ORDERLY EXIT AND CAMPUS EVACUATION PLAN – FALL 2020

In the spring of 2020, as COVID-19 began to reach the United States, Hamilton evacuated campus for the safety of our students and community. A process was put in place to help our students, particularly those with extenuating circumstances, travel to a safe location. This document builds upon that process by prioritizing safety precautions, while also adhering to an equitable approach. This will ensure we are more adequately prepared should there be a need to evacuate the campus in the future due to COVID-19 or other similar circumstances.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Schedule and confirm travel arrangements for students
- Facilitate housing appeal process
- Address financial aid needs related to ensuring students’ well-being (e.g., housing, travel, food, and shelter)
- Identify, additional support needed for students to be successful at their destination, including technology, books, supplies, etc.

ROLES

HOST (RECEPTION)

When this process was run in person, a reception area was set up at the entrance to check students in, route them to the proper resource area, and provide a space for students to wait to be called. There was also a team of people floating and answering questions for each of the areas and individual students.

In a virtual format, multiple Zoom sessions can be created with one host tasked with ushering students in and out of virtual rooms to meet with people in the roles outlined below. A communication strategy will need to exist for the host to communicate with the staff in the breakout rooms that is invisible to the student participants (e.g., text, GroupMe, shared google document, etc.). Multiple Zoom sessions
can be created at the same time in order to manage the timeline as long as sufficient staff members are available to provide needed support.

- **Potential Staff**: Maria Genao-Homs, Travis Hill, and Sarah Solomon

### FINANCIAL AID

In March, one to two staff members spent the day in the Tolles Pavilion meeting with students to assess their financial needs. Students were referred to Financial Aid by the Housing Appeals Teams, or directly to Financial Aid if their goal was to leave campus but they needed financial assistance to do so. Financial Aid shared pertinent information and when appropriate referred students to the other teams stationed in the Pavilion for further support.

In a virtual environment, Financial Aid could be anywhere and ideally more Financial Aid staff could be available to offer multiple room sessions in order to manage the volume of students needing assistance.

- **Potential Staff**: Financial Aid Staff

### TRAVEL AGENTS

Travel agents were staff members asked to arrange travel for students in need of assistance. Travel agents were assigned specific categories of travel (i.e., international flights, domestic flights, trains, buses) in order to streamline and simplify the process, both on-site and later in processing paperwork. In the event international travel became too complicated due to border closures or State Department mandates, we employed the assistance of a travel agency, Direct Travel, for booking. Each travel agent was assigned a College corporate credit card with an increased spending limit. Travel agents booked the travel on behalf of the student, printed receipts for our records, and the student was billed in the event their financial aid package would not cover the cost.

The same process would be needed virtually using a breakout room per travel agent. Printing may not be an option so the virtual exchange of receipts will need to be explored. An expansion of the travel agent group would also likely be necessary in order to address volume and offer multiple zoom sessions.

- **Potential Travel Agents**: Andrew Jillings, Sarah Jillings, Regina Johnson, other members of Student Life, and partners from Advancement
HOUSING APPEAL TEAMS

Prior to meeting with departing students, a small team developed a rubric that would be used by Housing Appeal Teams to assess each student’s circumstances in order to determine the appropriate, fair, and equitable next steps. Ideally, in teams of two, housing appeals were considered based on a survey students filled out in advance outlining their situation and request. Some students were referred to another resource without being interviewed by a Housing Appeal Team because their request could be supported by another role in this process (e.g., wanting to go home but needing financial assistance). Everyone else met with a Housing Appeal Team to discuss their situation and either granted approval to stay on campus or referred to financial aid and/or a travel agent to arrange to leave campus.

A Housing Appeal Team of two would have a breakout room as the host ushers students in and out. Using the separate communication system referenced above, the host would be made aware of the decisions/referrals being made in order to help the student receive any additional support required. This process is time-consuming and emotionally draining, so many Housing Appeal Teams need to be formed and trained.

- Potential Housing Appeal Team Members: Ashley Place, Paola Lopez, Dayna Campbell, Tessa Chefalo, other Student Life staff members, partners in Career Services, Levitt Center, and Opportunity Programs

RESOURCE AND REFERRAL CENTER

- Transportation “on-site”
  - The Transportation Office should be available in each Zoom session to help arrange shuttles to airports, trains, and bus stations.

- Tech Support “on-site”
  - A representative from LITS should have a breakout room to assist in procuring technology needs such as laptops and hotspots.
Resource List Access

- A resource guide was developed after students departed, but now that the list exists, we should be prepared to help students identify and utilize resources available to them locally after they leave campus.

Health and Counseling Support

- Masks, hand sanitizer, and other travel care package
- Strategies to identify local health and counseling support
- Strategies to maintain connections with on-campus health and counseling support

CASE MANAGEMENT/COUNSELING SUPPORT

In March, Sarah Solomon was one of our floating staff members helping to ensure the process was operating smoothly, but also to serve in her case management role in the event a student needed additional emotional support and referral.

We should consider whether the Counseling Center and/or case management staff should be in a breakout room in each Zoom session or other ways those services can be accessed as needed.

- Possible Case Management/Counseling Staff: Sarah Solomon, Counseling Center Staff

PROCESS

FORMAT
The in-person process that was run in March in the Events Barn and Tolles Pavilion was successful and potentially ill-advised knowing what we now know about COVID-19. A campus evacuation in the future likely will be because of a localized, if not on-campus, outbreak. Therefore, the process must be accomplished virtually if at all possible. The only exceptions should be in the event that a student has a necessary and reasonable accommodation and/or medical restriction that cannot be met in a virtual environment.

All other students will be invited to a Zoom session where the host will usher each student in and out of waiting and breakout rooms until their needs are met or they are referred to a campus service outside of the Zoom session.
TIMELINE/SCHEDULING STRATEGIES
In March, with very little time to plan, we scheduled students by dividing the alphabet in half. This system worked sufficiently, though it turned out more students were in the second half of the alphabet. International students were a population that needed more support, and many international students’ last names fall in the latter half of the alphabet.

Other strategies should be considered given there is greater time to plan. Some options include breaking the alphabet more than in half, using student identification numbers to divide students, using financial aid thresholds, and/or creating Zoom rooms for students based on categories (e.g., domestic and international students).

In an effort to equitably prioritize and support our highest-need students, specialized Zoom sessions such as one for high-need students, one for international students, and one for all other students should be created. This would ensure that the staff could be intentionally placed in their roles based on their experience supporting students with these identities.

INFORMATION TRACKING AND COMMUNICATION
One of the first tools created in March was a shared database that the staff was able to edit in real time. A student roster was uploaded, students were checked in, and pertinent notes were cataloged. This database helped teams track the movement of students through the process, and the staff continued to use the document for the weeks and months ahead.

This system should be recreated for any future process, but as noted above, a new communication system needs to be identified as well. Within a Zoom session, a host needs to be in communication with staff in the breakout rooms without sharing personal information any more than is necessary. In addition, teams across Zoom sessions may need to communicate (e.g., all Housing Appeal Teams needing to discuss types of requests so that they are consistent). It would be helpful to have our partners in LITS identify the best way to accomplish this communication.

VIRTUAL STATIONS, PHYSICAL LOCATIONS
In the Events Barn and Pavilion, we had tables set up to provide additional support answering questions, and LITS had a table to hand out hotspots and take additional technology requests. This will also be accomplished virtually now, but obtaining the physical item(s) will still be necessary. Systems need to be put in place for students not only to be granted approval to receive supplies and equipment, but also how to receive them quickly and safely. In addition to computers, hotspots, books, and other academic materials, travel care packages that include masks and hand sanitizers will likely be needed. Printouts of tickets for travel will be needed as well.
RESIDENTIAL EVACUATION PLAN

PURPOSE

In the spring of 2020, as COVID-19 began to reach the United States, Hamilton evacuated campus for the safety of our students and community. Most students were evacuated from campus leaving behind all of their belongings. A plan was put into place to arrange for housing for the remaining students, to properly close and secure all residential spaces, eventually to reunite students with their belongings, and collect keys. This document is intended to build upon that process, prioritizing equity issues and safety precautions like physical distancing. We want to ensure that we are more adequately prepared should there be a need to evacuate the campus in the future due to COVID-19 or other similar circumstances and that we can do so in a more efficient manner.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- The evacuation of all students on campus in a safe and orderly manner to include:
  - Removal of all personal belongings
  - Return of all room keys
- Ensure the security of residential facilities
- Management of student behavior -- timeline inclusive of notification of closure through all students departure from campus
- Adherence guidelines set forth from Oneida County Health Department regarding travel
- Preparation of housing for students who are approved to stay after evacuation

PROCESS

NOTIFICATION/TIMELINE

The administration should send simultaneous text and email notifications alerting the campus community that “the decision for a campus evacuation has been made, check your email for more information.” This ensures that even students who have opted out of emails get the message. We should
also create an emergency webpage and/or create a new emergency listserv that students and staff cannot opt out of to ensure that everyone receives the messages.

Email communication/emergency web page should include the following:

- Details regarding evacuation timeline and expectations (48-hr. evacuation window)
- Check-out form (see link below)
- Guidelines for behavior between notification and evacuation deadline
- Information about the Resources and Referrals Team
- Application link for students to apply to stay beyond the 48-hr. evacuation window. Review of these requests will need to take into account the students pre-determined evacuation plan and why they are not following that predetermined plan

**MAINTAINING RECORDS OF DEPARTURES**
It may be necessary to maintain detailed data, because we may need to share it with the County Health Department (assuming we are evacuated due to an outbreak).

A Google form will still be the best way to collect and share data, however, the form must go out with the initial closure notification to students, so that they have it immediately. A google form will work well because it can be shared widely and is easily fed into a spreadsheet.

We have created a new form, which can immediately be added to closure notices. This form collects more details regarding the students’ evacuation plans, confirmation that their basic needs are met, where they will be residing, if their room is completely emptied, etc.

New Form:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1BvW5AOT7PA2bWbQvpbF6vKdHOpyKdt0jKeNNfroAM-k/edit

**STUDENTS’ PERSONAL BELONGINGS (IF STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE EVERYTHING WITH THEM WHEN THEY LEAVE)**
Students will be required to bring all of their belongings with them when they evacuate.

The Resource and Referral Team will connect with all students who are currently in off-site isolation or quarantine housing due to exposure. They will work with each student regarding their timeline for continuous isolation or quarantine and will help them plan their travel home when approved to do so.
Students in isolation or quarantine at the time of evacuation will be permitted to leave existing items in their residence halls until they are released from isolation or quarantine, at which time they will be expected to return to their room and remove their belongings prior to departing campus.

Residential Life will provide facilities staff with a list of affected rooms to ensure that students’ belongings remain in their room until they are released.

**STUDENTS’ PERSONAL BELONGINGS (IF STUDENTS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO TAKE EVERYTHING WITH THEM WHEN THEY LEAVE)[1]**

If students are permitted to leave personal belongings behind, it will be important to ensure that buildings and rooms are secured in a timely manner. Staff may be required to enter rooms when there is the potential for COVID exposure. The College will need to provide PPE.

Skenandoa and Bundy East residents will be informed that all their belongings must be packed prior to their departure, in order to allow staff to move their belongings to storage. We will do this to accommodate students living on campus. Boxes, tape, and supplies will be provided. Residential Life staff will meet with students to provide information about why they were being asked to do this and what their options are for storing their items on campus. Residential Life staff will also meet with RAs in Skenandoa and Bundy East prior to student notification to maintain open communication. Students will be instructed to pack and label all of their items and leave them in their rooms, to be moved into storage by facilities staff after their departure.

Students will be notified that, if they leave anything behind, they will not be allowed access to those belongings until at least January 2021.

Students who will not be returning for the spring semester will need to sign up for a time to return to campus during the first two weeks of January to collect their belongings. Those who cannot return will need to use Dorm Room Movers (DRM) service to have their items packed and stored or shipped. If DRM is not available, Hamilton College staff will pack and store or ship students’ belongings. These students will need to mail in their keys by January 1, 2021.

**KEY RETURN**

Students will be required to return their keys prior to leaving campus. We will charge for all non-returned keys.

(Option 1) We would like to install permanent dropboxes in a variety of locations on campus, which would be lockable and easy for students to access outside of a building (see link in comments). This would provide a secure method of collecting keys and allow all students to return keys without congregating. If we use these boxes, keys can stay locked in the boxes for at least three days to minimize
exposure risk for those collecting them. Keys in these boxes would be collected by Residential Life staff and moved to the Residential Life Office for inventory.

(Option 2) Alternatively, we can place envelopes or non-secure boxes into all common areas so that students can return their keys in their building. This creates a congregation point and will require that students walk through extended family units to access common rooms. In addition, these drop-off points will not be secure. These boxes will need to be collected on a daily or twice daily schedule to secure as many keys as possible. Due to the volume and frequency of collection and the need to enter residence halls, a Campus Safety or Facilities Management staff member will need to pick up keys and deliver them to the Residential Life Office for inventory.

**BEHAVIOR ISSUES AND SOCIALIZING DURING THE EVACUATION PERIOD**

During an evacuation, all previously approved gatherings are canceled. During evacuation, students will only be permitted to interact with others who are a part of their original cohort. Socializing in larger groups, including extended family units will not be permitted.

Evacuation communication must include clear instructions to students regarding behavioral expectations during the evacuation period. The most significant deterrent to negative behavior will be a clear understanding that students who violate procedures will jeopardize their status as a student (e.g., continuing remotely for the semester, potential suspension or expulsion from the College, etc.). Student conduct procedures must continue remotely and in a timely manner after the evacuation is completed. COVID-19 review board must also continue for the duration of the semester, regardless of whether students are on campus.

To enforce policies prohibiting gatherings of groups, a dramatic increase in Campus Safety staffing will be necessary for the 48-hour evacuation period. All gatherings must be disbursed, and students involved in gatherings must be identified. Reports of gatherings will be submitted within 24 hours of the closure period. Follow-up will occur within two weeks in order to ensure appropriate sanctions and to enable contact tracing if necessary.

**CONSOLIDATING LIVING QUARTERS FOR STUDENTS REMAINING ON CAMPUS**

We recommend using a series of buildings and maintaining them at half capacity with all rooms occupied as singles. Students should be placed in every other room so that no one is sharing a wall and to avoid a condensed living environment. Having students spread out will help them feel safer and will improve their mental health.

Recommended buildings are as follows: Bundy East, then Bundy West, followed by Wallace Johnson, then Wertimer. Skenandoa and Bristol will be kept for quarantine or isolation.
Upon notification of evacuation, students not evacuating should quarantine in their current space for 14 days after campus evacuation. After 14 days, they can be moved to these locations, depending on Facilities Management’s ability to clean the rooms and prepare them for students during the 14 days.

We will need a protocol in place for a room with a confirmed case in it (or to deem that room as usable).

**STUDENT SUPPORT FOR REMAINING STUDENTS ON CAMPUS**

For students who are staying, who are in the initial 14-day quarantine in their original rooms, the following support will be needed:

- **Food**
  - Will need to be delivered to students in their residence halls

- **Hygiene** (e.g., laundry, personal hygiene etc.). We should keep a stock of these types of items so that we can easily distribute them to students (e.g., shampoo, soap, laundry soap pods, menstruation products, toothpaste, bottled water)

- **Mental health assistance in dealing with the new situation**

- **Clarity of expectations and an opportunity to ask questions and get updates (community meeting); daily meetings for the first three to five days, then as needed**

- **Communication about the move to a consolidation area**

- **Continuous testing plan (more intensive, twice a week)**

- **Notification of cleaning processes occurring in their current building**

After they are consolidated and during their move to the consolidation areas:

- **How do we transition them? Van loading? This should mitigate them helping each other, or perhaps they can use a cart on their own.**

- **We can deliver their new keys to their current rooms and have a dropbox for them to return keys when they are done moving. Keys could be in a moving packet containing information about the next steps that can be taped to their doors.**

- **Food in Bundy Cafe, grab and go**
- Hygiene (e.g., laundry, personal hygiene)
- Mental health -- helping students understand what has happened and how to move forward
- Clarity of expectations and a place to ask questions and get updates (community meeting)
- Expectations for behavior/community agreement
- Laundry scheduling
- Weekly delivery schedule for supplies/groceries/etc.
- Continuous testing plan (less intensive, once a week)

**CLOSING OF VACANT BUILDINGS ON CAMPUS**

Because all students will be required to take everything with them, we will only need to check to ensure that windows have been closed and locked. Residential life staff will not be required to stay beyond the evacuation deadline to help with closing. Three days after the complete evacuation of campus, facilities staff will enter rooms and begin cleaning and securing all spaces (e.g., removal of trash or items left behind, cleaning and sanitizing, closing and locking all windows and doors).

Residential Life will provide facilities with a list of rooms where students are currently quarantining prior to their consolidation. Residents quarantining will be notified of building closure procedures. Buildings being used for consolidation will be prioritized for cleaning.

Facilities Management will provide Residential Life with updates on the cleaning processes. This will include a list of rooms where excessive cleaning was necessary, or major damage was noted. Area directors will follow up to evaluate major damage when safe to do so.

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[1] This section does not encompass all that has been going into the student belonging collection process. We need to debrief that process and re-plan for the future.