



COLLEGE OF
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

To: Faculty, Administration, Staff and Students

From: Charles L. Flynn, President

Date: May 18, 2020

Subject: Fall 2020

Faculty, administrators, and staff are busy preparing to reopen our campus for the Fall 2020 semester, on time, in seat. While protocols to maximize safety will certainly be different from those in the past, the signature strengths of a Mount Saint Vincent education will remain the same: a deep commitment to student engagement, inquiry, and the intellectual growth, substantial academic expectations, and student accomplishment aided by individual attention and support.

What can you expect for Fall semester at Mount Saint Vincent?

- Safety measures designed to protect our community, including, but not limited to:
 - Reconfiguration of our classrooms, residence halls, and dining spaces to enable social distancing, masks in public spaces, abundant hand sanitizer, deep-cleaning, etc.

What will academic courses look like?

- Our courses have always been small by design, facilitating interaction and individual attention, but this term we are re-envisioning our delivery methods to combine intensive, smaller, in person discussion sections with on-line lectures. We will thus harness technology to supplement (not replace) in-person academic engagement.
- Inside the classroom, you'll find yourself in active discussions with your professors and small groups of peers. Discussion is designed to ensure mastery of material, deepen understanding, and encourage analytical skills, critical thinking, problem solving, and clear expression.
- Lectures will be posted regularly by your professors (with the added bonus of being able to pause, review, and replay throughout). Lectures will thus be comparable to reading assignments, providing the material and background upon which discussion can draw.
- The fundamental model for teaching and learning will not change: learning through active engagement, collaboration with faculty and peers—inquiry that takes you beyond the rote acquisition of knowledge toward the development of intellectual self-reliance, independent judgment, and creativity.

- This model offers the ability to prepare contingency plans for alternative scenarios in case they prove necessary. Our new slogan might be: “At the Mount, we’re ready for anything.”

What additional safety measures is the College putting in place?

- The College is working with public health officials and state associations and health care providers to ensure early identification of any COVID-19 cases (testing and monitoring protocols), isolation, and contact tracing, to protect students, faculty, administrators, and staff to the greatest extent practical.

What will student life be like?

- At the Mount, active engagement and service outside the classroom are an important part of education. Mount students become Leaders in Service. For this part of College life, new protocols are also being developed for student activities, service leadership, residence life, and at Hudson Heights (the College dining hall).
- A mix of in group, in person, and virtual engagements will ensure that students continue to develop their interests, talents, and skills as they forge a community. Again, social distancing protocols will alter the format of some programming. We won’t be gathering in large groups this fall. But the College is committed to a vibrant campus life. Guidelines set by New York State and the CDC will govern creative engagement.
- Our Student Government Association (SGA) knows that community—a commitment to serve each other—is at the heart of everything we do. SGA is working with administrators to ensure that we will be ready to bring our community back together in activities, in residence halls, in the dining hall, and in service.

Will athletics—intercollegiate and intramural—be played?

- The College is working closely with the Skyline Conference in order to determine what the Fall athletic season will look like. We are hoping that protocols can ensure safe competition. Athletic participation and competition are an important part of College life. Of course, the Skyline Conference decision on intercollegiate fall competition will determine what is possible.