

From: President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman
To: ug-stud-fall@lists.yu.edu
Date: Dec. 9, 2020

Dear Students,

As we enter the final weeks of the Fall 2020 semester, I thank you all for your incredible partnership in ensuring a safe and productive semester. I am so proud of how our community has come together in support of each other. All throughout this time, we have been guided by our values and together with the great work of our administrators, faculty and staff, we have actualized a semester filled with deep learning, vibrant student experiences and great personal growth. The experience of our Fall semester has enabled us to plan for an even brighter semester for Spring 2021, and I am pleased to share with you a brief description of the semester ahead.

Academics

The Spring semester will run from January 19, 2021, to May 24, 2021

During our Fall semester, we hosted in person many Torah and Judaic Studies shiurim as well as a small assortment of college classes on both the Wilf and Beren campuses. While these Torah and Judaic Studies shiurim will continue, we anticipate having significantly more course offerings in the face-to-face/blended model during the upcoming semester, with over 200 courses expected to be delivered in this modality. These will include courses in YC/Stern Computer Science, Math, Sciences and Jewish Studies as well as Sy Syms' multi-section Principles and Jewish Values Program. A full list of classes, with their teaching modalities, is available in [Self-Service](#).

The following course modalities will be available:

- **Face-to-face:** Faculty member and students will meet on campus. Course is not available for remote instruction.

- **Blended:** Faculty member and on-campus students will periodically meet on campus for instruction. Remote students will participate online.
- **Online-Live, Synchronous:** Faculty member and students will meet online at the scheduled hours for course delivery.
- **Online, Asynchronous:** The course materials will be recorded for students to watch outside of class hours. Scheduled class hours will be for review, discussions, exams and so on.

Support services, including academic advisement and academic support, the writing and career centers, and the counseling center, will continue to offer support both on-site and remotely. The Libraries will be open.

Registration begins on December 15, 2020.

Housing

Housing applications

While we expect to continue to have reduced capacity in the residence halls, we have made additional rooms available for the Spring semester.

- Spring semester housing applications are due on December 14, 2020.
- We are asking students who are in housing this semester to recommit. Priority will be given to students who are on campus this semester, along with first-time-on-campus and out-of-town students.
- For international students, a separate communication will be sent out since guidance varies per country.

Quarantine

For those students who live out of town (excluding the contiguous states of NJ, MA, PA, CT and VT) and are required to quarantine when arriving in NY, we will offer an off-site quarantine hotel option, just as we did in the Fall semester. This will begin the week of January 10, 2021, with the expectation that students can move into housing and participate in orientation the following week.

In order to participate, students will have to submit a negative COVID PCR test taken no later than 3 days before arrival to NY and must arrive on January 10 or January 11. This is intended to allow the quarantine to end before Shabbat.

Student Life & On-Site Activities

Athletics

We are currently practicing for winter sports and are hopeful that winter and spring sports will continue as planned. Both undergraduate campuses have fitness facilities available to students for various hours, starting as early as 7 a.m. and as late as 10 p.m., which is the current NYS-mandated closing time. Facilities are cleaned and sanitized several times each day, and students sign up online in advance to ensure proper social distancing. We are in constant contact with the NCAA and conference representatives and will provide additional guidance as it becomes available.

Shabbat on Campus

We have had many wonderful Shabbatot on campus this semester. I just spent Shabbat on the Beren Campus, and it was amazing! I really enjoyed my time with our students. We expect to continue to have Shabbat programming and are hoping that the city and state guidelines will continue to evolve to allow for even more programming options on campus.

Events

There was a mix of online and in-person events on campus this semester. We have a packed Chanukah program planned over the next week, including a virtual concert, shiurim, candle-lighting and nightly activities on both campuses. We are continuing to monitor health and safety guidance and are planning additional events during the Spring 2021 semester.

Intercampus Shuttle

The intercampus shuttle has resumed at reduced capacity, based on social distancing guidelines. We are also planning to offer transportation for select events as well.

Dining

We will be adding flex dollars for local restaurants for the Spring semester and are also planning to reopen Milner's Mart on the Beren Campus.

Health and Safety Protocols

I am most pleased to report that overall we have seen that our YU community has felt a real sense of responsibility for their health and for protecting the health of others through complying with our guidance and the Code of Behavior. This is one of the central lessons of this challenging time, to think of the way our private actions deeply impact the lives of other people. This sense of *areyvut*, responsibility, is helping keep our campus safe.

This past semester, we implemented daily health screening and temperature checks, proactive COVID-19 monitoring for students, faculty and staff, social distancing guidelines and required mask wearing for everyone. We have also taken steps to ensure that our classrooms and facilities are properly cleaned on an ongoing basis and have upgraded our air filtration system, and we are continuing to look for ways to enhance our campus health and safety. In the coming weeks, we will provide updates on testing protocols for the Spring semester and, when they become available, plans for vaccine distribution.

Commencement Season

While it is of course impossible to predict the health conditions of the area in late Spring, we have begun to plan the possible venues for these milestone celebrations. Like with every part of our planning this year, we do it best when we do it together, and together with our students, we will discuss and plan for a meaningful and enjoyable commencement season.

FAQs

Our FAQs will be updated in the next week. Please keep sending in questions to **Spring2021questions@yu.edu** Your input is deeply impactful in actualizing and shaping the program.

As we enter into this holiday season, we have much reason to celebrate. The holiday of Chanukah represents the mission of Yeshiva University. Lit inside our homes, our candles illuminate the night outside. For us at Yeshiva University, you, our students, are the candles, and you have seen and studied this year, perhaps more clearly than any other year, how to lead with values. We believe in you as the leaders of tomorrow and trust that you will bring brightness and joy to our community and broader society.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful Chanukah and looking forward to a successful Spring semester.

Dr. Ari Berman