

Responsible Restart Plan for Fall 2020 and Updated for Spring 2021

The following changes have been put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- All classrooms, labs, and lecture classrooms have been assessed to determine the maximum capacity while adhering to social distancing guidelines.
- Depending on the course, some classes will be conducted in a hybrid environment with a combination of in-person and online.
- Some courses will be delivered entirely remotely through WDT's learning management system. These have been identified as "online" courses.
- The services that students rely on, such as the Library and Student Success Center, will be open with services available in person or online.
- Campus dining services will continue to be closed for the Spring 2021 semester. Snack options are available in the **campus bookstore**, with expanded "grab and go" food options to include hot and cold sandwiches, mini-pizzas, pop, and salads.
- All college staff, faculty, students, and campus visitors will wear masks or face shields while on campus, except when they are working at their desks in a closed-office space.
- All college staff, faculty, students, and campus visitors will follow all social distancing guidelines. Markers and signage have been placed in key locations to assist with these efforts.
- Self-screening of each employee will be conducted daily.
- Faculty will include mask and social distancing requirements in their course syllabi. Students who do not want to wear masks will be invited to join classes remotely. Students who are non-compliant with mask and social distancing requirements will be subject to disciplinary action under the WDT Code of Conduct and will be required to pay a fine.
- Because of the importance of accurate attendance records, students are required to participate actively in all classes and labs, whether delivered remotely or in person. Students who fail to attend and participate will be counted absent, which will have an adverse impact on students' scholarships and federal financial aid.
- All classrooms, labs, and campus common areas will be cleaned and disinfected frequently, following CDC guidelines.
- The CDC's general measures regarding COVID 19 can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/kEhNyxKopsg>.

The Responsible Restart Plan is developed with the following guiding principles:

1. Following CDC, South Dakota, regional, and local guidelines for reopening.
2. Maintaining the health and safety of our students, employees, and community members.
3. Designing appropriate student experiences that balance health and safety with quality.
4. Maintaining a focus on quality teaching and learning.

Preparations for the Fall and Spring Semesters, 2020-2021

COVID-19 Planning Committee – Five work teams researched and developed recommendations in the following areas with staff and faculty represented from varying departments:

1. Instructional Impact – Academic Support, Team Leaders, Registrar’s Office, Corporate Education and IT
2. Building Safety and Personal Protective Equipment – Marketing, Human Resources, Foundation and Enrollment Services
3. On-Campus Events – President’s Office, Academics, Student Success Center and Enrollment Services
4. Facility / Dining – Facilities and President’s Office
5. Travel – Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Center

Regional Alignment: President Ann Bolman is the primary point of contact with Pennington County Emergency Management and Monument Health. President Bolman remains in regular contact with local leaders to maintain alignment between regional guidelines and college decisions and operations.

Academic Plan

Barring any unforeseen change for the spring semester, Western Dakota Tech will begin the spring semester operations as scheduled on campus on January 11, 2021. Additionally, some courses will be delivered online via MyWDT, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or a combination.

All classroom and lab spaces have been analyzed by the President’s Office, Academics and the Registrar’s Office with course schedules developed under the following guiding design principles:

- Ensure alignment with physical distancing protocols.
- Balance requirements to migrate learning to a virtual platform with the need for the on-campus learning environments of skills-based programs.

Schedule Summary—Highlights and Overarching Themes

- Lecture courses will be offered as originally scheduled with face-to-face and online sections (when applicable).
- Lab courses will be offered in-person or in a hybrid manner.
- Clinical and internship courses will be offered as originally scheduled; however, these courses are primarily off campus with students engaged at a specific clinical/internship

site. Students will be required to follow all requirements set forth by the clinical/internship site.

- Off-site dual enrollment courses will follow the requirements set forth by the hosting high school with dual enrollment students/faculty members following host high school requirements accordingly.
- Based upon historical data, students in developmental/remedial courses perform statistically better when enrolled in face-to-face classes as compared to distance learning courses and therefore will be delivered primarily on campus.
- The CDC recommends occupancy per square feet in classrooms and labs to ensure social distancing. Based upon a review of available classrooms, there are adequate existing spaces at Western Dakota Tech to accommodate the current course offerings.

Laboratory Sections

Few laboratory sections lend themselves well to online instruction; however, for those that do, Western Dakota Tech plans for them to be fully migrated. It is also anticipated that many laboratory sections will run in a hybrid manner. In this situation, the enrolled students for a specific laboratory section would be subdivided into two smaller cohorts. To keep the number of people in lab space as low as possible, during any given scheduled laboratory day, one cohort would have an on-campus experience with the other cohort engaged in an online learning environment.

For those laboratory sections that are unable to migrate any of the required learning online (e.g. machining, welding, etc.), it is the intention that all students be required to report to laboratory class on each day that class is scheduled.

The laboratory spaces are large enough to accommodate physical distancing protocols without decreasing course caps. In situations where laboratory spaces are smaller (e.g. electronics labs), lab groups will be split to accommodate physical distancing standards, and other classroom spaces will be temporarily re-purposed into laboratory space to increase overall capacity, thus enabling conformation to physical distancing protocols.

Access to non-use spaces will be monitored and only scheduled for use through a central location where social distancing guidelines can be monitored.

Additional Instructional Considerations

Social distancing will be maintained in instructional laboratory sections by decreasing the number of people per laboratory room. This will provide enough laboratory equipment so each person has their own, preventing the need for lab groups. The lab equipment in each instructional lab will be arranged to allow proper distancing between people.

For computer labs, half of the computers will be removed from or restricted within each lab and where feasible reallocated to a different room to ensure proper distancing between machines or disabling them to only allow the correct number of users in each lab. All lab staff will monitor the space and ensure the safety and correct usage of the facilities.

Common Learning Areas & Library

- One-on-one tutoring will occur in the main area in the Library/Success Center with designated socially distanced areas.
- Total occupancy of the Library/Student Success Center will be monitored to meet square footage requirements per CDC guidelines.
- The Library will offer computer access with every other station disabled maintain distancing.
- Study tables, seating throughout campus, and areas in the Commons have been arranged to establish appropriate social distancing. Students and college staff are asked NOT to rearrange seating. Students who rearrange seating will be subject to a fine.
- The Library, Bookstore, Success Coach, Financial Aid, IT, and Student Accounts services will be offered both in person and remotely.

Faculty Development

The Academic Support staff are holding synchronous and asynchronous sessions, in conjunction with our Library to train on best practices in design and delivery. Group and individual sessions are held for technical support and course enhancement. Western Dakota Tech plans to expand on this effort by implementing professional development workshops and providing primary support for individual faculty in the quest to hone their instruction strategies.

Student Success and Support Online

The Academic and IT Support staff will be offering several trainings on student success as well as understanding the technical expectations of working in a remote setting. The Library staff, including the Student Success Coaches, IT support, and peer tutors, will be available both online and in-person for orientation, remote learning, and technical assistance.

Operational Plan

Our operational plans are based on the academic plan to offer the vast majority of technical classes on campus while making other courses available online to maintain a high-quality student learning experience. All student-facing offices will be open for regular hours of operations and with 100% of student services also available via remote delivery.

Building Safety and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The building safety work team has established protocols for facilities cleaning (particularly high-use areas) and PPE acquisition (with a guide of maintaining a 90-day inventory supply). Their recommendations have guided the following plans for workplace safety to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Cleaning and Sanitation Standards

- WDT has implemented strict cleaning and sanitation standards that include encouraging handwashing, using hand sanitizing stations, and promoting good personal hygiene.
- WDT has provided necessary supplies and protocols for staff to disinfect personal office space to allow Facilities staff to follow a more aggressive schedule to clean classrooms and high-use areas.
- WDT has limited bathroom availability and cleans bathrooms per CDC guidelines.
- WDT has turned off public drinking fountains to prevent the spread of the virus. (Contact-free water bottle filling features will remain operational.)
- WDT will maintain a 90-day supply of PPE inventory.
- WDT has been monitoring and will continue to monitor HVAC ventilation in all buildings for any abnormalities or concerns.

Density Reduction

In addition to limited academic offerings, density reduction of the workforce will be a priority.

- Western Dakota Tech resumed normal on-campus hours of operation (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) with few exceptions on Monday, May 18, 2020.
- New full-time faculty will begin on Monday, December 28, 2020 and all full-time returning faculty will begin on Monday, January 4, 2021.
- Maximum capacity guidelines have been established along with efforts to minimize visitors on campus.
- Physical work space will be adjusted to accommodate social distancing standards (e.g., 1:1 student advising) and plexiglass barriers have been installed at all service windows.
- Meetings will continue to use virtual meetings, even when on campus, to reduce the number of people in one room.
- Available seating will be reduced along with reconfigured study areas and computer desks available to students in order to observe the 6-foot distancing protocol.
- The Western Dakota Tech Event Center and conference rooms will be reserved for college use, and room reservations from external parties will be strictly limited.

Infection Prevention and Control

The President monitors the spread of the coronavirus daily and receives regular updates on effective measures for controlling the spread of the virus from state and local officials. Western Dakota Tech will follow city, regional, and state guidance to mitigate the risks of second or third

waves. The President will conduct regular updates with college employees to keep them apprised of changes in the local COVID 19 situation.

Reporting and Monitoring

Our Facilities staff will provide leadership for our infection prevention and control efforts. Since COVID-19 began, the President has established strong communication channels with the South Dakota Department of Health and Monument Health and created effective internal and external reporting and communication protocols and provides weekly updates to the VP of Finance and Operations. The VP of Finance and Operations is notified immediately by the VP of Student Success or the Director of Human Resources when an active case of COVID 19 has been confirmed on campus so that heightened sanitation protocols can be carried out. WDT has hired the additional custodial staff and equipment necessary to meet CDC cleaning guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID 19. Through these efforts, WDT strives to maintain a healthy and safe environment for everyone at WDT.

Monitoring and Testing

Western Dakota Tech follows CDC guidelines related to monitoring COVID 19 cases. Employees and students are asked to self-monitor for COVID 19 symptoms daily. If an employee reports to work or a student comes to campus, it is the assumption that he or she is feeling well and not experiencing symptoms. If an employee or student does experience symptoms after coming to campus, the person is asked to leave the premises. Barring any further changes to guidelines or directives and given the cost and logistical complexity of monitoring and testing, Western Dakota Tech does not intend to assume the direct role of taking temperatures for all employees and students. The College partners with Monument Health and will guide students and employees in need of medical advice and testing to the Monument Health Nurse Triage line.

At this time, testing for COVID 19 is provided free of charge to WDT students and employees by area health providers, particularly through Monument's Nurse Triage line. WDT anticipates that free testing will continue to be available and will notify the campus community if this situation changes. The Human Resources Director and Student Success Vice President will actively engage with supervisors, employees, and students to maintain an active system of monitoring symptoms and activating protocols should individuals demonstrate cause for concern with regard to COVID-19. Limited testing on campus for employees is planned for the Spring 2021 semester, with Medical Lab Technology program director coordinating this process with Human Resources and reporting test results to the SD DOH.

Contact Tracing

The South Dakota Department of Health has authority to conduct contact tracing and will do so in collaboration with WDT's Human Resources Office for tracing potential exposures of infected employees and with WDT's Vice President for Student Success in the case of infected students.

Tracing includes, but is not limited to, interviewing employees, supervisors, and students. All contact tracing involving WDT exposures will follow SD DOH requirements and will be coordinated with local health and emergency officials.

Prevention Measures

- **Masks:** All WDT employees and students will be provided with reusable WDT-branded face coverings. Additional disposable masks and face coverings will be available if needed because all employees will be required to wear a face covering in all public spaces. Information about the CDC's guidance on masks is available here: <https://youtu.be/KpXZkChOXwI>. Each student and visitor will be required to wear a face covering in public spaces. They will be asked to leave the campus building if they refuse to comply and may be subject to disciplinary action.
- **Social Distancing:** Social distancing protocols will be established and enforced in all college locations, classrooms, offices, and shared spaces.
- **Hand washing:** Hand sanitizing stations are available throughout the college campus locations, and students will be given individual hand sanitizing bottles at the beginning of the semester.

Employee Relations

The COVID-19 Planning Committee has reviewed various scenarios and issues associated with COVID-19 and implications for employees returning to campus. Their recommendations comprise an Employee Relations Action Plan that is summarized as follows:

- All policies will be reviewed with refinements to existing policies and development of new policies completed as necessary.
- All related legal issues will be reviewed to ensure compliance with any changes to the work environment.
- Attention will be given to EEOC guidance and reasonable accommodations for employees as necessary.
- We must all do our part to protect the health and wellbeing of our fellow employees and students by following all the CDC guidelines along with federal, state and city orders related to the COVID-19 outbreak.
 - Practice personal hygiene
 - Monitor for symptoms
 - Practice social distancing
 - Wear a mask
- **Mask alternatives:** Masks are worn to decrease the amount of force of the exhaled contaminants. Therefore, there are acceptable alternatives which can either be used in lieu of or complimentary to facial masks. For example, if a sufficient plexi-glass barrier is in place for a desk, the desk occupant may opt not to wear a mask. In most cases, a facial shield of sufficient coverage can be used in lieu of or in combination with a mask.

- Instructors may wear a face shield in place of a mask provided they are greater than six feet from any student. Another alternative is the use of microphones in the classroom.
- All employees will self-screen at the beginning of the day by taking their temperature at the door or they may take their temperature at home prior to coming to work. If they have the following symptoms, they will either need to stay home or go home: fever of 100.4 degrees or more, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, or new loss of taste or smell.
- If symptoms develop during the day, go home immediately. If symptoms develop while not working, do not return to work until you have been evaluated by a healthcare provider. If you must stay home, you may work remotely.

WDT Employee Travel Guidelines

Work related travel may be resumed on a limited basis under the following conditions:

1. A virtual option is not available or conducive;
2. It is crucial to the execution of projects and delivery of services;
3. Employee consents to traveling and is comfortable traveling;
4. Employee agrees to abide by CDC's Travel Guidance found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html> including the proper use of PPE such as face masks; and
5. The President gives prior approval.
6. Employees should evaluate the pandemic situation in the county or counties where travel will occur and any restrictions in place for facilities in which the work will be done before traveling.
7. Travel is only permissible if the employee agrees that if they are exposed to COVID-19 they will be expected to be quarantined at home while consulting medical attention and, if necessary, being tested.
8. Employees who must self-quarantine as required by the CDC guidelines, must contact their supervisor(s) and Theresa Scharn-Human Resources (theresa.scharn@wdt.edu).

Communication, Outreach and Training

The COVID-19 Planning Committee has reviewed various scenarios and communication and training issues associated with COVID-19 with implications for returning to campus. Their recommendations comprise the Communication and Outreach Action Plan that is summarized as follows:

- Long-established community relationships have been leveraged as necessary with leaders in local governmental, healthcare, non-profit service providers, private industry, and educational partner organizations.
- We will communicate our restart plans with employees, students, vendors, and community members openly and clearly as necessary. As needed, WDT will issue emergency alerts and timely notifications to students, employees, and related stakeholders.

- Significant concerns will be immediately communicated to relevant SD leaders and the Governor's Office, as appropriate.
- Coordination and collaboration with other educational institutions will occur wherever possible.
- Protocols have been established for "return to work" communications so employees are empowered with timely, relevant, and accurate information to inform their personal decisions and actions.
- A workplace signage plan will be developed to provide clear direction throughout Western Dakota Tech facilities and intentionally shape individual behaviors and campus traffic to comply with established guidelines.
- Liability processes will be developed to mitigate college exposure with COVID-19 issues.
- Training and support have been provided for employees regarding work conditions on campus. Additional information will be shared as conditions change and as updates are developed.
- Communications will be prepared in anticipation of various scenarios including incidents of active cases with employees and students.

Community Interactions

Western Dakota Tech is currently limiting the use of College facilities by non-WDT groups through the Spring 2021 semester. This strategy will allow for WDT's students, faculty, and staff to use the large meeting spaces for classes and activities and meet CDC and local requirements for social distancing. All external requests for facilities usage are provided to the President's Office for consideration and will be approved only in situations where the event can be conducted following WDT, local, and State guidelines.

Our Responsible Restart Plan is based on WDT's Emergency Plan for Pandemics, which was recently updated to clarify communication strategies with state and local authorities. In addition, we currently have open lines of communication with our local hospital and engage with them regularly.

Remote Technologies for Students and Employees

The COVID-19 Planning Committee has reviewed various scenarios and related issues associated with COVID-19 and implications for returning to campus. Their recommendations identify internet access solutions for students and employees in both urban and rural settings. In addition, our IT Department has inventoried the office technology equipment of all employees to address the remote-working needs to support operations through the 2020-2021 academic year.

Workforce Development

Western Dakota Tech is continuing to remain responsive to the needs of the community and the business industry. At each phase of the return-to-work plan, we are closely aligning with best

practices and guidelines as we deploy the classes and/or staff necessary to continue meeting the training needs of our community and businesses. For example, courses offered through our Corporate Education Office have continued while following social distancing guidelines. Local industry entities can continue scheduling custom training opportunities through the Corporate Education Office.

Evacuation Plan

If the circumstance should arise where a surge in COVID-19 cases occurs in the County or Region and Western Dakota Tech must transition to a completely remote operation, evacuation strategies will be implemented similar to last spring. With a conservative density-reduction plan, employees will already be well-positioned to work remotely, and instruction will be offered through remote delivery. Technical classes using specialized equipment will be temporarily suspended until it is safe to return to campus. If the campus becomes the hotspot, we will work with the South Dakota Department of Health and Pennington County Emergency Management to plan and coordinate an appropriate evacuation. In all cases, when a timely warning or emergency notification needs to occur, WDT will follow established communication plans outlined in the College's Emergency Plan.