



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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Anthony P. Monaco, *President*

July 31, 2020

The Honorable Katjana Ballantyne  
Somerville City Council, Ward 7  
49 Russell Road  
Somerville, MA 02144

Dear Councilor Ballantyne,

Thank you for contacting me regarding the reopening of our Medford/Somerville campus in the Fall of 2020. The health, safety and security of our neighbors, students, faculty and staff is our top priority. I will be hosting a community meeting on Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 5:30pm to walk through our reopening plan, engage our neighbors and answer their questions. I appreciate the questions that you have collected from constituents and hope to answer many of them at our meeting. Your constituents can find the most up to date information on our reopening plan, community messages and frequently asked questions on <https://coronavirus.tufts.edu/>. Should they have any questions, comments or concerns, they can always contact the office of Government and Community Relations at Tufts at **617-627-3780** and/or [communityrelations@tufts.edu](mailto:communityrelations@tufts.edu).

Tufts University has developed a comprehensive plan with multiple layers of protection including surveillance testing, contact tracing, quarantining and isolation. Students will be required to wear masks whenever they leave their room both on- and off-campus. We understand that our students interact with the community every day. Protecting the health and well-being of all our students, faculty and staff will protect the health and well-being of our neighbors. As you mentioned in your letter, some of our students are already living off-campus in the community and reopening will give us the ability to test them on a regular basis.

Our fall reopening plans were driven by data and modeling and built to be flexible given the uncertainties we have experienced so far in the pandemic. We are watching the developments in each state daily as well as guidance from the Commonwealth and will make adjustments to our plans as needed, including amending move-in phases for undergraduates. In accordance with updated travel guidance from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the University has also updated our move-in plans for the Fall semester. Please visit our Student Life [website](#) for more information.

We will also comply with the state's requirement for out-of-region students to quarantine upon arrival. While they can produce a negative test result 72 hours before travel, they will still be tested on the first day upon arrival and every three (3) days subsequently to reduce the number of initial cases

and thus spread. Tufts will require that students remain in quarantine until at least the first three (3) tests (one on arrival, two subsequent ones) are negative. We believe the layers of protection that we are requiring of each community member – including twice-a-week testing of students, both on *and off-campus* -- prioritizes the health and safety of our community and neighbors while preserving as much of our campus experience as possible given the challenging circumstances. The frequent testing will enable us to pull asymptomatic students out of the general population and isolate them, helping to stem the spread of the virus.

Here are the highlights of our current plan:

- the university's fall semester undergraduate and graduate programs in the Schools of Arts and Sciences and Engineering will begin in September
- many classes will be taught online and in a hybrid manner to reduce student movement on- and off-campus and allow students to learn remotely whenever possible.
- our residential spaces will use a small-group model limiting close interactions to groups (residential cohorts) of 6 to 12 students, particularly to provide for social engagement while reducing risk; co-curricular activities will change; and our dining facilities will offer additional hours, locations, options to pre-order food, and a reservation system to reduce crowding.
- we will be reducing the density of classrooms and some residence halls and reserving adequate room capacity for students who need to be in quarantine or isolation.
- we will be implementing social distancing guidelines, mask-wearing requirements, strict hygiene practices, health screenings and COVID testing. We are working closely with the local DPH and the Commonwealth to implement integrated protocols for contact tracing for all close contacts of index cases.
- we will be implementing a three-part COVID-19 testing program [[tufts.box.com](https://tufts.box.com)] [PDF] informed by the Higher Education Testing Group's report, that will include:
  - (1) initial testing of all students (both students living on- and off-campus) upon their return to campus to begin the fall semester, with results within 24 hours,
  - (2) regular surveillance testing of all students (both students living on- and off-campus) at least two times a week and student-facing faculty and staff at least once a week to identify asymptomatic carriers, with results within 24 hours, and
  - (3) rapid diagnostic on-site testing of those exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 infection, with results within two hours.
- we are developing an app to inform students and student-facing staff and faculty of their schedule for testing, send reminders, and inform them of results.
- students diagnosed with COVID-19 will be housed in modular residential units ("mods") on the Medford/Somerville campus, while the other members of their residential cohort will go into quarantine in their existing residential spaces or additional spaces as required.
- students who live off-campus will be considered to be in a residential cohort with their housemates. Any student who lives off campus will be required to convalesce on campus if they test positive for COVID-19. If one member of an off-campus residential cohort tests positive, their housemates will also go into quarantine with frequent health checks, COVID-19 testing and EMS support.
- face covering requirements are also extended to students living off-campus.
- in line with state guidelines, gatherings are currently limited to 10 people. Hosting or participating in larger gatherings is prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary action.

- There is a robust protocol for educating students about our new expectations for their behavior. The protocol is evidence-based and has been proven to work to address a variety of public health situations in the past. In addition, special student ambassadors will be providing masks and education to everyone on campus and TUPD will be conducting enforcement appropriately.

Thank you for the City's continued partnership with Tufts University. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Rocco DiRico at the office of Government and Community Relations at 617-627-3780.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony P. Monaco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony P. Monaco