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Oakland University reveals blueprint for fall return

Safest campus in state creates flexible, responsive plan to maintain health, promote engaging educational experiences and campus life

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. – A majority of classes will be taught in-person in sanitized classrooms, preventive health measures will be required, vaccinations will be encouraged, and student life will resemble a pre-pandemic atmosphere on campus, according to Oakland University's plan to repopulate campus this fall.

"Grizzlies Together – Again" is a blueprint that presents students, faculty, staff and visitors with a range of expectations and opportunities when they return to campus. The rationale for the plan is based on the ongoing widespread distribution and efficacy of vaccines, adherence to prevention measures, the extremely low number of virus cases and positivity rates on campus, overall downward trend of COVID-19 cases, and less restrictive state of Michigan requirements.

Collectively, these factors are continually evaluated to determine how best to foster a safe environment for repopulating campus, said Oakland University President Ora Hirsch Pescovitz.

"We have a comprehensive plan that preserves the highest level of safety and health while providing students with an engaging educational experience," she said. "We look forward to students walking on campus, and coming together in residence halls, public lectures, entertainment venues, sporting activities and all those traditional occasions that define the OU experience."

Increasing face-to-face coursework to pre-pandemic levels gives students the flexibility to learn through a variety of methods, said Oakland University Executive Vice President and Provost, Britt Rios-Ellis. "We pride ourselves in creating a learning environment that facilitates student empowerment, provides support for student success, and optimizes safe public health practices."

Last spring, Oakland was among the first universities in the state to roll out a wide-ranging plan in response to the threat from the spread of COVID-19. That plan, "Grizzlies Protect Grizzlies: Healthy Together," along with other public safety measures are reasons for OU's top ranking in January as the safest university campus in Michigan, according to Collegemagazine.com.

“We are continually reviewing the efficacy of our preventive health policies, and are proud of the compliance with these policies from the OU community,” said Oakland University Senior Vice President of Student Affairs Glenn McIntosh. “It’s time to look ahead, and we are preparing campus to make sure students receive the high-quality educational and on-campus housing experiences they’ve come to expect at Oakland.”

The expectations for fall presented in “Grizzlies Together – Again” include:

- Normal (pre-pandemic) level of operations that preserves student course choice while increasing undergraduate face-to-face learning opportunities to nearly 80 percent.
- Increase number of students living in on-campus resident halls and apartments to up to 80 percent.
- Additional mental health services available to support students who may experience stress and anxiety.
- On-campus dining halls will offer in-person and carry-out options.
- Support services will be available in-person, virtually and a hybrid format.
- Student-centered educational, social and recreational programs will resume in campus facilities.
- Spectators will be permitted at athletic events as allowed by preventive health protocols, and attendance restrictions.

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