



Dear incoming Oxford student,

By now you have received the letter from Emory President Claire Sterk and President-elect Greg Fennes describing the university's approach to the fall 2020 semester and how we will open safely for in-person classes and residential community this fall. Our commitment to the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff have shaped how we will reopen Emory and it will remain paramount.

As a vital part of the university, Oxford College will apply Emory's approach to our campus context with creativity, adaptability, and resolve. We are grateful for public health experts across Emory University who helped us plan. In all that we will do in face of the pandemic, we aim to create the educational community for which Oxford is known and to provide an excellent experience for our students.

## Commitment and Choice

One thing is crystal clear: This plan will require the active engagement and commitment of students, staff members, and faculty. Our safety and flourishing will take shared effort, a shared willingness to act responsibly and compassionately toward other students and employees. Students who return to campus will commit to uphold the necessary measures related to physical distancing and communal care.

We have built the element of choice into our plan:

- We believe and expect that most of you will choose to return to take classes and live on campus.
- You will have the choice to live off campus (in your own rental, in an Oxford-organized hotel option described below for sophomores, or with your family, if they are in metro Atlanta) and drive to campus for classes and activities.
- Alternatively, you have the opportunity to choose a fully online semester and not return to campus for the fall.

These choices are part of reducing the overall residential density of the campus in the fall while building our Oxford educational community in person and online.

## Schedule

As noted in the university's earlier message, the first day of classes for fall semester 2020 is now Wednesday, August 19, and the last day of in-person classes is November 24, the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. This schedule change as well as operating procedures with regard to the pandemic will also affect the dates of such events as new-student orientation and residence-hall move-ins. We are working now on a new approach to these, and we will inform you as soon as possible. We will proceed with an eye to safety and health while also keeping the excitement we all feel at the start of a new academic year.

## Housing

We expect that our residence halls can house most, but not all, students returning to campus in August.

- While we have some rooms used under normal circumstances as triples, these will be deployed for double occupancy, and some of our double occupancy rooms will be reduced to single occupancy.
- Students may request to live in a single room, with priority given to students with health vulnerabilities or conditions.

We are also implementing a more frequent and thorough cleaning and sanitizing regime for our bathrooms and public areas.

Given this reduction in density of our residence halls, we reserved room blocks in two nearby hotels – the Hampton Inn and Holiday Inn Express of Covington, both within easy driving distance (8-10 minutes) of campus—to serve as additional housing options for sophomore students.

- These will provide additional individual rooms with private baths for some sophomores.
- This unusual move will create a small community of Oxford students, with Resident Assistants (RAs) onsite and the support of professional staff.
- We will provide regular, physically distanced shuttle transportation between the hotels and campus. If you would like to bring a car, we will provide parking spaces on campus and will not be charging a parking fee.

If you have chosen a roommate, you will be able to stay with your roommate. Because of our efforts to reduce density, you may be assigned a different room or residence hall. If you are a sophomore, you may be assigned to one of the hotel rooms that we have reserved.

Tomorrow you will receive a survey going to all Emory undergraduates asking you to share your thinking about your options and your ideas regarding how we can help make the most of your on-campus experience. In addition, please watch for an Oxford housing information form next week that will ask for your preferences. Your prompt attention to fill out this form will allow us to prioritize health-related requests and to maximize your housing preferences.

## Academic Experience

The menu of in-person and online courses will be different, and each type of course will include robust choice. The majority of courses will be offered in person, with accommodations made for students who cannot attend class due to illness, quarantine, or other reasons. A wide array of online courses will also be available to students, wherever they are living, including students who are in residence. We intend to expand our online choices through collaboration with Emory College of Arts and Sciences by allowing cross-registration for some courses.

Oxford's faculty members and leaders in Academic Affairs are actively organizing course offerings—shifting course times and moving classrooms to larger venues that accommodate physical distancing. We expect to be reopening course registration to create schedules that allow you to take classes on campus or to complete your semester exclusively through online learning. Students in residence may have a mix of in-person and online courses. We expect to be able to contact returning students with details by June 17, with their restarted registration following thereafter. New students will undertake advising and registration for courses—as we had envisioned pre-pandemic—starting in mid-July.

## Health Standards and Practices

I want to repeat that we will be counting on all of you to uphold the norms and practices of hygiene, distancing, health testing and reporting of conditions, and mutual care necessary to build the safe educational community that we need. Sophomore leaders are collaborating this summer to help Oxford create a set of shared expectations.

Some of the key practices that are part of our pledge of safety and mutual care will include:

- Wearing masks in most venues across campus, including in classes
- Physically distancing across campus
- Upholding quarantine and isolation protocols, when necessary

Please refer to the [Emory Forward Health and Safety Plan](#) for additional details.

I appreciate deeply the resilience and creativity of the Oxford community, and I have every confidence that, while this will be different from other years, we will meet the challenge. We fully intend, within this extraordinary coming semester, to have fun and to learn a great deal together.

I'm sure that this email and the wider Emory University announcement raise various questions for you. I hope it is clear that we are actively working as thoughtfully and rapidly as possible to make all arrangements for another excellent semester. Please watch for additional information as we finalize the details of our plan.

We have established an "[Oxford Forward](#)" page, where you will find information and frequently asked questions. This is a complement to the overall university's

"[Emory Forward](#)" page with other helpful information. In addition, you may reach out to these colleagues across Oxford with questions: for housing, Residential Education and Services at [RES@emory.edu](mailto:RES@emory.edu) or 770-784-8383; for academic questions, Advising Support Center at [oxadvising@emory.edu](mailto:oxadvising@emory.edu); for financial aid questions, Office of Financial Aid at [ox.finaid@emory.edu](mailto:ox.finaid@emory.edu); or for general questions, the Office of the Dean, at [oxforddean@emory.edu](mailto:oxforddean@emory.edu) or 770-784-8300.

We pledge to communicate often in the coming days, and we also thank you for your patience and understanding as all of us work through the implications of a global pandemic to continue to deliver on our educational mission. We will achieve it together.

Sincerely,

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