

Town Hall for Students and Families
Tuesday, January 12, 2021
5 p.m.

Jo Ann Brasington: Good afternoon and welcome to this virtual town hall for students and families. I'm Jo Ann Brasington, your host and moderator. This event is supported by the offices of Marketing and Communications and Information Technology Services, with special thanks to Kaye Foster and Martin Aigner for their technical expertise, and Mark Olencki for help with the slides. Joining me are panelists Dr. Nayef Samhat, president; Dr. Mike Sosulski, provost; Roberta Hurley, vice president dean of students; Dieran McGowan and Drew Reynolds representing the Student COVID-19 Response Team, Tom Henson, director of parent engagement, Dan Deeter, director of business services and risk management and Dan is also the leader of the colleges COVID-19 working group, and Beth Wallace, associate dean, associate vice-president and director of the Wellness Center. Dudley Brown, director of communications and a member of the COVID working group, will be monitoring the Q&A feature and responding or passing along questions to the panelists as appropriate. This will last no more than 45 minutes. If you cannot stay for the event, we will post a recording and transcript at www.wofford.edu/coronavirus under the Town Hall icon. Let's begin with remarks from President Samhat.

President Samhat: Thanks Jo Ann, and thank you everyone for joining us today, this afternoon. Since the end of December, we've heard from a lot of students and families. Some feel we have moved too quickly to on-campus classes. Others feel as though we're too strict with our social policies and wellness practices. And as you might expect, there are those who have written to thank us for the balanced approach that we've taken as we tried to start the spring semester. I'd love for everyone to be happy and agree with the college's approach. I would say that as college president, I understand that it's very difficult to make everyone happy and we try to follow a balance approach in whatever we do. I do appreciate the level of engagement and I want to assure all of the parents and students that the working group for the return to campus and campus leaders continue to consider student opinion, public health data and the safety of our community as we make decisions. That campus community includes 2200 students, faculty and staff who are together every day. And so we're talking about a very large number of people and our attempts to ensure their wellness and safety. I also want to share with you some information about other institutions or the perception about other institutions and practices. So for instance, we continue to hear comparisons of Wofford to other universities, especially in our area. Universities are very large and very few students as a percentage of the population live on their campus. We tend to compare ourselves to like colleges, knowing that one size does not fit all. We are benchmarking ourselves to other institutions because each college and university is grappling with this same public health crisis. We've heard that many colleges and universities have cut or frozen their comprehensive fees, and that's not really the case. Some have certainly, but it has come with a cost in terms of their ability to provide services, staffing and programs. A handful of colleges have taken those measure of course, but we continue to provide all the services and staffing and programs that you would expect from a Wofford education. There's also a perception that some college and universities have considerably relaxed their safety measures in the first weeks of the spring semester. But in fact, most college and universities have started the semester online or in-person with very strict policies designed to get a baseline of data with limited restrictions, and this is what we're doing. We want to get a baseline of data in our first week or so, so we can understand circumstances on our campus, knowing

that students have come to campus with a negative test. Some institutions that have started with bold plans to go 100% in-person and have reversed those plans in recent days because of the environment we find ourselves in. You'll get details on this and then our program much later in this town hall and on our website. But I would direct you to places like the Chronicle of Higher Education online or Inside Higher Education online to resources that talk about what institutions are doing to address the pandemic. Both are outstanding resources on higher education. And I would encourage you to take a look as well continue to visit our own website. We do remain hopeful that a vaccine will allow us to gather more as a community as we get through this semester. I am optimistic because I want to see people and gather with students, colleagues and friends just as much as our students want to see others and gather and have fun. So I'm grateful for your support for the Wofford community and what we're trying to do here. Our commitment is to first and foremost maintain the health and well-being of every student, faculty and staff member on campus, and secondly, to deliver our mission. And I am happy to say that I am surrounded by an extraordinary group of people committed to service our students. So thank you, and let's begin.

In light of the growing spread of the pandemic and the new more contagious strain, will Wofford please consider moving to online classes until a vaccine is more readily available?

President Samhat: Again, as I said, we are very concerned about the health and well-being of our community. It numbers about 2200 people on any given day between students, faculty and staff. That is our number one priority in order to deliver our mission in an effective way. What I can tell you is that we learned a lot in the fall. Just as we did not have a lot of information when we transitioned in the spring, by the time we reach the fall, we knew a lot about how to prepare ourselves for a semester. As we approach this spring term, we have learned a lot from our experiences in the fall, and we're applying those lessons. I think we have a very good plan for classroom instruction. And we also have a good plan for surveillance testing throughout the semester. We continue to employ additional cleaning staff and protocols, as well as additional staff in the Wellness Center. So I think we have a good plan. We have good compliance from students, I see them walking all over campus with masks on. We all know that defeating the pandemic will take some time. Providing for our health and well-being is a matter of a few basic practices: mask wearing, washing hands and social distancing. And that's what we're going to do until we're able to get a vaccine and continue to complete our semester.

What measurable factors are contributing to decisions on social restrictions on campus?

Dan Deeter: Wofford's been making decisions based upon a lot of information, including positivity rates. Positivity rates being the percentage of tests given in a state or county and what percentage of those tests come back positive. We get the reports of that number on a running seven-day average. It's close to 30% right now in South Carolina, it's even higher than that in Spartanburg County, closer to 40%. We also look at campus case counts, we look at our available isolation and quarantine spaces and how quickly those are being used and at what rate. We look at hospital capacity for our local community as well as public health recommendations from the DHEC, health leaders and otherwise. We have a link at <https://www.wofford.edu/coronavirus> to those statistics, if you would like to see them, on the Wofford dashboard as well as links on that site to the DHEC site, for South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control in their data. We encourage you to look at those.

What is Wofford doing to incentivize behavior so students can soon be more social?

Roberta Hurley: Thank you for that question and let me first say that we have two great students on this Town Hall that you'll hear from shortly. But what we did yesterday with the first day back with classes in-person is we organized a student leaders meeting and Drew Reynolds, who's the president of the student body helped me with that and we have over 47 student leaders on the call. And we went through our current situation, what it is now and what our steps will be as we move to change the situation on campus each week. But we challenged them and as to what we are doing to incentivize behavior, I look to the student leaders to set the tone for what's acceptable on campus and we asked them to mobilize and spread the word for this weekend so that students wouldn't look to go to one of the nearby institutions or state universities to a party and just stay here in Spartanburg, stay on campus, socialize with a few of their good friends. So we can, when the committee meets next week to evaluate our situation and what level we're at, that we're able to move down to another level, so student organizations can meet in-person and activities can begin to happen on the campus. You know, I've been here awhile, as most of you know, and have found that students respond when you challenge them, they respond. And I think that our students who are members of fraternities and sororities are looking forward to having recruitment, so that's an incentive in itself, that they want to have some in-person activities, which they understand now that they won't be able to do if we have a huge outbreak after a weekend or so. We're doing several things but again, I put it back on the student to challenge themselves and to encourage their friends and make good decisions. As Mr. Deeter just said, and President Samhat, we will be evaluating things based on public health information. And so as soon as we can, we plan to make a change at least weekly and communicate that to students. So we are very hopeful about that.

With everyone allowed back having a negative test, why not start at Level 1 and adjust up if needed?

Roberta Bigger: I thought that was another good question. But what we all know now is that the test, a COVID test, just tells you whether you had it that day, that you could possibly be exposed to COVID within hours of taking a test or the next day. So we asked students to get a test, and employees, before they return to campus so that we could identify anyone who was asymptomatic and unfortunately, there were some students and employees who did test positive so they did not return to campus yet and that's helped contain any spread that we might have had from those students coming back, not knowing they were positive. And so that was the reason we required the test. And we're starting at Level Four, just like we did in August, so that we can have a week on campus where students are getting acclimated to their residence halls and their classrooms, but they are not gathering in large groups so that we can assess our situation next Tuesday morning and see where we are on the campus. In addition, for parents who are on this Town Hall and students who are not from South Carolina, you may not realize that Spartanburg and Greenville counties are two of the highest counties in our country, for our size population in terms of the percentage of people who are testing positive. The hospitals, we know, in our adjacent Laurens county, they are completely filled, and they've called out the National Guard to create some medical units that can be used. I think Mr. Deeter said the Spartanburg hospitals are full and we believe the current capacity in the Upstate is about 83% in the hospital. And so we don't want students and employees being exposed or becoming positive and not being able to access the medical care they need. The COVID working group includes representatives from our area in Campus Life & Student Development, the faculty, Athletics, Facilities and so it's a very important group and they're collecting the information we need to make a decision each week. And as Dan mentioned, working with DHEC and the Spartanburg Regional Hospital System, which is in our backyard, so to speak. I'm running on. I hope that answered the question as to why we started at that level.

What is the hospital capacity in Spartanburg County? Why is that a factor?

Dan Deeter: Hospital capacity or some people refer to it as hospital occupancy rate really gives us a picture of not only how many beds are left in the hospital but what is the rate of COVID or severe COVID cases because those statistics go on to talk about things like how many COVID cases are in a particular hospital, how many ICU beds are taken, how many ventilators are in use, and all those kinds of things. So it gives us a real-time view of how many people are severely ill with COVID in our communities. So that's important information. It also can mean that with higher utilization rates or if the hospital becomes completely full it compromises our community's ability to serve people with emergency health situations like heart attacks, traffic accidents and those sorts of things. So we feel as part of our responsibility as a member of the community to be sensitive to the needs of that entire community and their health, public health and hospital resources. So when those numbers get to 80 – 90% we get concerned. That's why we look at that number.

How many students were hospitalized during the fall semester and what was the outcome? How many faculty/staff?

Beth Wallace: It's really not appropriate for me to talk about medical information with our students or our faculty and staff. I will say that if this is related to COVID situations and hospitalizations with our community can take on many different situations, injuries or illnesses but related to COVID, I will say that it was minimal. And that faculty and staff do not necessarily have to report to us, the Wellness Center, their medical information. And so it really isn't appropriate for me to respond to confidential medical information, because it would be somewhat self-identifying because it is minimal.

Does the Wofford administration have a plan to reduce tuition costs for the 2021-22 academic year?

President Samhat: At this point, we do not. We're conscious of and sympathetic to the concerns about the cost of higher education and we have sought to lower the rate of increases in fees, year after year. And so that has been our plan. The cost of a college education, or a Wofford education, is a function of extraordinary quality in terms of the services and programs and staff and faculty that we provide to transform lives. It is not an inexpensive program and we do not add students to our enrollment to help cover costs of education. We're a small liberal arts college with small class sizes, and a broad and supportive staff and outstanding faculty and to maintain that size, it does create some pressures. So I will tell you that the tuition fees cover about 65% of the cost of operating the college. As I have said before, institutions that have, in fact, reduced tuition and comprehensive fees have found themselves having to reduce programs and staff as well. At the same time, we have had to alter a lot of practices during this academic year in response to COVID. Those practices, the cleaning practices, supplies PPE, we've hired more staff, both to clean facilities, as well as in our Wellness Center, and so the cost of dealing with the pandemic on campus has been quite significant. We have sought assistance for students through a program, we raised money for back in the summer, about \$500,000, to help students whose families were negatively impacted by the pandemic. And in addition, we provided about another \$500,000 or so through the CARES ACT funds. So we've distributed about a million dollars to families in need to help support them in challenging times as a result of the pandemic. I would, however, encourage anyone with questions about financial aid or if they feel like they need to, or they qualify for additional support to please contact our Financial Aid office at WoffordFinancialAid@wofford.edu

Talk a little about how Wofford will do surveillance testing in the spring. How often will students, faculty and staff be tested? What type of tests are you using?

Dan Deeter: Dean Hurley already talked a little bit about our pre-arrival testing and following what I think was a successful pre-arrival testing program and identification of over 70 positive cases of asymptomatic individual we will use surveillance testing to assess where we stand in terms of our positivity rate on campus on a periodic basis. And you know, this whole program of surveillance testing is really based on learning from best practices from other institutions, which I believe President Samhat talked about earlier in our Town Hall as well. We'll do periodic testing by randomly selecting students, faculty and staff to be tested on a regular basis. Those tests will begin in early February. And we will do that every two to four weeks throughout the semester. Combined with athletic testing, which the NCAA requires, we will end up with a significant amount of the community getting tested monthly. In some cases, more often. The question regarding the type of tests that we're using, our current plan is to use PCR testing as we did for most of the pre-arrival testing. That's for maximum accuracy. Depending on what is developed in the next few months, we may change that decision. But that's our current plan.

Do you think the COVID student response team made an impact in the fall? What are you planning for the spring to help each other stay the course?

Dieran McGowan:

Absolutely. So to the first question, yes, I do believe that the COVID student response team made a positive impact on the Wofford community, from helping to create guidelines and creating the COVID-19 student pledge, and just finding different creative ways to get students excited to return to campus through our Terriers Take Care. We definitely made an impact, and we see that because we were able to stay on campus. Students saw the value and the importance of coming together as a community and they wanted to be here. And when you are a community, you will do anything you possibly can to stay on campus. But as far as future plans, we were originally created as a support to the COVID working group and we will continue to behave as a support system to that group. Of course, we're always trying to find ways to increase, creative ways, excuse me, to keep the moral high on campus. It is taking a toll on students, but we'll do that through videos, through programming, whatever we can do to help these students out.

Can we trace the spread of COVID on campus to academic spaces?

Mike Sosulski: The short answer is no. We have, we are very happy to report that there has been little to no effect, no discernible spread of the virus in teaching spaces on campus classrooms, labs or otherwise. So that's excellent news and I chalked that up to the community response to the guidelines as defined by the COVID-19 working group. And the students were excellent in the fall in adhering to guidelines. I taught a course in the fall; I taught a first-year seminar that met in person and students were fantastic. They always wore their masks and were careful to sanitize the surfaces of desks and door handles and everything else. So I really want to applaud our students for the really terrific way in which they responded to the things we needed to do in order to maintain our class in-person. What we have learned over the course of the semester is that when the virus did spread, it's mostly been able to be traced back to things like parties and off-campus dining. Those were the greatest spreading incidents that we found, but we're hopeful that with renewed vigilance that even those incidents will be minimal. I thought I would take a minute to talk about how we're responding to classroom practice. We've made a few adjustments in the spring and there are, again strong efforts to hold as much in-person instruction

as we can possibly do safely on campus. There are a small number of faculty members who, due to their own person health reasons, need to teach remotely, but that is a minority of classes that we have in place. There are other classes that are being held in a blended fashion, which means part of the class meets in-person and part is remote, then those students alternate. The guideline that we have is no less than a third of the normal contact time that the class would take up should be remote. So at the very least students would be in class 50 minutes a week. That's five zero, 50, not 15. That only applies to classes that are held in blended fashion and we are holding blended fashion courses in many cases simply because we're a small college, we're not a large state university with very large lecture halls. Most of our rooms are designed to hold 25 or fewer students. And so, with the spacing that's required for social distancing while we're teaching, it's very difficult sometimes to hold a class of 24 in the spaces that we have available, but I going to speak in a few moments about, actually, you know what, this is the very next question, so I'm going to go head and jump in.

Are we using larger or outdoor spaces for classes?

Mike Sosulski: We can go to the next slide because the next slide was about creating larger classroom spaces by using outdoor spaces, and yes, the answer is we are doing that. We have a dozen or more outdoor spaces that have been designated for teaching. It's going to be a little chillier in the winter than it was in the fall. We were blessed with some really great weather in the fall to allow maximum use of all of the spaces. But we are still using them. Faculty are using tented areas. We have, outside of our new art center, we have a really beautiful amphitheater space that gets used on a regular basis for teaching and some faculty are even being creative and using spaces that aren't even formally designated as outdoor teaching spaces when they can. So we are doing the very best we can to be creative. And our faculty and staff want to be in-person as much as students do, I can assure you. We're very much looking forward to the opportunity to get back to that absolutely full time.

What is the college doing to keep students on campus and having the most normal experience possible?

Roberta Hurley: I don't know if it's possible to have a normal experience during a global pandemic that we've been drawing on and I see where there's a few faculty and staff on this call. So I first want to thank all the faculty and staff who worked with not only Campus Life & Student Development but Academic Affairs and Athletics to create a lot of fun activities for students. I know our college photographer, Mark Olencki is on this call and I know that he attended dozens and dozens, probably over four dozen events in-person to take photographs. And I've asked Jo Ann to post a link to those photographs in the chat in case any parents don't realize that they can see, through the Wofford website, there's a page that says This Week at Wofford, so every week you can go on and see what events are going on the campus and photographs from them, and often remind students to go on and see their own photographs, because sometimes they hit the banner on the main college website. But you know, we started with some traditional events, like the blessing of the books, the blessing of the animals that Ron Robinson does, the student annual pumpkin carving contest. We had outdoor fitness classes, we had cornhole games in the President's front yard and my front yard. The president of the student body is on here, so I won't tell you how he fared, but I think the students had a good time. The first couple of weeks that were very demanding in September, and it was, I think more difficult for the first-year students than the upperclassmen who knew one another and were glad to see one another. So we are re-committed to making this semester, to getting back to some of our traditional activities as soon as we can. But as again, like I said earlier, that that's the challenge and the incentive for students.

That if they can be calm this week and this weekend, then we can make some changes and do more in-person events. I know I'm close to the Senior class president, Rick Ujohn and his officers are planning several events for seniors so that they can have some traditional events for their last semester on campus. And the Campus Union and the Wofford Activities Council, Wofford Live, have had, they were even working during the break to get ready and to be planning and to make sure that as soon as we can have these events in person, that we're ready to go. Our food service partner, AVI, has done a fabulous job of working with our staff to have refreshments at events when that's possible. So I think that we've gotten very creative. The students have been and student organizations have teamed up with us and been cooperative and creative as well. So I just really want to give a shout out to everyone. Some told me they didn't like this saying but we really are all in this together and you know, the students are for learning new ways to form friendships and relationships and get to know one another. So we will get through this semester and we'll hopefully have a vaccine soon and have commencement weekend.

What is Wofford doing to protect morale and mental wellbeing?

Beth Wallace: As you all know, I think we reported on our last Town Hall, or if you're not aware, that we've hired another licensed counselor, Tiara Looney who's been an additional asset to our staff. She is working on pretty much a full caseload. So we have three full-time counselors. I see some of my students that I've seen in the past and I do the Alcohol and Drug Education efforts. Right now they are not taking initial appointments, but I will as soon as I can since I'm helping with COVID management. So our counseling staff, we're doing, I think, a really good job of addressing needs of students. There's plenty of ways to get in touch with us. We worked with a student the other day that need an appointment, sooner than the end of the month, so he was seen today. And so students know they can reach out to use and we will juggle and redistribute time and things like that to make that happen. We still have the 24-hours, seven day a week counseling crisis line that is being used. That is available not only for our students but for our faculty and staff as well. We've very pleased with that. And so happy that we can offer that assistance through that. Those are licensed counselors who go through that phone and we get reports and follow up and so far, since we have partnered with that organization, it's worked out very well. The one thing I wanted to really highlight and I'm going to brag on one of my staff who's been here for several years. Perry Henson, some of you, many of you know, is overseeing our counseling and accessibility services and in December she came to me and said, "You know, I am concerned nationally and on our campus about our students. Just fatigue from this and mental wellbeing and you know, we saw a lot of that, particularly at the end of the semester, which is a normal uptick for us. So she asked me what I thought about the idea of having Wellness Days in the spring. We have a long semester ahead of us and what would it look like if we partnered with Academic Affairs and had four Wellness Days. And I'm thrilled to say that Provost Sosulski and Dr. Schmitz and Dr. Samhat and Dean Hurley, all of those just overwhelmingly were supportive of this idea. So we're in the process of creating this and it will be four days. The first one is February 2. We talked to the students about it last night. We've reached out to departments and it's things like to think of the conference. I might want to go to a yoga class on the lawn that is safely done, or I may want to go do some art in another area, or I may want to go play tennis or volleyball and some things that will be organized. I know there is concern about first-year students getting engaged and involved. Last night a student on our forum had an awesome idea. They said can we have some type of interest fair again. For the first-year students, we were able to do it safely during fall orientation. The students, my orientation staff, did a phenomenal job of creating an interest fair for first-year students. And I thought, what a great idea, to recreate that even if it's a few student organizations that could take some time, these two days in February. So I'm looking to that to perhaps re-engage those first-year students and get them excited about some organizations.

So all that to say, it's a very positive initiative. It's a partnership with both sides of the academic and co-curricular programs like that, again, it's not like Perry Henson doesn't have anything else to do, I promise. As well as the rest of us. But our concern and our, you know, thinking out of the box, how can we help our students? What can we do to make it fun and things to look forward to? So I'm sorry, I know really excited about that initiative because it's a community effort that we all will be working on, students, faculty, and staff. Thank you for letting me say that.

I've heard that some people can test positive for up to three months. Is that true, and if so, what is Wofford doing about that?

Beth Wallace: We follow those faculty, staff and students pretty closely. We ask them to upload their positive results and we did for instance, this pre-arrival test, coming back, I believe it was the end of October or some date up to that point if they had a positive, they did not need to retest. Yes, they may be showing positive again, but we're following them if they're symptomatic. We're continuing to test them if they want to be tested. An absolute with this virus, there's no rhyme or reason to many of these things, but we are working with those students individually or faculty and staff. And typically they convert to negative, but the research shows there's some immunity for three months. And so we're happy to have the students and faculty and staff join us. I hate that they had it, but join us and not have to be retested

When will interim and summer class schedules be announced?

Mike Sosulski: Good question. So January 19 we will be posting the course schedule for Interim and that'll be available through the MyWofford website for students to view and then Feb. 2 and 3 will be the registration dates for the new April and May Interim.

How is Wofford advertising social opportunities to students other than email?

Jo Ann Brasington: Activities are all on the campus calendar, they're posted in the daily announcements which come out Monday through Friday and Dean Hurley has been sending an email to students at the end of each week with the weekend activities and other activities design to keep students engaged on campus. In addition, the Wofford College Instagram account includes activities on its Story, so daily activities are on that story. I'll put a link to that in the chat in case you'd like to follow it.

How will Wofford improve communications with parents going during the spring?

Thom Henson: The Wofford Together website, <https://www.wofford.edu/wofford-together> and the <https://www.wofford.edu/coronavirus> website are where you can go for the most up to date information. It has case counts, wellness guidelines and also all of these Town Hall's that we've done, this one today, the ones we did in the fall, are on that site. My office sends monthly emails to parents and I hope you're getting those. Let me know if you're not. And then starting in February, we're going to have reports included from the Office of Campus Life & Student Development and give you a little bit more information about what's going on with them. In addition, I hope you're getting the weekly Conquer & Prevails, those newsletters are very helpful. And then I'm always happy to answer questions from specific parents, or I mean specific questions from parents. I'm going to put my email in the chat, although I'll be honest with you, I think most of you have it and are using it. Because I'm hearing from you and keep that going. But I do want to make a point real quick. We aren't just sitting here twiddling

our thumbs at Wofford. We're not trying to hurt the students. We're not trying to hurt the alumni. This is a pandemic that is global. And this is new, nobody's ever gone through this. And so think, maybe, before you hit send. And I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

How do Wofford students feel things went in the fall as far as classes and social opportunities?

Drew Reynolds: I think that in terms of classes I think students thought they went really well actually. It was great to have kind of like a few different options. I know a few friends of mine who had totally in-person class every day that was scheduled for and they met outside, and it was really great just to have the opportunity to be together in-person. And then like Provost Sosulski says, there is the mixed class where you have some on Zoom and some in-person and I had a lot of those last semester. And so really it was nice to have those and just have the opportunity to be able to kind of catch up. So I think that then, like all the ones that were totally on Zoom, it was great because we were able to get those and actually learned some good stuff. But I think the classes went really well. I know that it was I took a lot of hours last semester and it was definitely manageable a lot more manageable that I was expecting with having to kind of navigate when I was going to in-person class and when I wasn't. But we were all able to kind of figure it out. In terms of social opportunities, it was definitely, as mentioned earlier, the first two weeks back were tough. It's definitely kind of hard to figure out what was kind of allowed and what was ok but as the regulations, kind of, I guess, lightened up and we were able to hang out with people whether it was for me at senior village, being able to have people sit on the porch with me and eventually we're allowed to have guests inside the apartment. And so as we go those new privileges it was really nice. And I know everyone thoroughly enjoyed that. However, there really were not that many social opportunities. I know that the President's office was able to put together a little get together for seniors. And then we had 120 seniors have a 30-minute reception and I know that I got such positive feedback from that because people finally felt like they are able to do something that was school-approved, and I know that was a big plus. Just because as much as students want to follow the guidelines and want to be responsible, there is still the fact that we're college kids and don't always follow the rules. And so I think that more opportunities, the semester that the school provides will be a great thing. I know that President Samhat has got me and some of the other executive officers from Campus Union putting together a committee to look into the future social opportunities. So I'm hoping we can do more of that this semester. But obviously this all kind of falls under what the guidelines permit. So I hope that wasn't too much, but I think that's probably how the students felt from the fall.

How do students feel about the restrictions this spring?

Dieran McGowan: I have gotten mixed reviews. It depends on the student you talk to, of course. There are students who are upset. There are students who are concerned that other students, since we are operating on Level 4, students will go off campus and then bring the virus back to campus. But there are a lot of students who are happy and so thankful to be back on campus, especially seniors. Because while they're not getting the senior year, they thought they would, they know that being on campus with their peers and their friends is important and a lot of students cannot do this work at home. They are just unable to do it, they have too many distractions. So this is the best environment for them. So, as I said, there's mixed reviews.

I've heard that Wofford is going to be a vaccination site. Is this true? If so, when will Wofford get vaccines?

Beth Wallace: That's a great question and I'm happy to say that we applied for that and registered through DHEC. It's been a while back and the paperwork came through with the help of Dan Detter, Chris Gardner and Lisa Lafebvre and our nurse practitioner Tammy Gilliam, we got all of that paperwork in. We were told we needed to get a monitor for refrigeration, which makes sense, so we purchased that. Got that in. And the last email we got which was last week said that we are ready to be activated. Which, as we looked at it closer appears when vaccines are available and perhaps the next level of vaccinations that aren't healthcare providers, that we will be ready to go. We have not been given a definite date of when that might happen, but I will say that it appears are in the key, so to speak to (went mute). So an activation phase is what they're calling it and waiting for some vaccines to come available is what we've been told. We will set up a system and how to do that and find a space to do that. On a positive note, we've had students and faculty and staff who are not healthcare providers, volunteers saying we can help manage paperwork or flow. And so we know this will be a community effort. And I'm just for one will be very grateful when we do, we're able to provide that for the Wofford Community. We will not be a community site. We will be for Wofford, that is my understanding at this point. So we are thrilled to be able to say that we are in the queue to receive vaccines and I promise you I will be shouting it from the rooftop when that happens.

Jo Ann Brasington:

This is our last pre-submitted question. Unfortunately, we are already over time. There are some really good questions that we're not going to get to answer live. But I would invite you to email me at woffordnews@wofford.edu. I just put that in the chat again. So if you did not get your question answered please send it to Wofford News. Also check the Wofford.edu/WoffordTogether because a lot of those answers are there.

Is Wofford already planning to cancel Commencement?

President Samhat:

No. We have every intention of holding commencement. I think the news with the vaccines is promising. I think the fact that we will be a site to distribute vaccinations to the campus community is very promising and I look forward to a spring that gradually evolves. I do appreciate the frustration of many parents and students, and I would tell you that there are many faculty and staff equally frustrated by the inability to socialize in a robust fashion as we always do on campus. We missed a fall of all kinds of activity. We're hoping to have some athletic events and programs where we can create more opportunities for students. It has been an extraordinary challenge and I want to commend the students who have worked hard, Dieran and Drew and their colleagues and leading the effort to encourage students to come up with good ideas and new solutions and approaches to socializing, but also emphasizing the importance of compliance. I think our faculty and staff have responded in extraordinary ways to deliver to the best of our ability, under the circumstances, the mission of the college and people have spent an enormous amount of time on that effort as well. And the folks on the staff members on this Zoom in particular, to ensure the health and well-being and safety of everyone on campus. We have 2200 people, students, faculty and staff and everyone here is working extraordinarily hard to ensure we will make it through this semester in good order. I happen to be an optimist. And I think that as we get into late January and early February, we will begin to see vaccines find their way to larger numbers of

the population. And I also think that the plan we have in place for social activities and the guidelines that we've provided for students and that are available on the website will create opportunities for students to socialize and in ever greater numbers. I know it's been difficult for everyone. I know it's been difficult for students as well as parents and faculty and staff. But I want to assure you we are committed to the safety, health and well-being of our students, faculty and staff and the delivery of our mission. And we're going to do everything we can to get back to normal as soon as possible and that includes of course having a commencement in May. So I want to thank you all for your understanding and support. I hope that the light I see is the light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you.

Jo Ann Brasington: Thank you again for participating and thank you to our panelists and all the people behind the scenes who have made this event possible. Remember you can find a recording and a transcript of this event at <https://www.wofford.edu/coronavirus>. We will also send it out in the Conquer and Prevail e-newsletter and we had a really good suggestion to create a Frequently Asked Questions. So we will compile the questions asked that we didn't get to and post those answers as well. This concludes our virtual Town Hall. Stay well Terriers!