

Sept. 4, 2020

Good morning, Mountain Lions,

I am sorry to announce that, despite the plan distributed earlier this week, **Young Harris College will stay in Phase 1 of its [Return-to-Class Plan](#) until at least Monday, Sept. 21.** The situation on campus has changed significantly since Tuesday, when I made the decision to move to Phase 2. A spike in symptoms and cases among residential students, concentrated in a few suites, has necessitated this change of plan.

To those of you who have been following our protocols and directions, I apologize. Please know that I am your biggest fan. You have demonstrated maturity by caring about your own health and about the well-being of the other members of our community. I have observed your appeals in the app and on the sidewalks to get your peers to wear their masks, and I have observed you reminding those who do not abide by the protocols that they need to do so. You are true Mountain Lions. You understand that these rules have been put in place to help us return to classes taught in whole and in person. We hear you when you say that is the best possible YHC educational experience. Our faculty have approached the challenge of this semester with creativity and innovation, but they also want to be with you and your peers—not just in chat rooms, but in classrooms. You have done all you can to keep us on track and help us return to some semblance of normal. Again, to you, I apologize.

To those who have shown themselves unwilling to rise to the standards of our community, I invite you to find another. Is a mask uncomfortable? Absolutely, but it is the best tool we have to prevent transmission of COVID-19. Is keeping social distance difficult? Yes, but it, too, has been proven to reduce transmission significantly. These basic steps seem abnormal, but they are the best tools we have to help us return to normal. Those who refuse to wear the mask or keep their distance appear either to have a misguided sense of invulnerability or to think the pandemic is overblown. Trust me: Neither is the case. Disregarding the College's protocols puts yourself and others in harm's way.

In an effort to increase compliance and enhance safety, the following additional rules go into effect immediately:

- Cloth face coverings are required of all students, employees and contract workers in all indoor spaces, including all hallways and common areas. Exceptions are when one is in one's own residence hall room/suite, when one is bathing, or when one is eating in Grace Rollins Dining Hall or in spaces in the Rollins Campus Center designated for takeout dining. Employees may remove their face coverings only in their offices when alone. Face coverings must always cover both the nose and mouth.
- When outdoors on campus, all students, employees and contract workers are required to maintain six feet between themselves and others whenever possible. When six feet is not possible, individuals must wear their cloth face coverings.
- All athletic team practices are suspended until further notice.
- Additional random temperature screenings will occur in high-traffic areas.
- No visitors, including other Young Harris College students, are permitted as guests in residence hall rooms. Only the students assigned to a residence hall room/suite are allowed in that room/suite at any time.
- No gatherings of any size are allowed in residence hall common areas at any time.
- Any individual found to have violated the ban on visitors or the ban on gatherings in common areas will be required to quarantine off campus for two weeks or produce a

negative COVID-19 test before returning to campus. Absences for individuals required to quarantine as a result of violating either ban will not be excused.

- A student, employee or contract worker who does not comply with these or other previously announced requirements will face disciplinary action. A second violation will result in suspension or termination.

College personnel, including senior administrators, Residence Life staff and YHC Police Department officers, will be monitoring adherence to these protocols across campus. I also encourage all students and employees to monitor both yourself for any symptoms of COVID-19 and your peers for their compliance with these precautions. If you are a student who is experiencing symptoms, or if you observe a student not following the protocols, please notify Dr. Laura Whitaker-Lea immediately. If you are a faculty member who is experiencing symptoms, or if you observe a faculty member not following the protocols, please notify Dr. Jason Pierce immediately. If you are a staff member or contract worker who is experiencing symptoms, or if you observe a staff member or contract worker who is not following the protocols, please notify Mr. Bo Wright immediately.

This pandemic is a real threat to your lives and your educations. Following our published protocols significantly reduces that threat. Those who violate our protocols demonstrate a selfish disregard for others that is anathema to our community. As President, I will ensure that they will be removed from it.

Remain Mountain Lion strong,

Drew L. Van Horn, Ph.D.
President
Young Harris College