



## Office of the President



July 1, 2020

Dear Mitchell College Community,

I am thrilled to finally be here with you, serving as your president at Mitchell College, and I thank you for your patience in waiting to hear about the fall semester. As you can imagine, returning to campus safely presents complex challenges, which we want to understand and address fully. During this pandemic, the health and safety of our community is paramount.

Moving forward together we will be “Adjusting Our Sails” for the 2020-2021 academic year. Please look for regular communications and updates to our [website](#) as we have more to share. This is the first communication of many that we will send with information about COVID-19 testing, academics, support services, housing and dining, facilities, campus life and athletics.

Live web-based conversations about the implementation of Adjusting Our Sails are also being planned – join us to learn more and ask questions about how Mitchell will operate in the fall. Additional information about these conversations is coming soon.

We are planning our return to campus carefully and thoughtfully, using guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Connecticut and local health authorities. We are also using frameworks geared specifically to colleges and universities, considering options and recommendations for our reopening.

One of the primary changes to support the health and safety of the community involves adjustments to the academic calendar for Fall 2020. We are adopting this plan based on current public health guidance regarding risks associated with coming and going to and from campus, and models suggesting a potential resurgence of COVID-19 cases with the onset of influenza season. Our plan for the fall semester prioritizes the health and safety of our campus community and allows us to be agile in case the health situation changes. *Dates are subject to change.*

### Fall 2020 Schedule:

- August 24-30 – **A staggered move-in** for residential students. More details will follow. For COVID considerations and the safety of our students, the configuration of residence halls and room assignments are subject to change.
- September 1 – **Session I instruction begins** for residential and non-residential students, with online instruction for the first two weeks to support the move-in schedule and COVID-19 protocols.
- November 16-20 – **Final Exams**. Following final exams, students will depart for Thanksgiving break and will not return to campus after break.
- November 21-29 – **Thanksgiving Break**
- November 30-December 16 – **Session II instruction begins**, via remote delivery for all courses. Students will participate in Session II from home.

We will continue to monitor the situation and determine if any adjustments to the Spring 2021 calendar are necessary.

### Anchors Aweigh!

*Anchors Aweigh!*, our programming focused on onboarding our new Mariners, will run August 24-30. The schedule, to include online elements, will be forthcoming.

### Academics

A Mitchell education prioritizes deep student engagement with the campus community. We will provide a detailed plan in the coming weeks, but teaching

and learning in the fall will be different. Courses will be offered in a variety of formats: in-person with social distancing practices; blended, with a combination of in-person and online instruction; and fully remote.

This mix of modalities ensures that our classrooms and learning spaces support social distancing guidelines for the safety of our students, faculty and staff.

Our faculty is spending the summer participating in professional development centered around building robust and effective digital learning for our students.

### **Health & Safety Measures**

The health and safety of all members of our community has been a priority in our responses and decision-making to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of us must be responsible and act in ways that prevent the spread of the virus. Mitchell has already put in place several preventative measures.

All students, faculty, staff and approved visitors and vendors will be required to:

- wear face coverings in all indoor and outdoor public spaces on campus; face coverings are not required in student rooms
- adhere to handwashing protocols
- maintain 6' social (physical) distance whenever possible

Wearing a face covering, hand washing and maintaining social distance guidelines are the most effective ways to maintain health and safety. We will work with individuals with medical conditions precluding them from wearing a face covering to find alternative solutions.

Throughout campus, we are working to reduce density in classrooms and other public spaces and installing signage to support wearing of face coverings, hand washing and social distancing practices. Extensive cleaning and disinfecting protocols will continue. These measures are consistent with the state guidance on reopening colleges and universities.

### **COVID-19 Testing**

We are finalizing our protocols for testing, contact tracing, and daily health monitoring and will share them when we have the details.

We are leveraging the learning, data and experience we have acquired since the pandemic began to inform our plans and reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread as much as possible. We will continue to closely track the course of the pandemic and will adjust these plans as necessary in response to the latest public health information.

Please visit our website at [mitchell.edu/adjusting-our-sails-fall-2020/](https://mitchell.edu/adjusting-our-sails-fall-2020/) and email any questions to [communications@mitchell.edu](mailto:communications@mitchell.edu).

We look forward to seeing you again very soon as we adjust our sails together.

Tracy Y. Espy, Ph.D.  
*President*

---

**mitchell.edu**