



December 14, 2020

Dear Students,

As follow-up to my message last week, today I write to share plans related to our testing and pre-arrival requirements for spring. Recently the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) issued new guidance for colleges and universities regarding COVID-19 testing.

In order to operate in person, it is now recommended that we implement an active COVID-19 on-campus testing strategy. Our strategy will include testing requirements as students arrive back from the winter break, and surveillance testing throughout the semester. Similar to the fall semester, for **two weeks prior to move-in** we are also asking students to reduce contact with others outside of their household and strictly follow CDC guidelines, such as: wearing a mask in public buildings, reducing non-essential travel, increasing handwashing, and reducing public activities (e.g., unnecessary shopping trips and social activities with friends). Below are the details of our testing plans, and other requirements before moving onto campus in the spring.

Pre-Arrival Testing Requirements:

It is mandatory for *all students to be tested for COVID-19 from home within 5-days prior to arriving to campus*. The PA DOH also recommends that the testing occur within 72 hours of arrival for individuals traveling from out-of-state (excluding those commuting from neighboring states). Proof of a negative test result will be mandatory prior to arrival to campus. If a student does not provide proof of a negative test (specimen taken within 5-days of arriving to campus) they will either be sent home until a negative test result is obtained or required to quarantine on campus. The decision of whether or not to send a student home will be at the discretion of the College.

In the case that a student does not have access to testing at home, they should contact Health Services (724-589-2195) at least ten days prior to their arrival date to discuss an alternative plan and/or for help locating a testing facility. This means that students should develop a testing plan well before the five-day window of your arrival date to avoid a delayed on-campus arrival.

Exemptions to Testing Requirements: Students can apply for an exemption from the testing requirement based on the following three criteria.

- If a student can provide documented proof of having tested positive for COVID-19 and completing their isolation period within 90 days of their scheduled arrival date, the student may

be exempt from being tested again upon arrival.

- If the student can provide medical documentation from their primary care physician indicating that they should not be tested for health reasons.
- If a student can provide documentation that testing goes against their religious beliefs.

Students wishing to receive exempt status should complete the [COVID-19 Testing Exemption Form](#) and submit it to Health Services via email or fax at least ten days prior to their scheduled arrival time (health_services@thiel.edu or FAX#: 724-589-2875). Students receiving exempt status will be notified by Health Services prior to their arrival date.

Pre-arrival Screening Form:

All students are also required to complete and submit a screening form within 7-days prior to their arrival date. This form will be used to understand potential exposure levels of our population. Student can click on [this link](#) to obtain the form, or find it on the Thiel College [health and wellness page](#). Please complete the form and email or fax it to Health Services (health_services@thiel.edu or FAX#: 724-589-2875)

On-Going Surveillance and Symptomatic Testing:

Upon arriving to campus, all residential students will be required to be tested by the College. On-going surveillance and symptomatic testing of students will also be required during the spring semester. Students will be asked to submit insurance information when receiving a test, and our partners will bill their insurance carrier.

All students who have not been approved for exempt status must participate in testing if instructed by Health Services. Students refusing to participate will be required to leave campus. If a student is suspended from campus due to non-compliance with the testing or other health and safety requirements, the College will not issue any refunds for room, board, tuition, or fees.

Student-athletes and students involved in other high contact or higher risk activities will also be tested more regularly based on NCAA and other guidance and requirements. Coaches and program directors will provide participants more details related to specific testing requirements for their sport or program.

Upcoming Communications and Zoom Sessions:

As mentioned last week, on Wednesday, December 16 another email message will be sent covering new quarantine timeframes and what you can expect when arriving to campus in the spring. The following is the information for the upcoming zoom meetings. As a reminder, coaches and other program directors will be scheduling program specific zoom meetings for some groups.

December 16 @ Noon - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81473298782?pwd=Y1p0bkdLNWdVeTl1VWRvaWQxbytBQT09>

Meeting ID: 814 7329 8782
Passcode: GXB0tA

December 16 @ 4:00pm - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82104843318?pwd=eGVINXltUkNueHZWTFd3NWthWWQ1QT09>

Meeting ID: 821 0484 3318
Passcode: FHKNs1

December 17 @ Noon - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83123291834?pwd=b1ZuMjBhL21XTVpOUFduYXY0bFgxQT09>

Meeting ID: 831 2329 1834

Passcode: EAc7FX

Each zoom meeting will be recorded and posted to the [coronavirus updates](#) page in case you are unable to participate.

Thank you again for your careful planning as we get ready for a successful spring semester together!

Best Regards,

Dean McKinney