



## Office of the President



July 17, 2020

Dear Students and Families of Mitchell College and Thames at Mitchell,

Hello from New London! I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the summer. Everyone at Mitchell College is working hard to put into place plans to bring our students, faculty and staff back to campus safely for the fall semester. This letter will provide a few updates on topics you might be wondering about; if you don't find answers here, be assured that upcoming communications will likely provide them. Also, remember to check the [Adjusting Our Sails](#) webpage for updates.

Since the first communication of our *Adjusting Our Sails* plan for the fall reopening was sent, many of you replied with questions. We are still working through plans and will give you answers as soon as they become available. *Please note that as our guidance and guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Connecticut, and local health authorities follow the ever-changing situation with COVID-19, all plans and dates are subject to change.*

Many people have asked about the **status of athletics** for the fall semester. As was announced yesterday, fall semester conference play has been suspended by the New England Collegiate Conference (NECC) due to health and safety concerns around COVID-19. Adapting to these changes, Mitchell College Athletics is working hard at planning numerous opportunities to keep our student-athletes engaged, including use of our brand-new artificial turf fields, conditioning workouts, scrimmages, team building and leadership programs. Read more [here](#) about Mitchell's plans.

Another frequently asked question pertains to **Fall 2020 tuition, room and board**. Our planning team is working thoughtfully and diligently to ensure the safe return of our students to campus, with faculty providing the same high quality course content and deep engagement with students across all delivery modalities (in person, hybrid/blended and remote). Support services associated with advising, accessibility, the Bentsen Learning Center, the Mystic Program, and Thames at Mitchell will also operate regularly, regardless of modality. As you know, during COVID-19, extra precautions must be taken to ensure the health and safety of the campus community, which come with additional costs. In light of these added expenses, we are not able to adjust our tuition.

Additionally, although room and board fees for Fall 2020 will remain as billed, resident students may extend their room and board at no additional cost when enrolling in either a May or June 2021 MiniMester.

### **Pledge to Adapt**

The start of the new academic year presents a "new normal" for our whole

campus community. Look for our “Mariner Promise,” a pledge to keep our community safe by following specific guidelines for campus health and safety. You will join our faculty and staff in signing the Mariner Promise, coming soon. To adapt to a new normal brought on by the uncertainty of COVID-19, we must adjust our mindset and all work together to follow guidelines for behaviors that will help mitigate any potential risks of coming back together on campus. In addition to the Mariner Promise, look for amendments to the student code of conduct.

### **New Students!**

Mark your calendars for a **Virtual Beach Bash** on Friday, August 7. This will be a time for you to meet other new Mariners and current students; get set up with Mitchell Dock, an app for campus events and activities; participate in virtual games and trivia contests; and enjoy the sounds of beach music. Parents will also have the opportunity to ask any lingering questions, and get to know one another. This event is “all hands on deck,” also attended by Mitchell and Thames faculty and staff, ready to welcome you to the Mariner family!

Virtual Beach Bash is followed by the launch of **Anchors Aweigh!**, new student orientation, with many components taking place virtually during August, continuing on campus August 26-30. **Classes begin on Tuesday, September 1.** Watch for more information about Anchors Aweigh!, coming soon.

### **Returning Students**

New this year! If you are a returning student, you will be invited to participate in a variety of fun, virtual social activities, along with completing required virtual trainings prior to returning to campus. This will be an opportunity to be informed of COVID-19 changes to campus, get to know the Residence Life Staff from your residence halls, and connect with friends and fellow residents. Watch for more details in early August.

### **All Resident Students – What Should I Bring to Campus?**

Whether you are returning for your final year at Mitchell or beginning your first year, because we are living in COVID-19 times, the “what to bring” list differs slightly this fall.

- **Have a plan ready in the event of illness.** *If you test positive for COVID-19*, you are required to isolate; a designated residence hall with the ability to utilize telemedicine will be used for isolation for students who are COVID-19 positive. If that is not preferred, you may go home to isolate if you have access to private transportation and a safe, secure space to isolate. *If you have been exposed to someone COVID-19 positive*, you are required to quarantine in your room for 14 days. All meals will be provided via delivery from dining services to students in isolation or quarantine.

**Just so you know** – According to the CDC:

- Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected.
  - Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.
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- **Have a grab-and-go bag packed in the event that you will go into isolation.** Include clothing, toiletries, and items for school work.

- **Pack lightly for the fall semester and only bring what is needed.** When you return home for Thanksgiving break and Session II, the residence halls will be sanitized; living with the “less is more” mindset will allow for the most effective sanitation. *As a reminder, Session II classes and support services will be delivered remotely to you at home.*

### **Required:**

- **Double-layer cloth face coverings** (wash often and bring enough to accommodate laundry habits), thermometer, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, other cleaning supplies
- Plenty of snacks and other items needed (school supplies, First Aid supplies, etc.) to limit shopping trips
- Access complete supply lists:
  - Mitchell College**
    - **What to Bring/What *not* to Bring**
  - Thames at Mitchell College**
    - **Residence Halls What to Bring/What *not* to Bring**
    - **Academics/Technology Supplies**
- A staggered move in will take place from August 24-30. We are still finalizing plans regarding quarantining and testing at the beginning of the semester. Look for more information in next week’s communication, which will also include details on housing and dining.

**For two weeks, beginning on September 1, all classes will be fully remote. Beginning on September 14,** courses will be delivered in a variety of ways for the Fall 2020 semester. These differentiated methods of instruction during Session I will be based on careful attention paid to instructor input and best practices for delivering the specific content. As always, courses are being designed to ensure instructors are accessible and that interaction as a class community is emphasized. The delivery of all Session I courses will strive to be as synchronous as possible in all of the designated learning modalities:

- **In person (P)** - class meets in person, in the room assigned for all scheduled meeting times throughout the semester in Session I (with the exception of the first two weeks, which will be delivered remotely). In person classes must meet social distancing guidelines.
- **Remote Learning (RL)** - class is entirely online, but requires synchronous instruction for all or part of the semester.
- **Hybrid/Blended (HB)** - class meets in person for half of the scheduled meeting times and online for the other half, including both synchronous and asynchronous delivery.

We will let you know course designations (in person, remote learning, hybrid/blended) soon. Watch for specific details and instructions with examples in the coming weeks about how your academic schedule on campus might look.

As you know, we will continue to closely track the course of the pandemic and adjust these plans as necessary in response to the latest public health information. Be on the lookout for more information about housing and dining, academics and campus life over the next few weeks.

Please email any questions to [communications@mitchell.edu](mailto:communications@mitchell.edu), and remember to visit the [Adjusting our Sails](#) webpage often.

I can’t wait to see you all on campus in August and begin the new fall semester together! Not only are these historic times for the world, but this time is significant for me as I begin my tenure at Mitchell. You all are sure to

hold a special place in my memory as we chart our course, together this year.

Please stay healthy, care for those around you and enjoy the rest of the summer!

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

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