



Whitman Today

Monday, June 8, 2020

Update from the President

Dear members of the Whitman Community,

Last weekend I sent a message expressing my outrage and deep sense of sadness over the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. [You can read that message here.](#)

Following that message, I put together a special task force, chaired by Thomas Witherspoon, our Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, that will continue and amplify our work to make Whitman an even more inclusive and equitable community, where every member can share a sense of belonging. If you have ideas you would like to share with Thomas and the group, you can email Thomas at withertl@whitman.edu.

We will continue to share our progress on the assembly of the task force, plans for additional action steps as well as outcomes as we move this important work forward.

Kathy Murray

Coronavirus News

The [Walla Walla County Department of Health](#) reported seven new coronavirus cases in the past week. Of the total 116 confirmed cases, 105 residents are now recovered and 9 are in isolation. The county is currently in Phase 2 of the Safe Start economic reopening plan. [An article in today's Union-Bulletin](#) outlines steps taken by local government and businesses to comply with Phase 2 guidance and prepare for the possibility of entering Phase 3, which could happen no sooner than June 17.

Coronavirus Task Force Update: Planning for an In-Person Fall Semester

The coronavirus task force is planning for an in-person fall semester in a manner that is safe for students, faculty and staff. To achieve this, here are some of the policies, procedures, practices and procurement being worked on to address a number of critical safety issues:

- **Teaching schedules and spaces** are being reevaluated so that classrooms and labs can be used safely, with proper social distancing. All spaces on campus are being evaluated as possible classrooms to accommodate these needs, as are creative and flexible scheduling solutions. Technology is also being considered to extend in-person learning to online spaces as needed given physical constraints.
- **Student support services** are being evaluated and rethought to accommodate safety and social distancing.
- **Residence halls** will have some form of reduced density/occupancy. We are currently studying available housing inventory and options and are pursuing multiple approaches.
- **Face coverings** will be required indoors of all students, faculty and staff while they are in shared areas. They may be removed if an individual is in a private office/lab or well-isolated individual workspace, or in their dorm room in the case of students. Outdoors, masks will be required when in areas where social distancing is not fully possible (walkways, etc.).
- **Testing options** are being investigated. We hope to be able to test all members of the community when we return to campus. We are currently evaluating potential partners to help us manage this initial testing process, as well as testing of symptomatic members of the Whitman community.
- **Symptom checking** will be required daily, likely through self-reporting. We are working on multiple approaches to temperature checks.
- **Contact tracing** will likely be managed in part through a smartphone app. We are working through technical, privacy, and security issues and plan to have a selection in the next week or so.

[Whitman's Coronavirus Info Center](#)

Announcements

Whitman Coronavirus Stories Quick Response Form

Would you like to contribute to the [Whitman Coronavirus Stories Archive](#), but are short on time? [Fill out the quick response form!](#) You can submit as much or as little as you would like to five brief prompts. All questions are optional, so you can pick and choose which prompts to respond to. With every submission, the archive will become more representative of our community's collective experience over the last few tumultuous months.

Happening This Week

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

4 p.m.

[Whitman College Budget Overview Webinar](#)

An introduction to the college budget for faculty and staff with Chief Financial Officer Peter Harvey.

[More Upcoming Events](#)

Have a virtual event you'd like to share with campus? Email the details to whitmantoday@whitman.edu.

Parting Shot



A piece from Tess Francavilla's senior thesis project is among those featured in ["Interstitial," a virtual exhibit hosted by the Sheehan Gallery](#) for Whitman's 15 senior art majors.

"Whitman Today" is produced by the Office of Communications and is emailed weekly to Whitman College staff, faculty and students. All times are listed in Pacific Daylight Time. Previous newsletters can be found on the [Whitman Today archive website](#).

To submit items, email whitmantoday@whitman.edu. The deadline for submissions is 12 p.m. Friday for the following week's newsletter.



WHITMAN COLLEGE