Saints Rebound
Marymount University 2021-22 Plan
Updated 8/24/21

I. Executive Summary

To protect the health and well-being of its community members during the COVID-19 pandemic, Marymount University greatly reduced on-campus operations in March 2020. The institution prepared, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) approved, a reopening plan with a focus on five key areas: 1) Reopening; 2) Repopulating; 3) Monitoring; 4) Containing; and 5) Responding to an outbreak by shutting down.

The plan, Saints Reunite, represented the University’s approach for resuming in-person instruction and residential living in the 2020-21 academic year. It balanced Marymount’s primary concern for the safety of all campus community members with its mission to provide a vibrant on-campus learning and living environment for the students we serve.

The campus community successfully migrated operations online and then reopened with informed, decisive attention and action supporting the safety, health, and continued education of community members. Specifically, actions taken included reliance on technology for contact tracing, establishing physical reconfiguration to allow for social distancing including the use of Plexiglas barriers, requiring the use of masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and discontinuation of living and learning activities that would have put community members at risk.

Over the year, students, faculty and staff experienced academic, social, physical and emotional consequences from the COVID-19 virus. It is now time to take the next steps toward a full recovery from the pandemic. This plan, Saints Rebound, is designed to get the campus safely back to normal activities. This revised plan addresses the same areas as Saints Reunite, but with a more abbreviated focus due to the overall progress towards recovery from the pandemic.

II. Mandatory Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination will be required for all students, faculty and staff starting with the Fall 2021 semester, with exemptions for medical contraindications and religious or moral objections. Widespread campus vaccination gives Marymount more opportunity and flexibility in its learning and social activities.

The decision to mandate the vaccination was based on research and a myriad of discussions with experts and colleagues. Having everyone vaccinated is thought to be the best way to ensure safe, in-person educational and living experiences for all students. It also helps to mitigate the spread of the virus and creation of variant strains.

Members of the campus community have a grace period until September 30, 2021 to become fully-vaccinated (receipt of all required doses), and the vaccinations will be available from Student Health Services (SHS) and through one or more campus vaccination clinic(s). Students who receive a medical, religious or moral exemption will be required to undergo weekly rapid antigen testing, at no cost, through SHS. Staff and faculty who receive a medical, religious or moral exemption will be required to undergo weekly rapid antigen testing off campus.
Acceptable vaccinations for the mandate are those approved within the United States or by the World Health Organization (WHO). At this time, acceptable vaccines include those produced by AstraZeneca, Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson. Individuals who receive a vaccine manufactured by a different company will need to be re-vaccinated with an acceptable vaccine.

To comply with University policy, all community members must submit either a vaccination form or an exemption form, and get tested weekly in the case of the latter. Several campaigns and outreach methods will encourage compliance. Students who are non-compliant (e.g. do not show up for weekly testing) will be monitored and contacted by SHS, provided education, and expected to subsequently comply. If a student continues to be non-compliant, they will be suspended by the University until they are able to comply. Employees who are non-compliant will be monitored and contacted by Human Resources (HR), provided education, and expected to subsequently comply. If an employee continues to be non-compliant, they will be terminated with a 14-day notice.

III. Residual Controls and Protections

Some of the controls and protections in the Saints Reunite plan will need to continue during the Fall semester but with significant differences between vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

Surveillance and Testing

*Surveillance*, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of health-related data essential to planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health practice. SHS may coordinate pop-up surveillance testing if circumstances warrant.

*Testing*, both PCR and Rapid Testing (antigen), will be used for diagnosis, screening and surveillance. Vaccinated individuals will be tested only if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Unvaccinated individuals will need to undergo weekly screening tests for the virus, diagnostic testing if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, and a screening test if they have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Asymptomatic individuals who were diagnosed with COVID-19 within 90 days of entry into campus will be exempt from the testing requirements at the start of school. Once the 90 days is complete, the individual will be required to take part in the weekly testing. Some surveillance testing may be necessary in case of an outbreak.

The NCAA is recommending testing of all unvaccinated athletes when they are in their competitive season 24 hours prior to competition if using a rapid test and if a vaccinated athlete has been exposed they would also recommend testing 24 hours prior to competition to allow them to participate with a negative test result. Marymount will comply with NCAA & Atlantic East Conference recommendations.

*Contact tracing*, in partnership with Arlington County Public Health Department (ACPHD) and following CDC guidelines, will occur once a diagnosis has been determined. SHS will solicit information about people who were in close contact with the individual testing positive and will take appropriate steps to mitigate the spread. This contact also provides an opportunity to provide COVID-19 transition and mitigation education. SHS will be in daily contact with diagnosed students in isolation and quarantined due to exposure in order to monitor symptoms, and employees are referred to their primary care physician for follow-up and treatment. Contact tracing will no longer extend to campus visitors.

*Collaboration* will continue with VDH, ACPH, and various higher education associations such as American College Health Association (ACHA), National Association of College and University Attorneys.
(NACUA), University Risk Management & Insurance Association (URMIA), and the Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia (CICV).

Physical Distancing and Barriers

**Outside.** Vaccinated individuals can discontinue physical distancing from others, though masks may still be advisable when in a crowd, within close proximity to others. Unvaccinated individuals should continue to keep a distance of 6’ or more from others.

**Classrooms and Learning Environments.** Marymount will discontinue its four distinct modes of instruction delivery and resume full in-person instruction. Classroom configuration will revert to pre-pandemic distances.

**Dining, Collaboration Rooms, Athletic Facilities, and Other Crowded Spaces.** Physical distancing will be recommended in crowded indoor spaces for unvaccinated individuals, keeping 6’ from others, but in-person dining, studying, exercising, and socializing are allowed.

**Isolation and Quarantine.** Vaccinated students and employees do not need to isolate themselves unless they test positive for COVID-19 or are symptomatic until a negative test is confirmed. Unvaccinated students and employees will need to immediately quarantine for seven to 14 days per Virginia Department of Health guidelines, once they know of an exposure COVID-19. If the individual tests positive for COVID-19, they must isolate for 10 days from date of onset of symptoms or the day they receive a positive test result. SHS will make appropriate arrangements with housing for residential students; employees and commuter students will stay home. Faculty, staff, and students who develop symptoms and test positive will continue to isolate for 10 days, unless given other instructions from SHS. Marymount is holding a percentage of its residential rooms with private bathrooms for quarantine and isolation use. With the vaccine mandate, this reserved space is expected to be sufficient. Students in quarantine or isolation will be assigned designated spaces with basic needs being provided for by staff members. SHS and Student Living and Engagement (SLE) will collaborate on assigning rooms and assessing housing capacity.

Mask Wearing and Other PPE

**Masks.** Masks are required for everyone while indoors on campus. Masks will continue to be available at multiple locations (bookstore, campus safety, student living, etc.) for anyone who needs one.

**Outside.** Everyone can remove masks outside, though signage will encourage unvaccinated individuals to continue wearing a mask.

**Inside.** While Arlington County is experiencing “substantial” transmission rate, it is recommended that all individuals wear a mask when they are inside a building (unless alone in office or residential room), on the shuttle, in a crowded public place or in an area where masks are required. Marymount is therefore mandating mask wearing indoors while on campus. Marymount will continue its Mask Ambassador program to educate the campus community. Enforcement will rely on each person’s personal compliance with the campus policies and personal responsibility.

**Protecting High Risk Individuals.** People with medical conditions that put them at higher risk should consult with SHS or a personal physician about effective protective measures.

**Other PPE.** Protocols for ensuring a safe work environment for employees in need of additional PPE (janitorial staff, housekeeping, mail delivery, athletic trainers, student health staff, etc.) will continue to stay in place as recommended by the CDC and other governing organizations. Students in laboratories, medical areas, or other high-risk environments should seek instruction from their instructor or other knowledgeable faculty member.

Environmental Factors

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Cleanliness and hygiene. Existing cleaning and sanitizing protocols will remain in place, with attention to high-traffic areas and responding to locations where someone has tested positively. Handwashing will still be encouraged, and Marymount will keep hand sanitizer dispensers in elevator lobbies, lounges, building entrances and common areas. Cleaning products and PPE will continue to be distributed on campus.

Ventilation. The University will continue with its protocols of filter replacements and upgrades to ventilation systems.

Visitors, events, and general access to campus

Campus entry. All entrances to campus grounds are now open, and restricted entry has been discontinued.

Vendors, contractors and guests. It is no longer necessary to pre-register vendors, contractors and guests through the online reservation system. Contact tracing will no longer extend to these visitors. Each member of the campus community that invites a visitor to campus must inform visitors of the mitigation controls and protections that are required of anyone who is unvaccinated.

Events sponsored by Marymount. University events will resume subject to the controls and protections in these guidelines and campus policies. The campus unit sponsoring the event will keep a registration or attendance list in case contact tracing is required.

On-campus events hosted by external entities. Each external entity who desires to use campus facilities must contact Conference Services to comply with Marymount’s contracting requirements. The external host will be required to keep an attendance list and conduct any contact tracing.

Entry of neighbors. Neighbors who desire to walk outside on campus grounds are welcome to do so. Neighbors are asked to be respectful of ongoing activities and to take any trash generated off campus.

Communication, Education, Training, and Interactions

Website information. Information and infection metrics are posted online for internal and external review. New developments in disease spread, activity restrictions, or campus policy will be posted. Scheduled COVID-related events such as vaccination clinics, new surveillance testing, or educational programs will be posted online as well.

Emails and other communiques. New postings to the website will be emailed to the campus community and supplemented by more detailed communiques on various COVID-related topics.

Supervisor and Community Assistant (CA) training. Individuals with supervisory authority will be trained on appropriate health practices and will serve as role models for other Marymount students and employees.

Signage. SAFE SAINT signage will be modified and placed around the campus as well as on the back of every residential room door. The Safe Saint Pledge will be modified and distributed to students at the start of the Fall semester. Existing signage on campus will remain in place if consistent with current policies and guidelines.

General awareness and training. Instruction and advice will be given through new student and new employee orientation.

Vaccine campaign. The University has signed up for the White House College COVID Challenge, and the vaccination committee and Student Government Association (SGA) will participate together to encourage all members of the Marymount community to be vaccinated. The “Let’s get vax’d together” campaign is part of this effort and will continue through the Fall semester to encourage all students to get vaccinated. Vaccine clinics will be offered on campus August 26 and September 17, administering the first and second shot of the Pfizer vaccine. Vaccines will also be available at SHS.
Respectful interactions. Harassment of anyone who is exempt from the vaccination requirement or uses mitigation controls for the virus is prohibited. It is also prohibited to retaliate against someone for vaccination status, mask wearing, or other recommended or required mitigation controls. Students and employees should refrain from asking about another person’s vaccination status and, instead, express any concerns through established channels. SHS or HR staff can respond and pursue any necessary counseling or appropriate discipline. Marymount reinforces its existing policies that require mutual respect, equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging. Members of the campus community should be empowered to offer suggestions, ideas, and constructive comments in an effort to make the campus more enriching and dynamic while ensuring that it remains safe for all members of the community.

Travel by Members of the Campus Community

Travel. Travel by students, faculty and staff can resume, but vaccination may be required for particular trips (such as to a foreign country). Travelers are encouraged to consult with SHS and/or their personal physician prior to the trip and to following all recommendations and instructions.

IV. Mental Health Support

As the physical health threat of COVID-19 begins to improve, we are left with the many mental health consequences for all individuals, including students. It is predicted that the 2021-22 academic year will see an emergence of new and exacerbated mental health concerns, and Saints Rebound is dedicated to this need. Our mental health efforts include:

A. Continued offerings from SCS. Availability of individual and group therapy, as well as an after-hours crisis hotline. Services will be offered both virtually and in person.

B. Enhancement of the CARE Team. The campus CARE Team, which reaches out to students in distress, will grow in size and take in members from across campus to better meet the anticipated need for outreach.

C. Mental health training for all staff and faculty. All employees will take mental health training to learn how to recognize mental health symptoms and intervene appropriately.

D. Resilience Campaign marketing and social media. SCS’s “Resilience” campaign will be promoted throughout the community, and social media will continue to focus on mental health awareness and support.

E. Continuation of the BeWellMU podcast. The podcast will allow community members to access current and helpful health and well-being information.

V. Assessing Success

Marymount and its community have been, and will continue to be, resilient. We are confident in taking these steps in the recovery process. Saints Rebound is a living document and leadership will respond with appropriate changes and revisions as needed. Marymount will measure success based on an overall respect for the safety and health of community members, support of each other during this crisis, and an ability to offer continuous educational instruction and other programming as circumstances permit, whether in-person or online.