



Herkimer County Community College

Spring 2021 Restart Plan

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At the start of the 2020-2021 academic year (fall 2020 semester), Herkimer County Community College (Herkimer) conducted a well-organized, efficient, and successful residential student move-in process. Throughout the fall semester, Herkimer also maintained an effective ongoing surveillance testing procedure (provided by Upstate/Quadrant) for both residential and commuter students. As of this date, the College has zero positive test results among its residential students and has implemented a highly proactive communication plan in regard to the limited number of positive test results among some commuter students.

Based on the success of the fall semester's move-in/testing procedures and taking into consideration the other precautionary measures the College has in place as part of its comprehensive approach for maintaining the health and safety of its campus environment, Herkimer proposes to mirror those steps in its restart plan for the spring 2021 semester.

Academic Calendar

Spring Term Start and End Dates:

Herkimer County Community College will begin classes for the spring 2021 semester on February 1, 2021. The last day of classes will be on May 6th, 2021, and final exams will be conducted May 7th through 11th. There will be no spring break observed, nor any other special days with no classes scheduled.

Residential Student Move-In Dates:

Residential students scheduled appointed times on January 30th and 31st, 2021 to come to campus, go through their initial rapid testing (antigen test) for COVID-19, and once cleared, move into their on-campus apartments.

Commencement:

A virtual commencement ceremony will be held on Friday, May 14th, 2021.

Mode of Instruction

The majority of courses were conducted through real-time remote instruction in the fall semester and will continue to be delivered in this format in the spring 2021 semester. Herkimer will continue to assist students with access to devices and internet connectivity in order for students to be successful with remote instruction. Courses that will continue to be conducted in-person will be those that require hands-on components (i.e. those having clinical practicums and/or involving applied learning experiences requiring specialized equipment) to meet course/program learning outcomes. Faculty have also revised all course syllabi to reflect any changes in expectations for remote course delivery.

As required by SUNY for the purpose of maintaining for students and parents/guardians the transparency of information regarding the College's plans and operations, Herkimer will publish on its publicly accessible website the percentage of courses that will be offered in-person and remotely. Instruction for courses offered in-person will continue to be conducted so as to ensure safe on-campus density, consistent with New York State guidelines and those of the Herkimer County Public Health Department. As in the fall semester, the number of students in each course section delivered on campus will continue to be limited in order to observe social distancing requirements, and all students taking at least one in-person, on-campus class, utilizing services on campus (e.g. library, gym, dining, housing), or working on campus will continue to be required to participate in regular weekly pooled-sample surveillance testing (provided by Upstate/Quadrant) throughout the spring semester. All (100%) residential and commuter students are required to participate in regular ongoing weekly pooled surveillance testing at Herkimer; not just a sample of those populations.

Herkimer is prepared to execute fully remote operations if our campus meets the threshold for a mandatory pause on in-person instruction as outlined by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). Herkimer's expectations for students during a mandatory pause were communicated clearly to our students prior to the start of the spring 2021 semester, as it was prior to the start of the fall semester, through a variety of media/formats, including emails, text messaging, e-newsletters, in course syllabi, and through individual communications between students and Residential Life staff, academic advisors, and/or instructors.

Herkimer helps ensure that remote instruction meets or exceeds expectations of regular and substantive interaction by having faculty participate in professional development workshops that were conducted at the start of both the fall 2020 and the spring 2021 semesters. These workshops specifically addressed increasing students' engagement in online and remote courses.

Herkimer accommodates and monitors regular interaction with students working remotely through surveys conducted each semester (spring 2020, fall 2020, & spring 2021) with students to gauge their needs for technology support in the form of equipment (e.g., loaner laptops), technical assistance, and/or academic support. Student responses are used accordingly to inform planning and implementation of strategies to address their needs. Furthermore, the academic deans maintain regular interaction with all their faculty members to monitor any issues they or their students are having with remote instruction/learning, or any other related issues that may arise.

Herkimer maintains a proactive and engaged International Programs Office that provides a comprehensive range of services to accommodate the needs of international students completing coursework in different time zones. International Programs has support staff dedicated to working with international students to choose modalities that suit their academic needs. Herkimer also provides “just in time” support on a flexible schedule to assist students with any technical and/or academic difficulties they may experience.

Herkimer engages its students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, while also including all the following: provision of direct instruction; assessment and/or the provision of feedback on a student’s coursework; provision of information and/or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency; facilitation of group discussions regarding the content of a course or competency; and other instructional activities approved by our accrediting agency, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (Middle States). Middle States completed reaffirmation of Herkimer’s accreditation following a formal review process and virtual campus “visit” in October 2020. Furthermore, over 85% of Herkimer’s full-time faculty have completed the Online Course Refresh Process using the OSCQR tool. Those faculty members who have not yet completed the process were introduced to the rubric prior to the Spring 2020 term. Herkimer also makes use of experienced faculty members to provide support with best practices in remote and online learning.

Herkimer equips faculty members with knowledge and skills needed to effectively support remote learning for students with disabilities. The College’s Academic Support Center, which houses the College’s Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, also reaches out to and supports individual faculty members to ensure they are meeting the needs of their students with disabilities in a remote teaching environment. Effective, collaborative cross-departmental communications using the College’s Starfish system are maintained to allow faculty members, academic advisors, academic coaches and tutors, the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, and other campus support services providers to coordinate support for students experiencing difficulties or who may need specific accommodations.

Herkimer ensures that all faculty and students have access to orientation/training opportunities to familiarize them with instructional technologies and remote pedagogies. Herkimer created a successful virtual orientation program that was launched at the start of the current academic year. Information sessions included in the program provide students with specific orientation and training for accessing and participating effectively through their remote instructional technologies and pedagogies. Again, as noted above, the College also provides training sessions for faculty in remote and online instructional technologies and pedagogies prior to the start of each semester, and provides faculty and students with just-in-time support services throughout each semester.

As part of strategies in place for providing proactive and regularized advising interventions for all academic programs that reinforce and facilitate Herkimer’s prioritization of student success, the College introduced a new academic advisement model at the start of the current academic year and makes use of the Starfish communication system (mentioned above) to regulate and coordinate interventions for all academic programs. This combination of coordinated services

and technology helps Herkimer maintain a clear focus on supporting and promoting student academic success. Herkimer also makes use of the Open SUNY Helpdesk and other instructional support services provided through SUNY and SUNY Online.

Herkimer will report to the SUNY System Provost as required regarding any updates and/or adjustments to instructional modalities.

Mandatory Testing of Students

Upon returning for spring 2021 on-campus activities, any student who live on campus, or take at least one class on campus, or utilize services on campus (e.g., library, gym, dining facilities), or work on campus, were required to submit an attestation that they completed the required 14-day at-home self-quarantine prior to returning to campus, and inform the College of any known contacts with COVID-19 positive individuals, or of any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 they are experiencing, or of a positive test result for COVID-19. Students were informed that such reporting to the College does not take the place of reporting this same information to their healthcare provider, to the Herkimer County Public Health Department, or to the local health department for their home region.

On-campus pooled surveillance testing (provided by Upstate/Quadrant) continued uninterrupted over the winter break and was in regular operation at the start of the spring 2021 semester. Weekly participation in our surveillance testing procedure is required of 100% of residential and commuter students, as well as of all students who regularly utilize services on campus (e.g., library, gym, dining facilities), or work on campus.

In cases of possible exposure to COVID-19 on campus, Herkimer will follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance *Testing, Screening, and Outbreak Response for Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)*, specifically the section “Tiered approach and inclusion criteria for SARS-CoV-2 testing of persons with possible exposure in IHE setting in the context of an outbreak.”

Students, faculty, and staff who have traveled to/from restricted states/regions or to/from international locations as defined by New York State must follow the New York State Travel Advisory, whether living on or off-campus, and attest that they have submitted the New York Traveler Health form and will follow the guidance of the governing local health department related to mandatory testing, quarantine/isolation, and timing of returning to campus. Any student, faculty, or staff testing positive for COVID-19 will be required to isolate and follow the New York State Department of Health Order on isolation, as well as the guidance of the Herkimer County Public Health Department regarding the required length of their isolation and the timing of their return to campus. Herkimer confirms that, as in the fall 2020 semester, appropriate quarantine and isolation space for on-campus residential students has been identified and reserved in on-campus housing facilities. The College will also work with the Herkimer County Public Health Department to assist with quarantine and isolation space for off-campus students if necessary.

Residential Students:

All residential students who came to Herkimer for the spring 2021 semester were required to self-quarantine at home for 14 days, prior to returning to campus. All residential students coming on to campus for the start of the spring 2021 semester were tested during the check-in process, as they were at the start of the fall semester. Students had to attest that they adhered to the 14-day quarantine precautionary requirement, complete a health questionnaire, and be tested with the rapid diagnostic test (antigen test) for COVID-19. Because of the winter weather, the College's varsity gymnasium was used for these testing procedures, as it affords a designated entrance and exit for ensuring proper directional flow and spacing of students moving through the screening/testing procedure, it is accessible for individuals with mobility challenges, and it is large enough to provide a designated area for students waiting for the results of their rapid tests. Any student whose test results came back positive was required to leave campus and return home and observe the required period of quarantine. Students whose test results were negative were allowed to move into their assigned on-campus residential housing. As in the fall, Herkimer is using a "family status" system for roommates during the spring 2021 semester to help limit the potential spread of the Virus on campus.

Students Remaining on Campus:

As was described in Herkimer's SUNY-approved move-out plan for the fall semester, residential students who needed to remain in on-campus housing during and after the Thanksgiving break, and through to the start of the spring semester, were required to request permission from the Dean of Students and the Director of Residence Life. The Dean of Students and the Director of Residence Life interviewed all residential students who requested permission to stay in on-campus housing to determine the validity of their requests, prior to either approving or disapproving them.

The housing contract that all residential students are required to sign covers all rules they are required to abide by and serves as an acknowledgement and attestation that they were made aware of the rules that would govern their stay, that they understood these rules, and agreed to them. An addendum this year to the housing contract is the "Residence Life and Housing COVID Rules" that all residential students receive. Additionally, this year all residential students are required at move-in to sign the "We are HERKSafe" pledge, which links COVID related policies and practices for residential students with Herkimer's Student Code of Conduct, so that a violation of those policies and practices is considered a violation of the Code. The Director and staff of Residence Life provide ongoing oversight to ensure students' compliance with applicable policies and procedures, including their continued participation in regular, weekly surveillance testing. As was noted in Herkimer's fall semester move-out plan, these students consisted primarily of those enrolled in programs/courses that by nature of their subject matter and curricula require on-campus in-person instruction and learning. These students also included some international students, and some that did not have safe or stable home environments to return to (housing insecurities). Dining Services provided meals for students who remained on campus.

Quarantine and Isolation:

Herkimer College has made arrangements to isolate/quarantine any residential student who tests positive for COVID-19 or has been exposed to COVID-19 during the spring 2021 semester. Apartments in Building E of the Campus Meadows housing complex have been designated and prepped to serve as quarantine/isolation units for residential students who test positive for COVID-19. Herkimer will be fully attendant to students who are in quarantine and isolation on campus, providing regular communication and services to help ensure their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Students who test positive will be advised to follow the guidance of the Herkimer County Public Health Department regarding the length of time for quarantine and isolation, and the Department's release protocols.

Commuter students and residential students residing in off-campus housing who test positive will also be advised to self-quarantine in their off-campus residences and to follow the guidance of the Herkimer County Public Health Department regarding the length of time for quarantine and isolation, and the Department's release protocols.

Testing of College Employees

The College's administration is fully supportive of the mandate from the SUNY Chancellor that requires all faculty and staff that will be on-campus during the spring 2021 semester to participate in the weekly surveillance COVID-19 testing. While the administration is committed to achieving 100% compliance, at this time the College cannot guarantee this goal, until agreements have been concluded with local employee bargaining units in regard to this mandate. Many of the College's employees currently participate in the weekly testing, and discussions have been initiated with the bargaining units on this matter towards finalizing Memorandums of Agreement with each of them. In the meantime, all employees reporting to campus are asked and strongly encouraged by the College to participate in weekly pooled surveillance testing.

The College will also maintain its daily screening procedure that is required for all employees coming onto campus for work on campus. Employees must complete a daily COVID-19 screening questionnaire (utilizing the Campus Clear app or paper questionnaire) and have their temperature taken with a "no-touch" thermometer upon coming to campus. Employees who are cleared are issued a wrist band that must be worn during the entire time the employee remains on campus. Employees may only enter campus through one of two designated entrances that are set up for conducting this screening process.

Furthermore, any student, faculty, or staff member who has a positive result from participating in weekly pooled surveillance testing will be advised that they should not participate in surveillance testing for 90 days from the date of their positive test. Upon conclusion of this 90-day period, the individual(s) will be required to continue participating in regular weekly surveillance testing again. Vaccine recipients will also be included in pooled surveillance testing.

Reporting, Communication, and Transparency of Information

Herkimer will disseminate clear communication through multiple platforms and formats to help ensure broad distribution and transparency of information among students and their parents/guardians regarding policies and procedures for screening/testing requirements, mandatory quarantine and isolation, uniform compliance, modes of instruction (percentage of courses to be offered in-person and those to be delivered through virtual platforms), health and safety updates (local/regional, State, and/or from SUNY), and any other critical details they need to be aware of so they can make informed decisions about their educational experience. Herkimer will use the “What Students Should Know” template provided by SUNY to format these communications in clear, plain language, and will provide in it links and additional information about specific policies. Herkimer will also provide all students with a copy of the SUNY Chancellor’s Uniform Sanctioning in Response to COVID-19 Student Violations, as well as our campus-specific sanctions for such violations, so they will be aware of the potential penalties for failing to comply with all COVID-19 related testing and safety protocols.

Herkimer makes use of the SUNY system-wide dashboard for reporting on and making public testing results. The College’s Institutional Research Office reports campus testing data to the SUNY dashboard on a daily basis, including weekends, and the link to the SUNY dashboard is provided on the College’s website (<https://www.herkimer.edu/restart/>).

On-Campus Activities

Federal, State, and Local Guidance:

All in-person activities on the Herkimer campus will continue to follow the mandatory NYSDOH guidance for social distancing and the parameters established by the College’s SUNY-approved restart plan for the spring 2021 semester.

To the extent possible, any campus in-person activities will be held outdoors or in well-ventilated spaces, and Herkimer will ensure implementation on campus of CDC recommendations for improving ventilation. Furthermore, Herkimer will continue to make regular assessments of campus cleaning protocols to ensure that they are in compliance with NYSDOH Higher Education Guidance and CDC guidance.

Face Coverings (Masks):

Herkimer will ensure that face masks are worn by all members of the campus community and any visitors to campus at all times while on campus. This includes in classrooms, conference rooms, and other spaces, even while six-foot social distancing is being observed. Allowable exceptions to mask wearing guidelines will include: when students are in their private residential or personal space; while eating meals on campus (while seated and with social distancing being appropriately enforced); or when an individual is by her or himself. Faculty and staff are likewise exempt when alone in their office or other space. Herkimer will review any requests for medical, religious, or

other accommodation to this policy on a case-by-case basis in accordance with relevant laws and campus procedures.

Compliance:

In addition to providing all students with a copy of the SUNY Chancellor's Uniform Sanctioning in Response to COVID-19 Student Violations, Herkimer will post this document on its publicly accessible website and will refer students and parents/guardians to it as needed throughout the spring 2021 semester, to help ensure clarity of these protocols and support compliance with them.

Mental Health Supports, Services, and Referrals:

Given the unprecedented times for students and the resulting strain placed on their mental and emotional health, including symptoms associated with Digital Fatigue, Herkimer will take proactive steps to increase mental health services and support available for our students and among our campus community in general. These steps will include promoting both on-campus and community-based mental health treatment services and related resources (e.g. ReachOut SUNY, Thriving Campus, Middle Earth from the University at Albany). Communications and information made available on the College's website will also highlight the availability of any therapy groups or other peer-to-peer support strategies students and other members of our campus community have access to. Herkimer will also make the campus community aware of the availability of crisis services, including the New York State Office of Mental Health Crisis Text Line, as well as the availability of other resources, such as the free online QPR suicide prevention training.

Emphasis of Safety Protocols

Herkimer College's Campus Safety Monitor is the Director of Campus Safety, Timothy Rogers (rogerstd@herkimer.edu, 315-866-0300 ext. 8336). Herkimer College will reinforce for all its students the importance of limiting contact, wearing masks, and practicing social distancing in order to avoid any potential exposure to the Virus.

Reinforcement of Best Safety Practices with Faculty and Staff

During the fall 2020 semester, Herkimer County Community College maintained an ongoing, well-organized process for conducting pooled surveillance testing (provided by Upstate/Quadrant) with our students. Faculty and staff were also encouraged to take part in our surveillance testing, particularly "front line" office personnel, and specific schedules have been established for faculty and staff to participate in the testing in an organized, efficient manner. In the spring 2021 semester the College continues to ask and encourage all faculty and staff who work on campus according to a regular schedule to take part in weekly pooled surveillance testing, while MOU's are being negotiated with local bargaining units to finalize participation in this process as a requirement. The College will provide regular communications and reminders to reinforce the importance of this testing procedure for ensuring the health and safety of our campus working/learning environment, as well as of the communities we serve and the communities our students come to us from.