

Dear Graduate Students,

I hope you all are doing well. As you know, our county has moved to "yellow" today. A version of the message below was sent to faculty and staff to explain what this means for campus activities. I am forwarding it to graduate students as it also concerns those of you who may need access to campus for your research or other work. You should return to campus only if necessary and if your intended work meets the three criteria outlined below. That said, please take note that you are NOT required to return to campus if you are not comfortable doing so at this time.

Please read the message below carefully. If you have any questions about your individual situation, please get in touch with [Kathleen Hutnik](#).

I also want to let you know that I've been added to the Academic Planning Task Force, which is focused on scenario planning for the Fall semester. I welcome your thoughts regarding the impact of Fall semester campus opening scenarios on graduate students and invite you to [contact me directly](#) with your thoughts.

Warmly,  
Beth Dolan

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To Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students,

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf recently announced his intention to move all counties, (including Northampton County, where Lehigh is located) that remained in the red phase of the Commonwealth's COVID-19 reopening plan to the yellow phase effective June 5, 2020. On behalf of the Task Force to Safely Open the Lehigh Campus, we write to share a phased plan for what you can expect as faculty, staff, and graduate students in the coming weeks.

The governor's news is welcome because it signals that our collective efforts to flatten the curve of virus transmission in Pennsylvania are having a positive impact. However, as with traffic lights, the color yellow signals caution. We are not yet out of the woods.

None of us has experienced anything quite like the COVID-19 pandemic. For nearly twelve weeks, we have made sacrifices and changes in our lifestyle for each other. We wear our masks to protect one other. We follow distancing guidelines. We work remotely because some of us are more vulnerable than others. We pull together as a community because no one is immune from this virus.

The move to yellow lessens some restrictions from the original stay-at-home order and allows us to plan for the resumption of campus activity. The state recently provided new guidance for higher education that will allow some in-person instruction in this phase. However, the decision has been left to the discretion of each institution. **Lehigh will continue to hold summer session courses remotely at this time.**

We consider the guidelines provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with regard to the yellow phase to be the maximum level of openness allowable by law. Lehigh has the discretion, and responsibility, to implement the measures we deem necessary to protect the health and safety of our campus community.

The Task Force, in concert with senior leadership, has developed a two-stage plan for the yellow phase—Yellow I and Yellow II. The following guidance pertains to the Yellow I phase, which we will enter on June 5. Under this plan, most faculty, staff, and graduate students will continue working remotely, with allowable activities resuming for limited on-campus work that meets three criteria: mission/time-critical (this includes graduate research), incapable of being completed remotely, and supervisor-approved.

We are enacting the following measures during the Yellow I phase:

### **Work Location**

- **Faculty, staff, and graduate students are expected to continue working remotely, whenever feasible.** The majority of employees will work remotely during this period.
- **Faculty, staff, and graduate students may return to campus if their work can only be completed on campus and is mission and/or time critical.** Examples might include lab-based research; non-lab based research that requires access to materials on campus; and critical administrative and operational functions that must be completed on campus.
- All faculty, graduate students, and staff requesting the ability to work on campus need a supervisor's approval and must complete an online COVID-19 safety training, which will be provided by Lehigh. The training will require individuals to certify that they acknowledge and agree to comply with public health expectations and Lehigh policies and practices before returning to campus.
- Chairs/Supervisors are not authorized to mandate work-on-campus if an employee is considered non-essential.

### **On-Campus Work Conditions**

- Faculty, staff, and graduate students returning to campus will be given access only to their workstation in their respective building and must document with their supervisor/chair when they are on campus.
- To maintain safe distance between co-workers, there will be no shared workspaces or cubicles during this period unless required to complete lab work or comply with lab safety protocols.
- All faculty, staff, and graduate students working on campus will be required to observe social distancing requirements at all times and wear a cloth face covering when it is not feasible to maintain social distancing measures and whenever leaving their workstation.
- A reusable face covering will be provided by Lehigh with one replacement. Employees are responsible for washing and maintaining their face coverings.
- Faculty, staff, and graduate students working on campus will be expected to observe public health guidelines for use of public spaces and equipment (e.g. kitchens, copiers, etc.). These will be posted on the Lehigh COVID website as part of the forthcoming reopening plan.
- Meetings must continue to be held remotely, via Zoom, telephone or other means, whenever possible.
- There will be no group gatherings allowed outside of specific approved activities as part of a work plan or space plan.
- No visitors will be permitted on campus without prior permission and submission of a safety acknowledgment.

### **Health Screenings**

- Per the guidance of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, during Yellow I, on-campus health screenings (such as completing surveys or taking temperature scans) will only be required if a positive COVID-19 diagnosis is identified in an area of the university.

The measures we're implementing during Yellow I are just the start of the process of preparing for the safe return of our full workforce, and ultimately our students, to campus. This is our opportunity to assess our policies and practices.

University leadership and this Task Force continue to plan and prepare for the next phase, including developing the proper health and sanitization protocols and other considerations necessary for supporting the safety of the campus

community under Yellow Phase II. We will be posting additional information on the Lehigh website and will continue to keep you informed of the plan moving forward.

All of the task forces welcome feedback at <mailto:incovid@lehigh.edu>. If you have questions specific to graduate students, you may contact [Kathleen Hutnik](#). You can also contact your department chair with questions about the process for requesting permission to work on campus.

Thank you for your continued service to Lehigh.

Chris Halladay  
Associate Vice President for Human Resources

Brent Stringfellow AIA  
Associate Vice President for Facilities  
University Architect

(revised by EAD 6-4-2020)