

# Restarting On-Campus Education



## Safely Welcoming Students Back During COVID-19 Houghton College

Submitted July 8, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shirley A. Mullen".

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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To ensure that colleges and universities in New York proactively seek to mitigate the risks inherent in reopening campuses for the Fall 2020 as the nation and our world continue to battle the effects of COVID-19, we at Houghton College are pleased to join with other institutions by presenting the

following plan for the preparation, repopulation, and ongoing containment and mitigation measures that will be in place for the coming months. While much about the virus and its treatment remains uncertain, Houghton College, through the work of our Preparing a Residential Education Plan (PREP) Team, feels confident in our ability to safely and responsibly prepare our campuses to welcome back our small and engaged student body to live and learn together this fall.

As we have made the following decisions and engaged in ongoing preparations, we have sought guidance and opinions from federal, state, and local health professionals, risk management and legal advisors, and our own campus health physician, Dr. David Brubaker, who currently serves on the local Board of Health. Each piece of the college's plan regarding our operations, curricular, co-curricular, and public health operations for the fall has been shaped by the ongoing guidance of expert stakeholders. We are confident that we have done all we can to provide a sustainable plan for Houghton to resume its on-campus instruction this fall.

Creating a safe campus environment will rely not only on the work of our planning groups, but will depend on the ongoing support and goodwill of each member of the community who must adhere to these new standards daily with vigilance. Students, staff, and faculty must partner with one another in the shared task of keeping our community safe and healthy. Due to the high-level of community involvement this will entail, we believe that Houghton is uniquely positioned to be a model for other institutions of higher education as they develop their own reopening plans. Houghton's students, staff, and faculty have a long history of engaging in shared community practices, such as a joining together for corporate worship multiple times a week. A strong sense of concern for the community and the wellbeing of each individual is a hallmark of a Houghton education.

Even though the difficulty of this shared task is immense, Houghton has proven itself to be a place where students, staff, and faculty internalize and keep the commitments we make to one another. We believe that Houghton can be a place that flourishes in the midst of this uncertainty because of both our proactive approach to health and safety and also our strong commitment to one another as a Christ-centered working, worshipping, and learning community.

## 2 ADDRESSING REOPENING NEW YORK GUIDELINES

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A more thorough plan was submitted to the state which includes a detailed description of each area's reopening plans, while the following section addresses each area that New York State outlined in its guidance released on June 20, 2020. The guidance indicated that each institution should "develop and submit a plan that, at a minimum, covers":

1. Reopening of the campus,
2. Monitoring of health conditions,
3. Containment of potential transmission of the virus, and
4. Shut down of in-person operations on the campus, if necessitated by widespread COVID-19 transmission.

Throughout Houghton's planning processes, faculty, staff, trustees, students, and parents have been consulted as we have tried to engage stakeholders at multiple junctures. We have committed to communicating on at least a weekly basis with students, parents, and employees throughout the

summer and until students arrive in the fall. In these communications, stakeholders can use a form to submit questions and comments to the PREP Team, of which many have availed themselves.

## 2.1 REOPENING PLAN

### 2.1.1 Capacity, PPE, and Testing

Employees have been returning to campus with no more than 50% capacity on campus at any time as the Western New York Region has reopened in phases. We are encouraging employees from high-risk health categories to work remotely and are considering requests from others who do not yet feel safe to return to work. Masks and shields have been and will continue to be made available to employees.

All students, staff, and faculty will be given two Houghton branded masks upon arrival.

Students will be returning to campus over a three-day period in August. Students will sign up for a move-in slot and be permitted to have two individuals accompany them to move-in. Students and their visitors will need to be masked throughout their time moving in that weekend. Masks will be made available to guests who do not have one.

We are not currently planning to do mass testing of all individuals on arrival but will be screening all students, staff, and faculty and testing those who are symptomatic, or otherwise screen positive (e.g. for exposure). Students arriving from an international location or from a state considered high-risk will undergo a 14-day precautionary quarantine period upon arrival. The health center will be able to facilitate testing, which will be targeted for symptomatic and/or exposed students. We have identified several lab partners including Aegis Sciences Corporation, Quest Diagnostics and Wyoming County Community Hospital. We plan to have an inventory of at least 100 testing kits/swabs available on campus at any time.

### 2.1.2 Residential Living and Extracurriculars

Students will relax their practicing of masking and social distancing when in their rooms with their roommate(s). Any gatherings in common areas or for campus programming will be limited by whatever state or federal regulations are in effect at the time (such as no more than 50% of capacity and currently nor more than 50 people in any indoor space regardless of capacity limitations) and need to abide by masking and social distancing. Students will not be able to visit other student's rooms and common areas will be set up to encourage social distancing. Visitors will not be able to come into residence halls (aside from move-in day). Isolation and quarantine spaces have been identified in separate residential areas away from other students. The Student Guide has been updated to have new policies around COVID-19 which students will need to agree to uphold. Common space cleaning will be increased.

### 2.1.3 Operational Activity and Vulnerable Populations

Campus spaces will be limited in gathering size based on federal and state gathering restrictions, with each public building having designated up and down stairwells to manage traffic patterns. People will be encouraged to stay to the right in hallways, with signage indicating these patterns. Classrooms will be arranged so that students are able to socially distance from one another. We have 60 classes with over 20 students enrolled, and 17 rooms that will accommodate these larger classes with appropriate distance between students. We are preparing to use spaces in the chapel and gymnasium as necessary

for larger classes. Students, staff, and faculty who are from a high-risk health category will still be able to work and learn through remote working and learning options made available to all people this fall.

#### 2.1.4 Hygiene, Cleaning, Disinfection, and Restart Operations

Classes will be disinfected daily and students will have access to sanitizing wipes that they will be expected to use upon entering their classroom. Bathrooms are normally fully disinfected once per day. This will be changed to two times per day using an appropriate product identified by its EPA number to be effective on the virus. EPA number of primary products will be provided as well. When a divider is not present between fixtures (sinks, urinals, etc.) available fixtures will be six feet apart. Others will be removed or somehow marked as not available. Disinfecting materials will be available in the bathrooms for use by students. Other high-touch items in public areas (doorknobs, light switches, etc.) will be disinfected at least once per day. Hand sanitizing stations will be widely available and classrooms will be provided with disinfecting wipes for use by students. The dining hall will be disinfected between each designated meal time.

## 2.2 MONITORING PLAN

### 2.2.1 Testing Responsibility, Frequency, and Protocols

The Student Health Center will be responsible for procuring test kits from our lab partners, as noted above and carrying out necessary on-campus testing targeting symptomatic and/or exposed students. Turnaround time for test results is expected to be between 24-48 hours. A designated testing site has been identified in an area proximate to but separated from the student health center. An ongoing inventory of at least 100 testing swabs will be kept on hand at the health center. Students undergoing testing will remain on self-isolation in their rooms until test results are confirmed. The local Department of Health will be notified of any testing being done. Once results are available, anyone testing positive will be transferred to isolation facilities.

### 2.2.2 Early Warning Signs

While we anticipate closing down campus when 90% (36) of our isolation facilities are utilized, we will convene our Emergency Management Team when 30% of these facilities (12) are utilized to determine the likelihood of the rate of positive tests on campus to be accelerating at an unmanageable pace. The CoronaCare Team will monitor these levels.

### 2.2.3 Tracing and Screening

Students, staff, and faculty will need to undergo symptom screening each weekday. We plan to utilize an email-based screening platform called Healthy Rosters which automatically reminds students and employees each day to complete an electronic survey, self-reporting any symptoms suggesting COVID and/or contact with positive cases. Those who screen positive will undergo additional evaluation and testing if appropriate. Those who screen negative will get a confirmatory email which students will need to present as they enter the Dining Hall each day (Utica and Buffalo campuses will require this proof before students enter the classroom). Our local Department of Health, aided by the CoronaCare Team if needed, will coordinate contact tracing in the event of a positive case. Preliminary contact information will be collected at the time of testing, and class and floor lists, which have all requisite information needed for tracing, will be made available to the Department of Health as soon as possible after move-in day

## 2.3 CONTAINMENT PLAN

### 2.3.1 Isolation

The CoronaCare Team will oversee the relocation and care for students who test positive. Students who live close to campus (within 30 minutes) will be encouraged to isolate at home, though all students will have this option. Commuter students will need to isolate at home. On-campus isolation units are in an upper-class housing facility that is used only by faculty and staff with additional spaces in an off-campus alumni house, each with separate bathrooms. Students will be able to continue to learn remotely while in isolation and will have access to on-campus academic and mental health supports as needed. Daily health checks will be performed by health center staff. Students requiring higher level medical care will be transported to local hospital by ambulance.

### 2.3.2 Quarantine

Students who are identified as close contacts of individuals who have tested positive, and any other students that the DOH requires, will be tested and quarantined. As for isolation, students who live close to campus (within 30 minutes) will be encouraged to quarantine at home, though all students will have this option. Students requiring quarantine on campus will be housed in residence hall rooms that are on unoccupied floors. Students who live by themselves or who are the only roommate of a student who has been relocated for isolation may quarantine in their room. The CoronaCare Team will oversee the care for these students as well. Students will be able to continue to learn remotely while in quarantine and will have access to on-campus academic and mental health supports as needed. Daily health checks will be performed by health center staff. Repeat testing will be performed as necessary for quarantined students (e.g. after the development of new symptoms.)

### 2.3.3 Communication

The college is releasing weekly communication throughout the summer about our preparations. Communications will be drafted before students return in the event that a student tests positive for COVID-19. These will be communicated to the DOH to solicit their feedback. No identifying information about the student will be released.

## 2.4 SHUTDOWN PLAN

### 2.4.1 Operational Activity

To decrease the likelihood of our on-campus isolation units reaching 90% utilization, the following tiered approach will be used as a guide to mitigate exposure risk to students, staff, and faculty. After reaching an elevated tier, returning to a previous tier can be achieved only when utilization rates have been decreased to the exact specified threshold.

#### 2.4.1.1 *Tier One: 30% Utilization*

In the event that 30% of our on-campus isolation units are utilized (9 beds), all non-essential in-person gatherings will be restricted. In-person classes and athletic practices will be able to continue, but extracurricular gatherings will be held virtually. In-person employee gatherings (e.g. meetings, appointments) must be held virtually and work schedules will be staggered to decrease office occupancy. Visitors will not be allowed on campus. The Emergency Management Team will begin

meeting upon reaching this threshold and will hold bi-weekly meetings until utilization rates drop to an acceptable level.

#### 2.4.1.2 Tier Two: 60% Utilization

In the event that 60% of our on-campus isolation units are utilized (18 beds), all in-person gatherings will be restricted. All classes (except those most dependent on in-person interactions, which will use enhanced cleaning and social distancing procedures) will be held remotely and athletic activities will be suspended. Non-essential employees will be restricted from campus. Only take-out options will be available in the Dining Hall. All off-campus travel will be restricted. Students will need to practice a modified quarantine in their residence hall room, restricting their movement about campus.

#### 2.4.1.3 Tier Three: 90% Utilization

In the event that 90% of our on-campus isolation units are utilized (26 beds), the campus will begin shutdown procedures, with students given 48-hours to vacate campus. The college will continue to make housing available to students who fall into any one of the following three categories: (1) international students who may not be able to travel to their home country, (2) students who pose a clear health risk for someone in their home who is considered high risk for the coronavirus, (in this case, the housing will be temporary), and/or (3) students whose home situation is, in some way or other, disruptive to their flourishing as a student.

#### 2.4.2 Move-Out

In the event of the campus shutting down, students will be given 48 hours to vacate campus. Students will be encouraged to leave belongings on-campus simplifying the move-in process for the spring semester. Checkout procedures will mirror move-out procedures for Christmas Break, with no final room checkout needed.

#### 2.4.3 Communication

Draft communications for both a tiered approach to containment and shutdown will be drafted before students return. Students, staff, faculty, and parents will be communicated with at each tier of the process. The possibility of a campus shutdown will be raised at the Tier Two phase with its confirmation occurring at Tier Three.

### 3 REOPENING CHECKLIST

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The following is a brief description of how Houghton meets the higher education reopening mandatory requirements outlined by New York State on June 20, 2020.

#### 3.1 PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Requirement	Proof or Plan of Implementation
<b>Any time individuals come within 6 ft. of another person who does not reside in the same residence (i.e., roommate), acceptable face coverings must be worn. This provision should not be construed to require physical distancing among roommates or to require face</b>	All campus members will need to practice social distancing and masking when not with their roommate(s) or by themselves. Areas throughout campus will be reconfigured to enforce and encourage social distancing with classrooms and public spaces being redesigned to provide



<b>coverings be worn while inside an individual's residence.</b>	occupants with opportunities to socially distance from each other.
<b>In consultation with the local health department, identify where students who are exposed to, or infected with, COVID-19 will be residing and how daily needs (e.g. food, medication) will be met if it becomes necessary to have a period of quarantine or isolation.</b>	The CoronaCare Team will be responsible for relocating students infected with COVID-19 to isolation units with private restrooms and students who are their close contacts to quarantine units in designated floors within residence halls removed from other residents. Daily needs will be met by the CoronaCare Team in consultation with other campus partners.
<b>Reference relevant industry-specific guidelines provided by the Department of Health – and available on the New York Forward website – for operations of dining halls, research, office workspaces, gyms, transportation, retail stores, and other activities, as applicable.</b>	All area reopening plans have been shaped in accordance with public health and state guidance, with continued adaptation to changing protocols issued by these bodies.

### 3.2 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Proof or Plan of Implementation</b>
<b>Any time individuals come within 6 ft. of another person who does not reside in the same residence (i.e., roommate), acceptable face coverings must be worn. This provision should not be construed to require physical distancing among roommates or to require face coverings be worn while inside an individual's residence.</b>	All campus members will need to practice social distancing and masking when not with their roommate(s) or by themselves. Areas throughout campus will be reconfigured to enforce and encourage social distancing with classrooms and public spaces being redesigned to provide occupants with opportunities to socially distance from each other. Two masks will be provided to each student, staff, and faculty member by the college.
<b>Advise employees, students, and visitors that they are required to wear face coverings in common areas or situations where social distancing may be difficult to maintain, such as riding in elevators, entering/exiting classrooms or student centers, and traveling around the campus.</b>	Signs will be placed throughout campus reminding campus community members and visitors about masking, social distancing, and cleanliness standards. Wayfinding markers will be installed with designations for stairs and doorways that indicate one-way directional patterns for foot traffic.
<b>Provide face coverings to employees who directly interact with students or members of the public while at work, at no cost to the employee.</b>	Two masks will be provided to each student, staff, and faculty member by the college.
<b>Train employees on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE. See CDC guidance for additional information.</b>	Each student, staff, and faculty member will be instructed on proper usage during the first week of orientation by college personnel.

### 3.3 HYGIENE, CLEANING, AND DISINFECTION

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Proof or Plan of Implementation</b>
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<b>Adhere to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection. Identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility type and assign responsibility.</b>	College employees will record the scope of cleaning and disinfection, with classroom deep cleaning occurring daily and bathroom cleaning occurring twice daily, with sanitizing stations set up throughout campus. Students will have access to sanitizing wipes in each classroom to clean off their stations upon entry.
<b>Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations throughout the institution, including handwashing with soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels, as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.</b>	Sanitizing stations will be set up throughout campus. Students will have access to sanitizing wipes in each classroom to clean off their stations upon entry.
<b>Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of facilities and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces. Refer to Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) products identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19.</b>	College employees will record the scope of cleaning and disinfection, with classroom deep cleaning occurring daily and bathroom cleaning occurring twice daily, with sanitizing stations set up throughout campus. Students will have access to sanitizing wipes in each classroom to clean off their stations upon entry.
<b>Ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms</b>	Bathrooms will be clean twice daily.
<b>Provide for the cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at a minimum, all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces. Refer to CDC guidelines.</b>	College facilities workers will be trained in thorough cleaning protocol per CDC guidelines. Areas in which a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 has recently been will be thoroughly cleaned to these standards.

### 3.4 COMMUNICATION

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Proof or Plan of Implementation</b>
<b>Affirm you have reviewed and understand the state issued industry guidelines and submit reopening plans prior to reopening.</b>	The college's plan will be submitted in accordance with NYS guidelines and affirmed by our college president.
<b>Conspicuously post completed reopening plans for employees and students to access.</b>	A shortened reopening plan will be made available on our COVID-19 website, in addition to the weekly communications sent by the college.

### 3.5 SCREENING

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Proof or Plan of Implementation</b>
<b>Implement mandatory health screening practices (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) for employees, students, and, where</b>	The college will use an email-based screening tool this fall which is HIPPA-compliant and will be reviewed by Health Center staff each weekday.

<p><b>practicable, scheduled visitors (e.g. on-campus tour groups) asking about, at minimum: (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close or proximate contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. Assessment responses must be reviewed every day and such review must be documented.</b></p>	<p>Appropriate college personnel will follow-up with students or employees who fail to complete this. Those who indicate a potential exposure or possible symptoms will be contacted by Health Center staff.</p>
<p><b>Employees reporting to work on-campus must be screened on a daily basis.</b></p>	<p>The college will use an email-based screening tool this fall which is HIPPA-compliant and will be reviewed by Health Center staff each weekday. Appropriate college personnel will follow-up with students or employees who fail to complete this. Those who indicate a potential exposure or possible symptoms will be contacted by Health Center staff. Students must complete this each weekday. Employees will need to complete this each day they report to work.</p>
<p><b>Students must be screened periodically as determined by the higher education institution but are not required to be screened on a daily basis.</b></p>	<p>The college will use an email-based screening tool this fall which is HIPPA-compliant and will be reviewed by Health Center staff each weekday. Appropriate college personnel will follow-up with students or employees who fail to complete this. Those who indicate a potential exposure or possible symptoms will be contacted by Health Center staff. Students must complete this each weekday. Employees will need to complete this each day they report to work.</p>
<p><b>An individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms must be immediately sent home, to their residence, or to the designated quarantine or isolation location with instructions or arrangement for health assessment and testing.</b></p>	<p>The CoronaCare Team will be responsible for relocating students infected with COVID-19 to isolation units with private restrooms and students who are their close contacts to quarantine units in designated floors within residence halls removed from other residents. Daily needs will be met by the CoronaCare Team in consultation with other campus partners.</p>
<p><b>Immediately notify the state and local health departments of confirmed positive cases.</b></p>	<p>The CoronaCare Team in consultation with the campus Health Center will notify the DOH in the event of a positive case on campus.</p>
<p><b>In the case of an individual testing positive, develop plans with local health departments to trace all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the New York State Contact Tracing Program. Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations</b></p>	<p>The CoronaCare Team in consultation with the ACDOH will help conduct contact tracing in the event of a positive case on campus. List of students' housing and class rosters will be provided to the CoronaCare Team at the beginning of the fall semester to assist in this process.</p>

## 4 GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON COVID-19

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*The following is general information regarding COVID-19 from the New York State Department of Health:*

SARS-CoV-2, a novel coronavirus, was first identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in 2019. There are many coronaviruses, all of which typically cause respiratory disease in humans. The World Health Organization (WHO) named the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 “COVID-19.” (To eliminate potential for confusion with a different coronavirus, SARS-CoV, these FAQs refer to SARS-CoV-2 as “the virus that causes COVID-19” or “COVID-19”). On March 11, 2020, WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic due to the number of countries affected by its rapid spread.

COVID-19 can cause mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Other symptoms may include muscle aches/pains, fatigue, new loss of smell or taste, and decrease in appetite. According to CDC, headache, confusion, rhinorrhea, sore throat, hemoptysis, vomiting, and diarrhea have also been reported, but are less common (<10%). -Preliminary information suggests older adults and people with underlying health conditions or compromised immune systems are at higher risk of severe illness from this virus. CDC believes that symptoms of COVID-19 begin between 2 and 14 days after exposure.

While the initial transmission is believed to have been animal-to-person spread, COVID-19 is now spreading from person-to-person. This is thought to occur via respiratory droplets produced when a person infected with the virus coughs or sneezes, the same way flu and other respiratory illnesses spread. The virus that causes COVID-19 can also be transmitted if people touch surfaces and objects with the virus on it. In addition, there is growing understanding that asymptomatic transmission plays a significant role in perpetuating the pandemic.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to prevent exposure to the virus that causes SARS-CoV-2. CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of any respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash can.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wear a face covering whenever you are within 6 feet of another person not in your household

Community mitigation (or non-pharmaceutical interventions) are actions that individuals and communities can take to slow the spread of COVID-19, when there are no pharmaceutical preventive or treatment options. Community mitigation is critically important for protecting individuals most vulnerable to COVID-19 and reducing strain on the health care system. These actions include social distancing. Social distancing includes:

- Maintaining at a least six feet distance from others;
- Not shaking hands, hugging, or kissing when greeting people;

- Limiting visitors;
- Avoiding gatherings;
- Working at home; and
- Closing schools and providing remote learning instruction to students.

For individuals who may test positive for COVID-19, New York State has the following mitigation strategies that include three types of quarantine or isolation related to COVID-19:

### **Mandatory Quarantine**

The following people require mandatory quarantine:

1. Persons who, while not displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19, have been in contact with someone who was infected with SARS-CoV-2, in the past 14 days.
2. Persons who, in the past 14 days, have traveled to a country for which the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a Level 2 or Level 3 Health Notice, or who were on a cruise ship (including river cruises), and are not displaying signs symptoms of COVID-19.
3. Healthcare workers identified by their local health department, whether direct care providers or other staff, who meet criteria in described in either (1) or (2) above, may be allowed under the conditions set forth in NYSDOH’s Health Advisory: Updated Protocol Personnel in Healthcare and Other Direct Care Settings to Return to Work Following COVID-19 Exposure or Infection. While the advisory was initially targeted to Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Adult Care Facilities, this advisory expands eligibility for health workers to return to work in other healthcare settings, provided the condition linked advisory are met. These individuals must, when not working, remain quarantined.
4. Individuals identified by their local health department as essential personnel, as described in Department’s Health Advisory: Protocols for Essential Personnel to Return to Following COVID-19 Exposure or Infection, and who meet criteria described in (1) or (2) above, may be allowed to work under the conditions described in the advisory. These individuals must, when not working, remain quarantined.

### **Mandatory Isolation**

The following people require mandatory isolation:

1. Persons who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, regardless of whether they are displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19.
2. Persons who, in the past 14 days, have traveled to a country for which CDC has issued a Level 2 or 3 Health Notice, or who were on a cruise ship (including river cruises), and are displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19.
3. Healthcare workers identified by their local health department, who meet either of the above criteria, allowed to work under the conditions set forth in the Department’s Health Advisory: Updated Protocols for Personnel in Healthcare and Other Direct Care Settings to Return to Work Following COVID-19 Exposure or Infection. This advisory expands eligibility for healthcare workers to return to work in other healthcare settings, provided the conditions in the linked advisory are met. These individuals must, when not working, remain isolated.

### **Precautionary Quarantine**

The following people require precautionary quarantine:

1. Persons whose contact to someone infected with SARS-CoV-2 is known to be proximate, not close, and are not displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19.
2. Healthcare workers, identified by their local health department, whether direct care providers or other facility staff, who meet criteria in described above, may be allowed to work under the conditions set forth in NYSDOH's Health Advisory: Updated Protocols for Personnel in Healthcare and Other Direct Care Settings to Return to Work Following COVID-19 Exposure or Infection. These individuals must, when not working, remain quarantined.
3. Individuals identified by their local health department, employed as essential personnel, as described in NYSDOH's Health Advisory: Protocols for Essential Personnel to Return to Work Following COVID-19 Exposure or Infection, and who meet criteria described in (1) above, may be allowed to work under the conditions described in the advisory. These individuals must, when not working, remain quarantined.
4. Any person the local health department believes should be quarantined for precautionary reasons.

Attention to the different mitigation strategies in place at the state level are important to understand when considering the college's reopening plan, as the limitations of the college's ability to meet these expectations meaningfully impact each phase of our reopening plan.

## 5 IMPLICATIONS OF GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR HOUGHTON'S CONTEXT

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As we have developed our reopening plan, the following assumptions, principles, and a detailed rationale for each have guided our decisions.

### 5.1 ASSUMPTIONS

*The institution must have a range of options that we can implement at any point*

While we have planned for and anticipate being able to welcome back our students to campus this fall, we understand that Houghton must be prepared to move to remote or hybrid instruction at any time. This could be due to a spike in cases in our county, region, or even on our campuses. Individual students or faculty members may need to isolate due to emergency travel, family concerns, or due to a range of other reasons. While we detail what the college's calendar tentatively looks like, which has been changed from our initial planning, multiple learning modalities are necessary to continue to consider.

*This pandemic has impacts which last into the summer and fall*

We have no reason to assume that available vaccines, reliable antibody testing, or effective treatment regimens will be in place by the fall. Public health experts continue to project that cases will continue well into the fall with the possibility of a second wave hitting the United States late in the fall causing additional concern for Houghton College and leading us to change our academic calendar. Our plan has been formulated with the belief that the virus will still be a threat in the fall, that a majority of our students, staff, and faculty will not have previously contracted the virus, and that a member of our

campus community will likely test positive at some point during the semester. Containment and mitigation strategies must be a key part of our reopening strategy as a result of this assumption.

*Our choices will likely be meaningfully shaped by federal and state regulations*

Though we have constructed a workable and responsible plan, Houghton will continue to strictly follow and enforce the directives from our national, state, and local governments as we seek to protect not only our students, staff, and faculty, but our community and local partners. We are proactively developing policies and procedures to keep our campus safe in these uncertain times but we also recognize that federal and state agencies, who must consider the economic and health interests of broader constituencies beyond higher education, may provide regulations which limit certain activities we previously felt able to manage internally. In these instances, institutional procedures will be changed to realign with the guidance coming from our governmental leaders as we seek to partner together with these agencies to help protect our surrounding communities.

*The safety of a college's location, resources, and support for students is essential in this time of uncertainty*

In many ways, Houghton's setting is an ideal place to provide a safe harbor during a public health crisis, given our rural location, small community, and on-campus health center overseen by a medical doctor engaged in local public health protocol. Though access to emergency room and hospital facilities can present a challenge to some students without transportation, members of our community are able to be evaluated at one of five different health facilities within a 30- to 45-minute drive from campus. Our on-campus health staff also have overseen the successful isolation and quarantine of four students and their immediate contacts who were tested for COVID-19 during this past spring semester.

*This situation will likely enhance not heal political division, particularly due to the election*

Understanding the political undercurrents of this moment are important to consider, especially when considering the measures colleges want to put in place to minimize the risk of transmission of the virus once students return to campus. Masking, social distancing, and even the tracking of national statistics have been politicized, potentially thrusting any decisions we believe would best keep our campus safe into the light of partisanship and division. These assumptions have impacts on our ability to enforce social practices, create buy-in among our community, and impact any decisions we may need to make in the fall about stopping in-person classes and exiting the campus due to an outbreak.

## 5.2 PRINCIPLES

*Err on the Side of Caution*

As we did in the spring semester, we will continue to err on the side of caution in any decision we make about the fall or the continuation of in-person instruction. While we highly value the in-person experience for our students, staff, and faculty, we will continue to exercise careful judgement, with a thorough analysis of the risks entailed with repopulating our campus community. In this, we will continue to provide an exceptional educational experience for our on-campus and remote learners, ensuring that we not place ourselves or our students in the position of making an unwise decision simply due to concerns unrelated to the health of our campus community.

*Limited Capacity for Care: Our goal is to keep the virus off-campus as much as possible*

As we are a small community, we have a finite amount of on-campus resources to care for students, staff, and faculty during a public health crisis. We are prepared to treat, isolate, and recuperate a handful of individuals who may test positive for the virus on-campus and expect that this is a likelihood for the fall. To put us in the best position to limit this possibility, however, and to further mitigate the possibility that an outbreak happens on campus, our strategies detailed in this plan are comprehensive, unprecedented for a residential campus, and far-reaching.

*Reducing Risk by Stewarding our Resources Well*

In developing our reopening plan, it is important for us to consider what resources (e.g. time, infrastructure, money, personnel) we have available to us and recognize that these are finite. To serve our students, staff, and faculty well, we must appropriately gauge what we can reasonably and responsibly achieve. We have a limit on the number of individuals who may contract the virus, for instance, that we can adequately serve with our available resources. Thus, we cannot overstate our ability in this moment but must be transparent about what risks we are able to withstand.

*Protect Vulnerable Community Members*

There are members of our community who are of advanced age, have underlying medical problems, or who have compromised immune systems. Even if most community members may not be at risk for severe illness, it is imperative for us to provide safe learning and working environments for those who are vulnerable. The mitigation measures that will be expected of our community, (e.g. masking indoors) are aimed primarily at protecting vulnerable community members by minimizing contact, reducing overall transmission risk and slowing the spread of the virus. Given Houghton College's location in a small rural community, we recognize that what happens on campus has significant implications for the broader community, and protecting vulnerable members of the broader Houghton community is also an important goal of our mitigation efforts.

*Limit Impact on Student's Academic Progress*

Our institutional mission centers on the student educational experience and our reopening plan is equally centered around supporting each student's education. The measures we will put in place this fall must be viewed in light of this principle, as we go to great lengths to ensure that we provide a safe environment within which students can live and learn. Providing a HyFlex learning experience, limiting visitation and travel, and the great lengths we will go to encourage social distancing among the campus community have all been implemented so that we can limit the impact on each student's academic progress and experience.

*Have Contingency Plans as a Last Resort*

We refuse to implement a plan for our campus if we are reasonably certain that we will need to utilize one of our contingency plans in its stead. We are putting forward the following plan believing that there is a reasonable possibility that we will be able to see this plan through to its conclusion. While we will certainly plan for contingencies, we will not make our contingency plans our de facto reopening plan knowing that our initial hopes are doomed to fail.



### 5.3 MEASURES BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES

The residential college experience has long engaged in risk management practices, as students from all over the world descend upon a concentrated campus community, living among one another in relatively close quarters, engaging in competitive athletics, and participating in experiential co-curricular activities. Education is itself a risky endeavor! A residential education in an age of ongoing uncertainty regarding the effects of a global health crisis and its economic impacts raise additional concerns to which institutions like Houghton must respond. The following plan implements risk management practices while recognizing that risk cannot be eliminated but must instead be mitigated. The mitigation strategies outlined utilize what is currently the best knowledge we have on virus transmission, symptom tracking, containment strategies, and epidemiological modeling. Based on information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (DOH), and various associations providing guidance to institutions of higher education, such as the American College Health Association (ACHA) and National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), Houghton's reopening plan implements the following measures:

#### 5.3.1 Keeping the Virus Off the Residential Campus

Keeping the virus off campus as much as possible is our highest priority. Recognizing that it is an inevitability that at least one member of our community will contract the virus simply due to the high transmission risk present in high-contact, residential facilities, if we are to successfully restart on-campus classes in the fall, we must prepare to serve students, staff, and faculty well in that event. Even with this inevitability, however, Houghton has a limited capacity to care for a large number of affected individuals, in terms of space, time, and personnel. Thus, while the risk of fatality among college-aged populations is lower than other populations, we still must do all we can to limit the presence and potential spread of the virus among our community given both the complexity and cost of treating sick or infected individuals and importance of protecting vulnerable members of the community. Given the limitations of our resources, the need to flatten the curve on Houghton's campus so that our resources are not quickly overrun and overwhelmed is paramount. This is because our high-water mark of cases we are able to manage is much lower than that of the wider society. Thus, the measures outlined in this plan, though seemingly extreme in comparison to other businesses or industries in the American economy, must be understood in the light of our available resources.

#### 5.3.2 The Role of Testing

Testing, while important, cannot be our only measure of tracking and containment. While testing symptomatic campus members is a key part of identifying and isolating affected individuals, negative test results are not a guarantee of safety, as individuals may be tested and then soon after contract the virus through contact with an affected individual, thereby negating the negative test result. Additionally, widespread testing to screen asymptomatic individuals is not readily available in all areas, and Houghton may not have the capability to perform on-arrival or serial mass screening of all students, staff, and faculty in the Fall.

#### 5.3.3 Daily Screening

Daily symptom screening is a simple way to mitigate risk by identifying potentially affected individuals. Due to the current impracticality of testing for mass screening purposes, Houghton will implement a tracking strategy utilizing a daily symptom survey managed through our Student Health Center. All students and employees will need to complete an electronic survey, self-reporting any symptoms

suggesting COVID and/or contact with positive case. Those who screen positive will undergo additional evaluation and testing if appropriate.

#### 5.3.4 Masking, Social Distancing, and Cleanliness

Masking, social distancing, and cleanliness are equally effective strategies each individual must commit to practicing in order to lessen the risk of transmission and spread. Though simple practices, these three pieces of Houghton’s reopening plan are vital to successfully keeping the campus safe, and will significantly increase the likelihood that the campus can remain open even if a campus member tests positive for the virus. In addition to tracking the health of our community, it is essential that each member of our campus does their part in cutting the down the risk of spread by vigilantly practicing these “Big Three” strategies.

#### 5.3.5 Who is Here, When, and Other Assurances

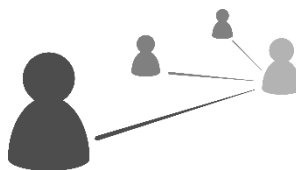
We must have a strong understanding of who is on our campus, when, and assurances that they will practice the “Big Three.” Houghton has a long history of being a campus that readily welcomes visitors and extends hospitality to all who step foot on our campus. To ensure that we have every opportunity to begin on-campus classes in the fall and carry them through to completion, limiting travel and visitation to and from our campus will need to be a high priority to keep the virus off campus as much as possible.

## 6 KEY COMMUNITY MEASURES: MAKE SAFE CHOICES

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### 6.1 FOR ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The “Big Three” community measures that form the backbone of our community’s response (and our communication strategy) can be understood using the moniker “**Make Safe Choices**” or: masking, social distancing, and cleanliness.



Houghton will provide a safe environment to which students can return this fall. The ongoing safety of that environment, however, will depend upon the consistent and deliberate choices that each student, staff, and faculty member will make each day to mask, socially distance themselves from others when possible, and maintain a clean environment and practice good hygiene. To **Make Safe Choices**, each person must actively choose to continue to contribute to the ongoing safety of Houghton’s residential environment. The individual choices that each person makes, more so than ever before, have an outsized effect on the people around them. Each person’s individual safety and ongoing health is not just the result of the personal choices that are made by that person. Each person’s safety and health is meaningfully shaped and affected by the personal choices of those around them. Choices, then, are not made at *your* individual risk but are made at *our* collective risk. The daily choices to mask, socially

distance from others in public, and practice habits of cleanliness have long term and far-reaching consequences on the ongoing safety and sustainability of life at Houghton this fall.

## 6.2 FOR STUDENTS

For life on campus, students will need to practice the Big Three when not in their residence hall room. If a student has a roommate then, they can be considered a small family unit and not be expected to be masked and socially distanced from others when with their roommate(s).

### 6.2.1 Masking

Students will agree to wear masks whenever they are out of their room and are not alone or with their roommate(s). Masks will be required indoors at all times. When students are outside, they will not be required to wear masks as long as they are socially distanced from others that are not their roommate(s). If they are unable to socially distance while outside, they need to be wearing a mask. Even while socially distancing outside, students are encouraged to wear masks.

*6.2.1.1 Off-site students, commuters, and students who live off-campus will need to wear a mask while on campus at all times except during meal times. The Center for Lifelong Learning will be designated as a commuter and off-campus student lounge, in which a student can choose to not wear a mask if they are the only ones in that space or with other family members (or who live with them off-campus) who are students. Off-site campuses are encouraged to consider designating a space at their campuses for this purpose as well.*

### 6.2.2 Social Distancing

Students will need to keep socially distanced (at least six feet) from others who are not their roommate(s). When they are outside, they will not be required to wear masks as long as they are socially distanced from others that are not their roommate(s). If they are unable to socially distance while outside, they need to be wearing a mask. Even while socially distancing outside, students are encouraged to wear masks.

### 6.2.3 Cleanliness

Students will need to practice good hygiene, being sure to wash their hands frequently, regularly cleaning their personal masks, and utilizing the additional sanitizing stations set up around campus when entering a building and interacting with others. Additionally, while bathrooms and common spaces will be cleaned regularly in the residence halls, cleaning products will be provided for students to help keep these areas clean. Consistent sanitizing and decluttering of common spaces will be important for students to participate in this fall.

## 6.3 FOR EMPLOYEES

While many of the expectations for students apply to faculty and staff as well, key differences need to be highlighted, particularly as employees travel to and from campus more frequently than students will this fall.

### 6.3.1 Masking

Employees will need to wear masks whenever they are in inside campus buildings unless they are alone in their offices. While outside, they are required to wear masks whenever they are within 6 feet of other

people, and are encouraged to wear them at all times as this helps model good citizenship for students while social distancing.

### **6.3.2 Social Distancing**

Employees will need to keep socially distanced (at least six feet) from others at all times and wear a mask when not able to be socially distanced.

### **6.3.3 Cleanliness**

Employees will need to practice good hygiene, being sure to wash their hands frequently, regularly cleaning their personal masks, and utilizing the additional sanitizing stations set up around campus when entering a building and interacting with others. Additionally, while classrooms and offices will be cleaned regularly, cleaning products will be provided at various places for employees to use to help keep these areas clean. Consistent sanitizing and decluttering of common spaces will be important for employees to participate in this fall.

## **6.4 FOR VISITORS**

Our main priority this fall is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for our students. To that end, for the safety of our students, staff, and faculty, visitors on Houghton's campuses this fall will be restricted to outdoor spaces and will only be permitted to visit public indoor spaces in non-residential buildings. Visitors will not be able to access residence halls, offices, and classrooms. A visitor is defined as an individual who is not a current employee or student of the college.

Vendors who have contracted with the college may visit campus to deliver goods and services but must be in consistent contact with a college representative as to when they plan to be on campus.

Prospective students and their families may visit under the guidance of the admissions office and a college department, following the above limitations.

All visitors will need to submit to a screening procedure at the direction of their campus host.

### **6.4.1 Masking**

Visitors will be required to wear masks when they are in inside campus buildings. While outside, they are required to wear masks when near others and are encouraged to wear them at all times.

### **6.4.2 Social Distancing**

Visitors will need to keep socially distanced (at least six feet) from others at all times and wear a mask when not able to be socially distanced.

### **6.4.3 Cleanliness**

Visitors will need to practice good hygiene, being sure to wash their hands frequently, using a clean mask, and utilizing the additional sanitizing stations set up around campus when entering a building and interacting with others.

## 7 ARRIVAL AND TRAVEL GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY

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As it is imperative that we do all we can to limit the presence and spread of the virus on our campus this fall, travel will be highly restricted for all members of our community. In most cases, travel will be one of the most likely ways in which the virus will appear on our campus which is why the following measures will be put in place in the fall.

### 7.1 CAMPUS ARRIVAL FOR STUDENTS

Most students will repopulate the campus over a three-day move-in period Aug 21-23 (Fri-Sun). In order to minimize the number of students in any one location during the process, students will move-in on scheduled/assigned dates and times by floor. On arrival, students coming from an international location or from states designated as high-risk will start a precautionary self-quarantine period with minimal movement out of their rooms. The quarantine will extend until Monday, Sept 7, encompassing a full two-week incubation period of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This time will allow for symptom tracking, and testing of any symptomatic students prior to the start of general on-campus activities, and minimizes contact as students return from areas with varying rates of viral transmission.

The first week will be one of re-orientation for students, with virtual re-orientation sessions held covering topics like mental health, academic life in HyFlex learning models, wellness initiatives, and co-curricular programming by floor.

The first week of instruction—the second quarantine week—will be online, with student movement still restricted. In-person instruction will begin on Monday, September 7, with adherence to campus mitigations strategies (masks, physical distancing, etc.).

### 7.2 TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS DURING THE SEMESTER

Students and employees are encouraged to remain in Houghton throughout the entirety of the fall semester. Any student who must be away from campus or their home overnight after Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup> (or employees after August 7<sup>th</sup>) will need to either (1) undergo a two-week quarantine period off-campus (employees) or in quarantine housing on-campus (students), or (2) be tested for SARS-CoV-2 (at their own expense, if needed) on return and 7 days later, self-isolating until a negative test result is confirmed with the Campus Health Center. If a student does not live in a single room, the quarantine period will need to be spent in campus quarantine housing. Students who utilize quarantine housing due to travel will incur a health service fee to offset the added workload for our CoronaCare Team. Students who need to spend a night off-campus due to a health or family emergency will be exempt from the fee if travel has been approved by the Dean of Students.

College sponsored travel will be very limited through at least December 2020. International travel, travel to any states identified by New York State as a travel advisory, and any overnight travel for college purposes will generally not be approved for employees.

While the College is not imposing additional restrictions on employee's personal travel, we urge all Houghton staff and faculty to limit fall travel as much as possible. International and domestic travel continues to be discouraged by state and federal public health organizations. Those who travel internationally or to U.S. States that fall under New York State travel advisories should plan to remain

away from campus for 14 days after their return, working remotely as they are able, and should monitor their health per CDC guidelines. Employees are encouraged to be in close contact with their supervisors about any personal travel that may impact their ability to complete aspects of their work due to travel restrictions.

#### 7.2.1 Academic Calendar Modifications to Limit Travel

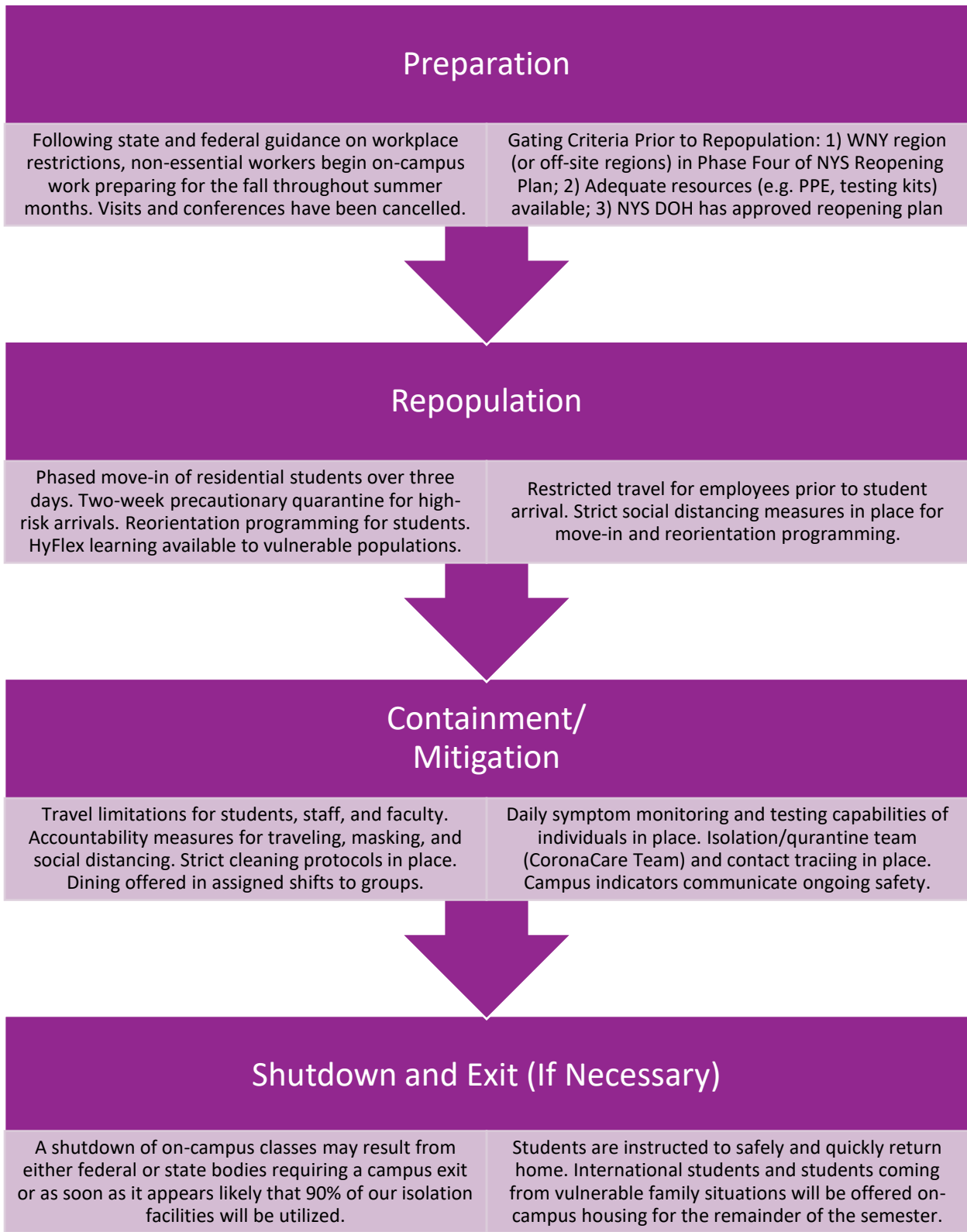
To further encourage students and employees to remain on campus and to limit the necessity of returning home during the semester, the academic calendar has been changed. Students will learn on-campus until Thanksgiving Break and then complete the remainder of the semester remotely. To facilitate this change and to further limit travel, October Break has been cancelled for Fall 2020.

## 8 PHASES OF RESTARTING ON-CAMPUS EDUCATION

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To gradually and deliberately make the campus ready to hold in-person classes again this fall, there are four distinct phases to Houghton's plan, though the last phase, Shutdown and Exit, is one we will prepare for but hope to not implement.

Much of the preparation and shutdown aspects of the phased reopening plan are contingent on federal and state guidance. New York State's Reopening Plan includes higher education in Phase Four, though administrative services are able to return in Phase Two at 50% capacity. The following phases of Houghton's reopening plan comprehensively address the risks and ongoing monitoring of reintroducing students to in-person classes this fall.



# 9 FALL 2020 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

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## August

S	M	T	W	R	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## September

S	M	T	W	R	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

## October

S	M	T	W	R	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## November

S	M	T	W	R	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

## December

S	M	T	W	R	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26

### Fall 2020 Academic Calendar

**Aug 21-23:** Students arrive at scheduled times

**Aug 24-28:** Reorientation Programming for all students

**Aug 31:** Classes begin with online instruction

**Sept 7:** In-person classes begin

**Nov 24:** Thanksgiving Break begins

**Nov 30:** Classes resume online for remainder of the semester

**Dec 11:** Last day of classes

**Dec 18:** Fall semester ends



## 10 CONTRIBUTORS

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This plan has been completed by the following members of the PREP Team.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Department/Area</u>
<i>PREP Team Steering Committee</i>		
Shirley Mullen	Chair	President
Marc Smithers		Chief Student Life Officer
Dale Wright		Chief Financial Officer
<i>Curricular Planning</i>		
Paul Young	Sub Chair	Curricular
Cathy Freytag		Academic Council
Kevin Kettinger		Registrar
John Rowley		General Education
Sunshine Sullivan		Faculty Development
Don Haingray		Technology Services
<i>Co-Curricular Planning</i>		
Marc Smithers	Sub Chair	Student Life
Matthew Webb		Athletics
Katie Breitigan		Residence Life
AC Taylor		Student Engagement
Michael Jordan		Spiritual Life
<i>Operations</i>		
Dale Wright	Sub Chair	Finances
Chad Plymale		Facilities
Danae Forrest		Accounting
Nancy Stanley		Human Resources
<i>Communications</i>		
Michael Blankenship	Sub Chair	Marketing/Communication
Ryan Spear		Enrollment
Amanda Zambrano		Alumni Engagement
Jason Mucher		Athletics
<i>Public Health Procedures</i>		
David Brubaker	Sub Chair	Health Center
Marc Smithers		Student Life
Leah Burgess		Health Center
Andrew Cahill		Facilities
Deanna Hand		Athletics

# 11 RESOURCES

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The following resources have helped inform our planning for the fall:

- American College Health Association: <https://www.acha.org/COVID-19>
- Centers for Disease Control
  - Considerations for Institutes of Higher Education: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html>
  - Coronavirus Index: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York State: <https://cicu.org/news/creating-safe-and-resilient-campus-suggestions-reopening-and-reimagining-colleges-and-universities-new-york>
- Connecticut Higher Education Subcommittee: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/News/20200506-Recommendations-to-Governor-Lamont-for-a-phased-reopening-of-colleges-and-universities.pdf?la=en> New York Forward: <https://forward.ny.gov/>
- New York State Department of Health: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>
- Reopening Allegany County: <https://www.alleganyco.com/coronavirus/reopening-allegany-county/>
- Reopening New York State: <https://forward.ny.gov/phase-four-industries>
- World Health Organization: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1)