



COLUMBIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Updated October 30, 2020

The following guidelines were developed based upon the recommendations of the seminary's COVID-19 Task Force and approved by the President's Council to clarify community expectations and outline standard practices designed to safeguard the wellbeing of the seminary community during the pandemic. The seminary continues to actively monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and be advised concerning best practices for educational institutions by local and national health experts. These guidelines will be updated as conditions evolve, and the most up-to-date information will be posted to this page regularly.

Many of us are heartsore and weary, burned out and frustrated, and impatient for the day when we can share space and fellowship as we once did. We know that this season has asked us all to sacrifice and endure much, and we recognize that these guidelines will ask much of us once again. But it is clear that we still have a long road ahead of us. In the month of October, the state of Georgia reported roughly twice as many new coronavirus cases as it did in April, while colleges and universities remain a major driver of infections and cluster events in our state. As a community that has been called together by the Spirit in service to a common mission, careful adherence to these guidelines is an expression of our mutual care and concern for one another. They will require that we limit some of our accustomed behaviors and activities even as we adopt new behaviors and activities for the sake of the health and safety of all. They will demand that we each bear some burden in the hope that by doing so we give ourselves the best possible chance of ensuring that none of us will have to bear the much heavier burden of illness due to COVID-19. We join you in praying for effective national leadership, a safe and accessible vaccine, and an end to these uncertain times. Let our commitment to upholding these guidelines declare that at least we are certain of this: we belong to Christ and to each other, and in that certainty we will stay the course to protect one another for as long as we must.

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SECTION I: CAMPUS ACCESS & SERVICES

Columbia Theological Seminary's campus remains closed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. All students, faculty, and staff are expected to complete their coursework and professional duties remotely. Until such time as the seminary deems it appropriate to reopen campus, campus access and services shall be strictly limited as follows:

I. **Employee Access:** Employees will be permitted to report to campus for work only under one of the following categories:

- 1) **On-site Worker (OSW).** On-site workers are those for whom *75% of their work or more requires physical presence on campus*. Examples would include security, maintenance, residence life, central services, and housekeeping personnel. OSWs are permitted to report to campus for work functions during normal work hours (between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm M-F), provided they comply with masking, distancing, and hand-washing guidelines at all times when present on campus. The President's Council shall review and approve all OSW designations.
- 2) **Essential Function Worker (EFW).** Essential functions shall be defined as those activities that
 - a. cannot be completed remotely, OR would be significantly negatively impacted if required to be completed remotely.
 - b. are critical to an employee's ability to perform duties explicitly outlined in their position description; and
 - c. are approved by the employee's direct supervisor and the Vice President with oversight of that area.

Examples may include faculty recording course lectures or performing other course-related duties, business office staff performing treasury functions, and staff performing in-person tasks such as signature of documents and retrieval of mail, packages, or supplies from designated drop points. These employees are permitted to report to campus for the time required to complete their essential functions during normal business hours. On-campus activities shall be restricted to the employee's seminary-assigned workspace, or where specific essential functions must be performed. These activities will be scheduled and highly coordinated. Employees performing essential functions must comply with masking, distancing, and hand-washing guidelines at all times when present on campus. The President's Council shall review and approve all ESW designations.

- 3) **Temporary Approval Worker (TAW).** Temporary, one-time approval may be granted for an employee to report to campus in the case of an immediate or emergency need. Examples might include an employee who can generally work from home, but whose internet or electricity has been compromised, or in the case of an unusual or urgent business request. Temporary approval requests must be submitted to supervisors for approval by a Vice President. Approvals will be granted in writing and shall apply only to the singular instance

for which it is granted. Temporary approval granted on one occasion shall not imply approval for a similar occasion later. Employees with temporary approval are permitted to report to campus only to complete the task for which approval has been granted, provided they comply with masking, distancing, and hand-washing guidelines at all times when present on campus. The President's Council shall receive and monitor all TAW approvals.

The Seminary reserves the right to discontinue onsite work completely at any time and without prior notice. In addition, any employee who reports to campus under any of the above-outlined categories will be required to:

- Comply with masking, distancing, and hand-washing guidelines at all times when present on campus.
- Log any and all contacts that may occur while on campus via contact tracing software available through the ResLife campus portal.
- Wear a CTS name badge while on campus.

II. Student Access: The buildings of upper campus, including JBCL, remain closed to students. With the exception of those students living in Florida Hall (see number 3 below), students are not permitted to enter upper campus buildings for any reason, and upper campus building codes have been changed to prevent student access. However, student use of the Columbia Campus is permitted as follows:

- 1) Outdoor Use:** Students are permitted on the quad and in outdoor spaces on upper campus, for recreational use or approved Seminary events in compliance with masking and social distancing measures.
- 2) JBCL Library Drop Point:** Students are permitted to access the outdoor pickup and drop-off location outside of JBCL to access library materials.
- 3) Students Residing in Florida Hall:** Columbia has reserved 4 separate entry housing units in Florida Hall for students during the pandemic. Students residing in these units are permitted to access Campbell Hall once per week on Saturdays to pick up mail and packages. Otherwise, the buildings of upper campus remain closed to these students.

In all cases, students are required to comply with masking, distancing, and hand-washing guidelines while on campus.

III. Mail and Central Services: Columbia's Central Services office remains operational to offer essential mailing and delivery services to the seminary community. However, services are strictly limited as follows:

- a) **Personal mail:** With the exception of students residing in Florida Hall, students, faculty, and staff shall NOT receive personal mail to their Campbell Hall address for the duration of the pandemic. Individuals shall direct member organizations, congregations, and personal contacts to use a home or personal address for all personal correspondence and shall take other reasonable measures to divert mail away from Campbell Hall.

- Students residing in the Village are expected to receive personal mail and packages at their Village Apartment address.
 - Students currently residing in Florida Hall are permitted to enter Campbell Hall *on Saturdays only* to collect mail and packages.
 - Personal mail that has been inadvertently delivered to Campbell Hall shall be forwarded to the intended recipient at their forwarding address on file, provided the mail is first-class. All non-first-class personal mail (ie: magazines, fliers, solicitations) shall be discarded.
 - Community members are strongly encouraged to update their forwarding address with Central Services using the form posted on eCampus.
- b) **Business mail:** To the extent possible, faculty and staff are requested to limit incoming business mail by advising vendors and contacts to use electronic means of delivery whenever available. Interoffice mail and incoming business mail shall be delivered to campus boxes daily, Monday through Friday. Interoffice mail may be dropped off and business mail may be collected from Campbell Hall only in compliance with the employee access categories outlined above (OSW, EFW, TAW). Each area or office outside of Campbell Hall shall designate a single mail collector to perform this task.
- c) **Outgoing business mail:** To the extent possible, faculty and staff are requested to limit outgoing business mail by using electronic means of delivery whenever available. When electronic delivery is not possible, outgoing seminary business mail may be deposited for processing in the bin located outside of the mail room on the garden level of Campbell Hall. A departmental billing code must be provided. Outgoing business mail may be dropped off in Campbell Hall only in compliance with the employee access categories outlined above (OSW, EFW, TAW).
- d) **Package services:** Campbell Hall is accepting delivery of business packages only at this time. With the exception of students living in Florida Hall, students, faculty, and staff are directed to use another address for all personal packages. Business packages will be available for pickup using the numbered package lockers located on the garden level of Campbell Hall. Recipients will be notified by Central Services staff when a package has been placed in the lockers for pickup. Packages may only be retrieved in compliance with the employee access categories outlined above (OSW, EFW, TAW).
- e) **Outgoing package services:** Columbia Seminary is providing outgoing UPS package service for seminary business shipments only at this time. FedEx and DHL are not available for seminary shipments and no personal outgoing packages will be accepted. A seminary business form must be submitted to include sender, department code, and recipient. Outgoing packages may be placed on the table outside of the mail room on the garden level of Campbell Hall for processing. Outgoing packages may be dropped off for processing only in compliance with the employee access categories outlined above (OSW, EFW, TAW).

- IV. Common Areas and Shared Spaces:** Columbia Seminary will strictly limit access to common and shared spaces for the duration of the pandemic as outlined below:
- a) Common Areas:** Common areas shall be defined as those designed for communal gathering, fellowship, or where it would be appropriate for more than one party to be present under normal circumstances. Examples include lobbies, stairwells, reception areas, break rooms, hallways, etc. These areas shall remain closed for the duration of the pandemic. Employees may pass through these areas but lingering or congregating is not permitted.
 - b) Restrooms:** All campus restrooms shall function as single-stall, single-user restrooms until further notice. Occupancy signs have been installed to permit individuals to indicate when a restroom is in use. Restrooms will be cleaned regularly in accordance with Columbia's enhanced cleaning protocols. Employees are required to wash their hands after use.
 - c) Shared Workspaces:** Shared workspaces shall be defined as any space equipped with more than one workstation that would normally be occupied by an employee under non-pandemic working conditions. Supervisors that manage employees who are approved to work on site (OSW, EFW, TAW) and must also work in shared workspaces are required to adopt a modified work schedule for those employees. The modified work schedule shall at minimum split the impacted employees into two teams that will alternate the weeks they work in the office. Where possible, use of shared workspaces should be discontinued or restricted to one employee until such time as the seminary deems it appropriate to resume normal on-campus work.
 - d) Shared Resources:** Shared resources shall be defined as campus work resources that would normally be accessed and used by multiple employees, such as printers, scanners / copiers, and supply closets / cabinets. These resources are available for one-at-a-time use only until further notice. Shared resource areas will be cleaned regularly in accordance with Columbia's enhanced cleaning protocols, and employees are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands before and after use.

SECTION II: SAFETY PROTOCOLS

For the duration of the pandemic, Columbia Seminary and members of the seminary community shall adhere to the following safety protocols, as advised by public health officials, to prevent virus transmission and limit the spread of COVID-19.

- I. **Personal Conduct Measures:** All persons present on Columbia's campus shall comply with the following safety protocols:
 - **Masking:** All employees, students, and community members are required to wear a mask at all times when present on Columbia's campus, both indoors and outdoors. Masks may not be removed at any time *UNLESS* the individual is:
 - a) living on campus and inside their apartment
 - b) alone in a car with doors and windows closed
 - c) alone in a room with a closed doorMasks must be worn again upon exiting any of the above-designated spaces.
 - **Distancing:** All employees, students, and community members shall maintain a distance of at least six feet from all other persons at all times while present on Columbia's campus.
 - **Hand-washing:** All employees, students, and community members shall observe proper hand-washing, sanitizing, and hygiene habits at all times while present on Columbia's campus. Sanitization stations will be made available at various campus locations to encourage frequent hand sanitizing.
- II. **Cleaning Protocols:** Columbia Seminary housekeeping staff shall continue to observe enhanced daily and weekly cleaning protocols for the duration of the pandemic, including regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces, shared workspaces, and shared resources using products approved by the CDC as effective in killing SARS-CoV-2.
- III. **Physical Plant Measures:** Columbia Seminary has installed several safety measures to enhance the cleanliness and safety of the physical plant. These measures include:
 - Antimicrobial coatings on door handles and push-bars
 - glass / plexiglass shielding in staff service locations
 - HEPA rated air filtration in campus buildings and increased HVAC preventive maintenance.

SECTION III: ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNICATION

Clear and consistent accountability measures are vital to facilitating a sense of mutual safety in the Columbia community. The greater our degree of trustworthiness and commitment in upholding the practices outlined in these guidelines, the greater our degree of freedom and confidence on campus. If, however, it becomes clear that community members are not honoring these guidelines, or in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak in the seminary community, the following communication and accountability measures are in place to minimize the risk of harm to the wider community.

- I. **Campus Security:** Campus security officers have been tasked with enforcing campus access and safety protocol policies and clearly communicating expectations with community members and those who pass through campus.
- II. **Signage:** Columbia Seminary has placed clear and consistent signage on all building entrances and in other strategic locations across campus. Students, faculty, staff, and outside community members are expected to comply with posted signs at all times.
- III. **COVID-19 Testing and Diagnosis:** According to current Georgia Department of Health policy, COVID-19 testing is available to all persons who request it, whether they are experiencing symptoms or not. However, testing supplies and locations may become limited in the case of a spike or surge in COVID-19 cases. All students, staff, and faculty are advised to familiarize themselves with local testing resources and monitor testing availability through the GA Department of Health website and directory:

<https://dph.georgia.gov/covidtesting>

- A COVID-19 case shall be considered confirmed following a positive COVID-19 test (viral, PCR, or antibody) OR, in the event that testing is not available, following a positive diagnosis by a qualified healthcare professional (doctor or nurse practitioner).
- IV. **Contact Tracing:** all employees shall be required to log all close contacts that may occur while on campus via contact tracing software available via the ResLife campus portal. In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case, employee contacts shall be notified. Students are likewise required to keep a record of their close contacts and activities so that, in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case student contacts may be notified. All persons who have been notified of contact or exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case, whether by a member of the seminary community or by an outside notifying authority, shall be required to quarantine for 14 days OR until they have received a negative COVID-19 test result.

- A “close contact” is defined by the CDC as anyone who has been within 6 feet of distance for longer than 15 minutes in any 24-hour period. For more detailed guidance on contacts and contact-tracing, please visit the CDC’s website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>

V. **Quarantine and Isolation:** Quarantine and isolation have been demonstrated to be effective in curbing the spread of COVID-19, and shall be employed by members of the seminary community as recommended by the CDC and outlined below:

- **Quarantine** is used to keep someone *who might have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2*, the virus that causes COVID-19, away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.
- **Isolation** is used to separate persons *who are infected with SARS-CoV-2*, the virus that causes COVID-19, from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it’s safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific “sick room” or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).
- In the event that a student currently residing on campus receives a positive COVID-19 test result or diagnosis, that student shall be required to relocate to a designated isolation apartment in Riggs Commons until they have been symptom-free for at least 72 hours and received a negative COVID-19 test result OR, in the event that testing is not available, until they have been cleared to end isolation by a qualified health professional (doctor or nurse practitioner).
- All persons who have been notified of contact or exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case, whether by a member of the seminary community or by an outside notifying authority, shall be required to quarantine for 14 days OR until they have received a negative COVID-19 test result. Members of the Columbia community who have reasonable cause to believe that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to quarantine for 14 days or until they have received a negative COVID-19 test result.

SECTION IV: INFECTION METRICS

The Georgia Department of Health is tracking daily COVID-19 cases and monitoring local infection rates for each Georgia county. For detailed information regarding the status of the pandemic in our state, please refer to the COVID-19 Daily Status Report:

<https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-daily-status-report>

Columbia Seminary is closely monitoring this information, and reserves the right to take the following actions in response to evolving pandemic conditions:

- Should the COVID-19 infection rate reach or exceed 2% (200 cases per 100,000 residents) in at least one Metro Atlanta County, *ALL* onsite work shall be immediately suspended without regard for prior approval until such time as the COVID-19 transmission rate drops below 2% for 14 consecutive days in all counties in the metropolitan area.
- If the COVID-19 infection rate drops and remains below 0.5% (50 cases per 100,000 residents) in all Metro Atlanta counties for 21 consecutive days, the Seminary *may* elect to relax COVID-19 restrictions and / or to resume onsite work via a phased approach. Any change in guidance will be clearly communicated to the seminary community and posted to this web page.