Covid-19 Staff Forum
with Mary Opperman, VP and CHRO

Wednesday, March 18th, 2020
Adam: Gina is saying that we're not -- they're working on it, but they don't know, they don't have an ETA. Not necessarily being close to be able to expand it. Looks like maybe we will either have to maybe hold another one. CIT is working on the problem right now. So with that in mind, Mary, are you okay with going ahead and then we'll maybe follow up with another one?

Mary: Sure, of course. We'll do whatever you think is best.

Adam: Okay. So I apologize for this, everyone. We'll have to put together another one, set it up as a webinar likely. But no those of you who are here, thank you for joining us. As you can tell, this is somewhat of an unless I dented situation and we're all working through it the best we can.

On the employee assembly, we're not used to having such a large digital forum, so we set it up one way and we should have probably set this up as a webinar. We'll March forward and do what we can and try to get some good afternoon out. We'll also make sure that this is recorded and that so that we can get that out. We'll also make sure that this is recorded and that so that we can get that out.

I'm Adam Howell. I am the Chair of the employee assembly for the 2019/2020 term, as well as the College of agriculture and life sciences representative. Thank you for being here. Those of you who could get in. And I hope that this * -- I hope that this helps. This is very uncertain time for folks. There's a good amount of anxiety and likely many questions. And we're hopeful this forum will help you answer some of those. What we're going to do it we will ask you all, first of all, to mute your microphone and then how we'll proceed is you can either type in your questions in the chat log or what we will do is you can use the raise your hand function in the side bar and we'll recognize you to have these questions be asked for Mary. And I guess I should
also mention Vice President of Human Resources, Mary O
fferman, is with us and she'll be fielding questions. Thank
you, Mary, for taking the
time to be here. And just I know that this is going to be a
big help and
hopefully we'll get a lot of good information out for
folks.

Hahe did he pew, vice-chair to the employee
assembly, will be taking down your questions if you type
in the chat log or recognizing you. Gina Batis
ta, Director of the Office of the Assemblies, will also be
assisting with this. She
may be working on trying to open up
the zoom meeting for others, so Hahe, you may
just be doing this on your own for right now, but we'll
see.

So with that, Mary, I'll turn it over to you. I'm
sure you have a few remarks you want to make and then we'll
open it up for
questions. Mary heir thanks, Adam. I do have some remarks
--

Mary: Thanks, Adam. I do have some remarks I want to
make, but I really
appreciate that the employee assembly did this and the fact
that
we're having some technical difficulties
is actually a moment to reflect on how we deal with things
that disappoint us. So I know that people wanted to get in,
but
I'd also just take a moment to thank the employee assembly
and the Office of the Assemblies for putting this together on
less
than 24 hours notice. We learn each time we try something, and
I just want to say to the assembly's office and to the EA,
thank you very much. I appreciate this.

So I'm going to make a few remarks and then we can open
this up no
-- for questions. Let me start by saying that this is truly
an unprecedented
situation. As many of you know, I'm far along in my career and
I've
been through many situations that when
I was in them I thought they were unique and different and I
didn't know how to
handle them.
I was at another university when the AIDS epidemic hit and the
reaction of
people in the workplace and how that evolved
evolved. I was here through 9/11 and for the great recession, and each time I said to myself, this is the most challenging thing I've ever dealt with. And here we are again dealing with something that is truly unprecedented. The whole world is trying to grapple with the emerging understanding of what Covid-19 means and what it means for us.

We're working our way through this here at Cornell in a thoughtful and careful way, yet we are moving quickly, because the situation warrants it. We have, right from the start, prioritized the health of our community and president Pollack and our leadership team have made some very difficult and courageous decisions, including sending people home in order to de-dense I identify our campus. When we moved to remote work, most of our staff, we moved to remote work and most of our staff have either moved into remote working or will be doing season. But not all of our work can be done remotely, and in those cases, our leaders are assessing what work still needs to be done and how best to do it. Since this pandemic first became known to us, we have been trying to respond to issues as we understand them. One of the things about this health crisis is what we knew and understood yesterday may have changed today. So we've been focused on the issues right in front of us. And let me give I just a few examples. And these are just a few.

On March 10th, that was ten days ago, we decided that it was best for students to leave campus and we made the decision that they should not return after spring break, which would begin on March 27th, and that instruction would begin online after break. Three days later, it became clear that it was not in the best interest of our students or the campus community for the students to remain on campus until March 27th. And so we made the decision to suspend classes at the end of that day and asked students to begin to leave for home. That significant change happened in three days. At the end of that day on March 13th, all K-12 schools in the County closed through April 12th. Other counties soon followed. On March 16th, 3 days later
the governor ordered that all food establishments must move to takeout only by 8:00 p.m. that night and the crowd capacity was reduced to 50 people. Yesterday, March 17th, daycare centers in the County were ordered to close for all but healthcare workers and first responders. Many of you have probably felt like you've been in this situation for a very long time, but in fact, we've been in this situation for less than two weeks. And so here's what I've learned. What we decided to may be outdated by tomorrow. It's very hard to communicate clearly in a rapidly changing environment, because it's hard for folks to keep up. And it only takes missing one message for your understanding to be outdated. And that's absolutely okay. People are doing the best they can.

I've learned that people deal with ambiguity and stress differently. So their reactions to this situation are different. For most of us, the enormity pandemic is hard to grasp and we find that some people are searching for simple answers to complex or even unknown questions. This also is completely understandable. It is a way of coping with something that we cannot control. And I've learned that sometimes we just need to Showdown, reach out to our friends, our family, and our colleagues, and take a deep breath, even though we don't really know what's coming next. We have no answers for how long this is going to go on. What we are doing is learning as much as we can and responding as best we can to a changing situation. But we are committed to getting through this and getting through this together. Can you all still see me?

- Yes, we can.
- You can?
- Yes.

Sorry. Something just happened. So I'm going to keep on going in case there are still people out there. Here's what I would ask of all of you. Take care of yourselves. I hope by now you all know how to protect yourself by washing your hands, refraining from common practices such as shaking hands, and you should all be practicing
social distancing to the best of your ability. And also take care of your personal well-being as best you can. Plan to the extent you are able. Be mindful of your eating habits. Get outside and breathe the fresh air. Move around. And get some rest. As the president says to me, this is going to be a marathon, not a sprint. And let me say one other thing before I turn it over for questions. I have spoken to so many tap and tacklely and leaders over the last nine days. Some of them are struggling to put this into a place that they can understand and deal with, so they are understandably looking for sometimes, looking for someone to give them answers that we don't have and in some cases, because they don't know what else to do, they're looking for someone to blame, and I can understand that. I want a human nature to try to make sense of such a unique and challenging and changing situation, and at least for a while being angry is a release of energy, and there's something really healthy about that.

I'm asking you, though, to be mindful of the impact that anger and negativity have on your own well-being, because in the long run you need to take care of yourself and find a way to do that that is healthy and sustaining. So I'm going to open up to questions now and I'll do my best to answer them, but please understand in some cases my answer is we don't know or we're working on it.

So with that, I'm going to turn this back to Adam and we can open it up for questions.

Adam: Okay. Again, thank you, Mary. We really appreciate this, especially as we're seeing in the face of trying to adapt to an unknown situation. This is very helpful. For everybody, again, if you have questions, please do one of two things. Use the raise your hand function or type it in the chat log. And A, I will turn it over to you to start fielding some questions for Mary.

Thank you, Adam. So we collected some questions that have come through chat, either
privately to me or to everyone
and also some questions that have been submit through e-mail.
One of the questions we have, Mary, and thank you so much
for your time, I think everybody appreciates, you know, this
opportunity to engage
with you, the first question that we have is as students leave
campus, this negatively
impacts the staff these to provide services for said
students. We're thinking dining facilities. Many staff
members, particularly wage workers
who cannot perform their jobs remotely, may be subject to loss
of hours, work. I know
that we've added health and personal days, but this is ten days and
students are gone for the rest of the semester. Can you shed
some light on maybe
the preparations or discussions being made to accommodate a
loss of demand
for these types of staff members, particularly wage workers who
cannot perform their jobs
remotely, you know, discussions
beyond the ten additional days, which I think is pretty
generous, but again
, this doesn't cover much of the spirit of time when the
students are gone.

Mary: Yep. So it's a great question and it's one I
completely understand. Right this we
don't have answers toe that right now. Here's what we're
doing. We're taking
a look at work that we do need to have campus. We need to
figure
out how long we need that work done for. We're also looking
at other types of work that we are
, our service workers and others who are, I don't know, do
. And we're successing on a regular
basis how long we can continued to find meaningful
work. So I don't have an answer to that, although it's an
understandable question
, because we're kind of going day by day as things
change and we're trying to, as boast we can,
keep the workers and their best interests in the tore front of
our minds as we do
that.

Thank you. We also have a question from Jamie who is an
EA member
who wants to know what steps in the central university
administration are being taken to ensure that
all units, departments are providing their staff with guidance and
instructions that meet the federal/state recommendations with regards to workplace
12:34:18 conditions? Heir heir this may be related
12:34:23 to those who have to be on campus, but if not would you clarify
it so I'm
12:34:27 answering the right question? But here's what
12:34:31 we are doing. We meet at least once a week with all of the
college HR and business
12:34:36 officers. They have bee been, since believe it or not, liking
12:34:41 last week or actually it might have been Investigators before,
trying to develop
12:34:46 their remote work strategies and their on-campus
12:34:50 needs. Again, I just want to say that what we
12:34:54 knew when we started the planning, what we expected to have
happen is very
12:34:58 different than what's happening today.
12:35:04 So each time something changes, the plans have to be adjusted
12:35:10 , so
12:35:10 the answer is yes, we are trying to -- and I know
12:35:14 I talked to the HR people every other day. They're all looking
-- they're
12:35:19 all developing their staffing plans, working with people to
make sure that those who are remote
12:35:23 have the right equipment, working on social distancing
12:35:28 for those who are here.
12:35:35 Thank you. I have several questions from Brian God
12:35:39 . I want to touch on some of them. I think one is related to
the question that Jamie
12:35:44 asked. I believe that the question was posed, why doesn't
Cornell
12:35:48 just shut down, period. Front line workers are concerned,
because
12:35:52 they feel that they still have to go to work everyday, because
they can't work remotely.
12:35:57 Trades, building care, front line workers don't feel safe. They
also feel
12:36:01 they're taking a chance by going to work and returning to their
families and possibly exposing
12:36:05 themselves. Many members, you know, in this field have family
members who are in
12:36:10 higher risk group groups.
12:36:15 That is the question. Why doesn't Cornell shut down, period?
12:36:19 Mary: The university is not shutting down. We are
definitely in a reduced
12:36:24 operations capacity
12:36:28 , but at this point our intention is to continue to operate
12:36:33 . Let me speak specifically to the question that Brian has
asked, which is if people do
12:36:38 not feel safe coming to work
12:36:43 , can we develop an alternate strategy for them and the answer
is, Brian, we will
12:36:47 try our very best. For folks who, in the short-term, who feel
12:36:51 that they can't come into work, they should contact
their local -- their supervisor or their local HR person and we will work with them to find another arrange meant for them or they can take their time that we've put into their bank. In the longer-term, we're trying to figure exactly that out. We're trying to figure out what services need to be here and how best to get them accomplished. These are very understandable questions that you all have. But for me to give you a simple answer to an incredibly complex situation would just be irresponsible of me. We're working on it. We're continuing to work on it. This is a 24/7 effort on our part to do the right thing by people. If individuals have specific issues and they don't feel comfortable talking to anyone else, I'm pretty much here all the time. They could call me.

Thank you for making yourself available. We have a question to everyone. What actions are specifically being addressed for essential staff, support, and safety if they have to work on-site? I think a lot of the questions that are come this go are this regards to staff members who feel the nature of their work requires to them to be at work and provide that support, whether they're cleaning items, cleaning facilities and they don't feel safe doing so. What is your guidance to that?

Mary: So they should be practicing all of their safety requirements. If they include wearing gloves to do their cleaning, wear gloves. They should be washing their hands frequently. They should be social distancing. What does that mean?

If they are needing to clean and there are still people in that building, they should make every effort to stay 3 to 6 feet away from individuals while they do the same. If that is difficult for them to do in their environment and they feel that they are at risk, they need to talk to their supervisor. If it they're not getting help from their supervisor, they should talk to their HR person.

The best way to handle these concerns is really one by one in the environments that they're in. So in some environments, the buildings are almost emptied out. And so there's
very little risk in terms of social distancing. People are practicing good hygiene and watching their hands on a regular basis. There is no one in the building or very few people in the building. Wind be able to practice social distancing. That said, right now we are trying to get instruction online, and it is not always possible while they're doing that for them to fully practice social distancing. And if they have concerns, then we want to try to mitigate those. What we need to know about them in order to do that.

Mary, that is Tony Indiscernible could I add a comment to that? If F C S building care, I have zero employees at my clock and what we're doing is staggering start times so that we're abiding way the less than ten people at a time. So we're adapting and we feel that as they understand the student population that's going to remain, that will establish our priorities and we're actually able to maintain the social distancing guidelines here, and that was just worded out yesterday.

Mary: Thank you.

I have a 2-part question. One is from Laura Santacross. Is there any number to the estimate of students who will remain in-house examining off campus housing. And tran chess could asked on -- Francesca says there's a call for volunteers to help students move out. What tools are provided to volunteers to ensure that they're doing this safely, especially since so many parents may come from out of town to pick up students. Do you know how many students still remain? How many students have moved out? And what are the tools provided?

Mary: Okay. So even if I wasn't really tired littler I could never have remembered all of those parts to that one question. So I'm going to start and then, hey, you can prompt me. I'm not sure I remember the beginning. Let me give this a try and then you can prompt me for the different elements of this. We don't yet know how many students will remain in campuses housing. The number we originally had is changing. Some people that expected they would need to stay in on campus housing are now going home or elsewhere. And others who felt they could go home or go elsewhere are indicating that they need to stay. It will till be
tractional -- still be fractional in comparison to the number of students on campus in normal times.

In terms of off campus, it's a very good question. People who are in off campus parents, what we can do is limit their time ask the way they interact on campus, but they have private leases and those are the decisions that they would make as a private lease holder. We know some are leaving and we expect that some are staying. I'm sorry. What are the other pieces of that question?

They wanted to know an estimate. Sounds like numbers wise we don't have an exact count, and it's kind of hard to know which students are living off campus. There's also been a call for volunteers to help move students out. What tools are being provided to volunteers to ensure that they do this safely?

So many students are coming from out of town.

Mary: Great question. So campus life will give safety instructions for how to help.

I was around this past weekend and I can tell you they're asking the parents not to go into the residence halls. They are bringing the dorm -- the stuff that was in the room out. They're doing everything they can to not have the parents go in. And that's been working actually pretty well.

The other thing I would say is we -- I think we have had a pretty steady -- more than a trickle, but a pretty steady number of parents coming through, so they haven't been as inundated i in any one day.

That also helps with social distancing.

Mary, this is Tony again. If I could comment in housing. As of the end of the day yesterday, 50% of the students on campus have left, and there really hasn't been a lot of chaos. Parents are coming, as you said. There are signs. Parents and visitors should not go into the buildings. So it's been quite orderly. So the big move out is scheduled for this Friday and this weekend. So we'll have extra staff in on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, but it's been really orderly.

and I haven't seen any large groups of people. So it's been going pretty
well so far.

Mary: Great. Thank you.
Adam: So really quickly, I just have a brief announcement about the meeting. We anticipate being able to add a few hundred more people to this particular zoom meeting and we'll probably have to set up another one correctly as a webinar very briefly in the future. I know that there are people listening in on other folks' computers and such. If you have your own questions, we'll try to get something set up correctly in the future.

And just as a reminder, please don't ask direct questions -- please type your questions in the chat or raise your hand to speak and we'll try to get -- we'll try to get to you. So that's just a quick announcement about this. And again, sorry for the technical difficulties, everybody.

Thanks. So I'm just continuing on the questions that we've been collecting right now. One of the questions that came in from UMP 4, temp employees are not eligible for personal sick time. Are there plans to provide a safety net for those employees in the event they may get sick?

Mary: Yep. Let me say there's a lot of concern in general for everyone, and I completely understand that and I appreciate that. We are trying as best we can to figure out how to take care of our folks as much as we can for as long as we can. Temping officials without benefits don't get sick and vacation days, and right now there is no plan to do that.

More questions are coming in had. We received one question from Joshua Holden. Will the UAW staff be able to collect unemployment? Heir Mary so if there is a --

Mary: So if there is a lack of work and the UAW staff are furloughed, we're working right now with the unemployment compensation office, and you can imagine that they are inundated, so it's a little hard to get information, to understand what benefits would be available if that were to come to pass.

Thank you. We received one question. If staff members are negative financially impacted by Covid-19 due to loss of wages, whether that
Mary: Let me answer that question in two ways. One, we're looking at what we can do here at the university. But the other I think is a really important thing to say in general. This is a situation the entire globe has never dealt with. Italy is dealing with these circumstances. We are not going to be able to get through this and out the other side. Simply and only from the efforts of individual employers. It just isn't going to be able to happen. And while we need the kinds of responses we are starting to see from the state and federal governments in order to be able to get ourselves through in a manner that will allow all organizations, including Cornell, to be able to get back to business when this subsides, and so we are doing the very, very best we can. And I just want to say, I've been in this community a long time and I completely understand and actually appreciate the high standard our community and our workforce holds under the circumstances to, but there are -- this is an unprecedented situation. Completely unprecedented. And we're going to need the kinds of help that's coming from the government. So as those become available, and I'm confident that they will, we'll make sure that we let people know what those are and how they affect our workforce.

Michelle Podalack: I supervise a team of hourly employees. Will the university be coming out with additional guidelines on working at home for hourly employees? Can we allow team members expanded work hours? Our team members are vital to supporting the transition to virtual for staff. I'd like to make sure my team members can meet the heavy workload in it the transition while still accepting the fact their children may need daytime attention that may impact the staff's ability to work full time, 8:00 o'clock to 4:30, ten extra days of HAP is very generous, but I
12:49:48 need to be able to use as many work hours as possible for our team's transition to virtual
12:49:49.

12:49:53 → Mary: Hourly workers can, indeed, work remotely. And that information is already
12:49:57 on the HR website about remote work.
12:50:03 If you have other questions, though, specific questions about how to set that up, and
12:50:07 they're not answered on the website, send me an e-mail and I
12:50:11 will get you to the right person. But yes, we have
12:50:16 -- we absolutely can have hourly workers work from home. They must
12:50:20 track their hours. Yes, you can be flexible in how those hours are collect, but
12:50:24 they must track their hours. So look on the website. See if what
12:50:30 we have there answers your question. If it doesn't, then I'm happy, send me an e-mail
12:50:34 and I'm happy to get you to the right person.

12:50:38 → Thank you. One question about the 10HAP days
12:50:42. Is there expiration date on using these ten sick days?

12:50:46 → Mary: We just haven't gotten that far yet. I think that we'll all be very happy
12:50:51 if, in it the outcome, we have ten sick days
12:50:56 that no one had to use for either themselves or anyone else. That will be a nice
12:51:00 problem to have. Right now, we are focused on what's in front of us and what's in front of
12:51:04 us is trying to make the current situation as doable as possible.

12:51:13 → The campus life division has been sending e-mails with the expectation that staff are expected to be working
12:51:18 on campus. The person submitting this wants to remain anonymous, is
12:51:22 in this division my position is not considered essential. I have been on campus this week with
12:51:27 no official timeline to be transitional
12:51:31 -- transitioned to work from home. The remainder is desolate with administrative
12:51:36 meetings. Can units be re-encouraged to quickly transition nonessential workers
12:51:40 to work remotely and is there an expectation to make staffing
12:51:44 plans due Friday that nonessential staff are to
12:51:46 physically report to work?

12:51:50 → Mary: So I will follow up on their staffing plans. I had several conversations
12:51:55 with them as you can imagine. Student and campus life is on the front
12:51:59 lines of trying to get our students moved out.
So they have understandably been trying to prioritize where the efforts of the leaders go. As I said in opening remarks, we have one set of understanding for how we do our dining, and then in one day, because of the change in state regulations *losses, we had to move to takeout. When each of those things happens, what we find is that we just stop where we are. We have to go back and look at everything we thought we were going to do. And we thought we were going to do. And we think we're getting these questions about people who are doing research. We're getting questions about people who have to support faculty.

For colleges requiring factual to come to campus April 6 to do lectures, how are staff who must support them be protected some I think we're getting these questions about people who are doing research. We're getting questions about people who have to support faculty.

Mary: Just a quick recap of what I said before. So I think we're getting these questions about people who have to support faculty.

Mary: Just a quick recap of what I said before. So the situations are changing daily. For example, in research, we're putting on pause a lot of our research because of social distancing issues. And those plans are really just starting to form, because that decision was made over the weekend.

In terms of the staff needed to move faculty to virtual teaching, I do expect that some of that right now really does need somebody there to make sure it's set up, and it may be that those faculty will do their classes from their offices or from classes.

Rooms. And we are talking right now about the extent to which that support, that technical support needs to be on premise and how much of that technical support can be done remotely.

We received a question from Scott Burke. Is the pandemic creating any new jobs at Cornell? Program at IT. If so, what are the jobs? What are we can volunteer to help?
Mary: What a wonderful question. Thank you so much. To date, we haven't come up with new jobs, but I think in time we may find some new opportunities and new assignments, so stay tuned. I will tell you if we do ask for people to volunteer to take on new responsibilities, we're going to do that through the talent marketplace and a gig. So more to come. We haven't gotten to that place yet.

I will say, let me tell you personally how I think this is making us stronger. First of all, the leadership team is working around the clock to try to address issues that come up. I have seen heros across this campus who have gone above and beyond to support each other, to support our students, and I know that in some cases it's frightening to be in situations where the students and their families are, and that's completely understandable. But I would just ask us all to remember that they're scared, too, and for our seniors, this was the end of their senior year and this is not at all what they expected. So I guess what I would say is I feel a sense of pride in how hard everyone is trying to do what is best for everyone, recognizing how many different priorities there are.

SASCL Becker asked in the event that our UA summer positions that we've already signed up for are eliminated, will we be guaranteed any sort of compensation? Because we were guaranteed summer work when we signed our contract.

Mary: Yep, I understand. There were a lot of things we expected to be handled in it a different way on March 5th than what we're dealing with now. We will get to summer work. Whoa just are not there yet. I understand the concern. If we can't fulfill summer expectations, we'll see what we can do to address that. We just are not there yet.

I know that you addressed this before. They're receiving more staff members if afternoon R. an employee doesn't feel comfortable, an example of isolation rooms was given, they shouldn't be required to clean those others. They tell they height have retaliation if they refuse. Can you tell employees they won't be retaliated against if they see it as an
unnecessary health risk?

Mary: Let me start this answer by saying I'm not a health professional and so I just want to be really clear here about what I am saying is being guided by what we are learning from health professionals. We are not putting anyone in situations that the Health Department has indicated we should not put them in. That said, individual individuals' own comfort with this unknown situation is different. And so what I think is if somebody really feels afraid, to first and foremost talk with someone to figure out why. It may be that they don't have all of the information they need to make that decision for themselves. It is the case that there's a lot of information swirling around about the virus and about how to get it, most of which is speculation on the part of others. And so we have made our decisions and we have pretty carefully stuck to this based on what the Health Department has told us. With you if an individual is still concerned, we should first and foremost talk to their supervisor and express their concerns. Of course there are situations where people are afraid to do that, but everyone right now is trying to come to terms with something we've never dealt with before, and I have confidence that our supervisors will understand if someone is just worried and can't figure out exactly what they should do. If they're thought comfortable doing that, hopefully they are comfortable going to someone else, a manager above that individual, a manager above that, the HR person, someone who can help them talk through these. High general advice to everyone is take a deep breath and try to figure out where your reaction is coming from. If it is coming from a place where you need more information, let's help you get that information. That's totally understandable. If it's coming from a place where you believe you have the information and you need to act, then let's figure out how to help you do that. Thank you. We have a question online that asks, do you anticipate a mandate
for nonessential staff to be required to work? Is there an expectation from the unit
staffing plans through Friday that nonessential staff are to physically report to work?
- Mary: So let me start by saying that we don't identify essential people. We identify essential functions. And the essential functions functions that we are identifying are those that then, after we've identified the essential functions, we're trying to figure out how to get them done. So in some cases, they can be done remotely. In some cases, they can be done mostly remotely. And in other cases, the only way to perform those functions is on campus.

So we do expect and have seen the staffing plans coming in that are clearly identifying the work that must be done on campuses and how they are going to get that accomplished. Did I answer that question?

I'm not sure I did.
- I think so. If anybody has any follow-up questions about that, they can e-mail me or submit it in the chat.

Another question that came in through Brian good El -- Goodell, I have a question about front line staff. If the only reason they were here is because Cornell thinks they're expendable, can you reassure the after it they're at Cornell because they're replaceable? Not expendable? I think that's the sense of some staff members. Yes.
- Mary: That makes me really sad that that's how someone would feel. The university has worked so hard to prioritize its workforce and to try to find ways to keep people in pay as long as we possibly can. That for someone to feel that the fact that we're trying to do that is because we of course they're expendable, it's really sad. I just have to say it makes me really sad. What I would say is we're working very hard to try to find meaningful opportunities for people to continue to perform services that we need done in a time where a lot of things are slowing down. So if the individuals that work on our campus, those who are working in grounds and in housekeeping and custodial and dining are very important members of this community. They
13:03:24 help with our buildings and our people, our
13:03:29 students and our spaces, and
13:03:33 we have such a sense of obligation to them that we're doing the
best we can to
13:03:37 try to keep them in a job that needs to get done. And
13:03:39 I would just implore
13:03:43 those of you who are in positions where you can help
13:03:47 people, find a space
13:03:52 there's healthy and resilient to work through those feelings of
anger and upset so
13:03:57 that they can come to a police where they're not looking
13:04:01 at
13:04:06 the actions taken in the worst possible way, but whether
13:04:11 generosity of heart and
13:04:11 spirit and that his the healthiest way for all of them to get
through this
13:04:15 together.
13:04:19 ^ Okay. I think to counter that
13:04:24 , I think there's been a lot of tremendous response from staff
member
13:04:28 s to say the response has been very effective, very efficient, very quick, and
13:04:33 there have been a lot of comments be
13:04:37 turning the university. They want to thank you. They want
13:04:43 to thank
13:04:49 . They have asked earlier, knowing there's a lot of
appreciation from staff members to yourself
13:04:55 and to Martha
13:04:59 for the steps being taken and also a lot of questions I'm
really glad we have this forum to
13:05:00 try to answer those.
13:05:04 Moving on to another question.
13:05:08 For those who pay to Park and are not coming back to work, will
we be credited
13:05:11 and not charged for the parking fee?
13:05:14 ^ Mary: I don't know. We'll take it to transportation
and ask.
13:05:19 ^ Thank you. We have a question
13:05:23 from other live. Are there any plans to make
13:05:27 empty student housing available to healthcare organizations or
potential facility
13:05:31 overflow if the situation worsens?
13:05:37 ^ That's a great question and I saw that on the
13:05:41 news. That's something we haven't dealt
13:05:46 with in Upstate New York. Our campuses in downstate is very
different than what we're dealing
13:05:51 with here. So our medical college
13:05:55 , be our Dean and our faculty
and our staff who are working on the front lines are true heroes, and you should be really proud to be their colleagues. They are dealing with just an unbelievable situation and they're doing a fantastic job.

This is really I think mostly a campus conversation, but our leadership at Cornell tech has quickly ramped up a remote work situation. Our medical college is trying as best they can to get people who can do remote work off. Their doctors and nurses and technicians are busy in the hospitals trying to deal with a situation that really is not at all like what we're dealing with here at this time. And they're doing an amazing job. So I don't think we've had that situation happen here.

—from Lisa Dean, are you moving students to one building that will be remaining or are the students being scattered throughout several buildings?

—Mary: Actually, that's a great question. I thought that question might come up and I don't know the answer to it, but it's a really good question. I know that they've been trying to figure out -- they wouldn't squash them all to the same building. This whole idea is to create social distancing, but I don't know whether or not they might disburse them into more than one. And I don't think they're really going to know that until they see how many are staying.

—if somebody that has to go to Cornell for one reason or another, will be ticketed if they go to a spot in the appropriate parking pass.

—I know the question -- I thought that had been addressed. Let us check. I thought they had relaxed the parking. Let's make sure that's been done. Yes. And I believe they have relaxed them. And so if you haven't seen that, we'll make sure that you can find them. I believe that they've relaxed the parking restrictions until April 19th. The only thing that's prohibited is handicapped parking. No parking assigned. So if you don't have a permit or a lessor permit, you can Park in any permitted spot.
13:08:40 Another question we received online, from Lel
13:08:44 a Ellis is if there's a shortage of, say, dining work, or could
somebody come in
13:08:50 to put an hours with the grounds department botanic gardens, 
would it be
13:08:54 possible to fill in those gaps where appropriate?
  — Mary:
13:08:58 Again, we're not quite there yet, but once we have a sense of 
our staffing, 
13:09:02 we may very well be calling for people to volunteer
13:09:07 to take other assignments, and if we do that, we put 
13:09:12 that call out through workday and we use that opportunity 
market lace, and 
13:09:16 in it there's sort of a gig request and we'll gut them in as 
gig requests. If 
13:09:20 we do that, because that all sounds like something from another 
country to should have us, we'll 
13:09:25 make sure that we give lots of information about 
13:09:29 that and walk you through how to do that. But it may be that 
we have that 
13:09:35 situation and we'll thank you for asking that. Yeah. 
13:09:42 — What are some preparations being made to alleviate any 
negative long term impacts to 
13:09:43 the staff?
13:09:47 — Mary: I just saw a question come through. Gigs are 
generally unpaid. So we're just using 
13:09:52 the gig technology. That's a good question. Thank you for 
clarifying it. We're just 
13:09:56 using the gig technology as a way 
13:10:00 to put the call out and get the information. It's not a gig in the 
13:10:04 way we use them for professional development. I'm sorry. I just 
13:10:07 wanted to clarify.
13:10:11 — That's fine. Thank you for clarifying. So the 
13:10:16 question was what do you project are the long term impacts 
13:10:21 to alleviate any long term negative impacts to the 
13:10:21 staff.
13:10:25 — I Jeff I knew. I think we're 
13:10:29 all watching and reading. We don't know what the long term 
impacts of 
13:10:34 Covid-19 are, and I'm not a publi public health professional. 
And for 
13:10:38 me to give you a sense of what I think that would be would just 
be me repeating what I've read 
13:10:42 or heard from others. 
13:10:53 I want you to remain as strong of a community as 
13:10:58 we can. 
13:11:02 — Does Mary know when a staff member event eventually is 
diagnosed
with a positive case how the healthcare department wants to make sure colleagues are detected to make sure others aren't exposed?

Mary: That's a great question and I had on my list to address this.

I will just stop to say this is all I've done for six months. As I looked at the calendar, it's been less than two weeks. When I first started realizing that we had to develop plans there were no test kits available anywhere. So it was very few people were being tested. Now the test kits are starting to come out and more people are being tested. We are getting way more questions, because of that, which is good. I'm glad those questions are coming. If a positive test, if someone on the campus is tested positive, the Health Department contacts us ask contacts them and they work with a person to develop what I believe they called a contact map. And that contact map allows the Health Department directly, not us, directly to of this the individuals who have been in contact with that individual. For us, if we were to be informed, we would not be informed of who it is.

That person may choose to tell us, but the Health Department would not. That's my understanding.

It seems like some people have been able to join this chat, so might have missed some of the questions asked earlier, so I apologize if any of this seems redundant.

Rereceived a question online. Other colleges and universities have relieved their custodial staff due to high risk environments, but Cornell has yet to send custodial staff at home. The risk with shaving this virus are children and parents is of paramount concern. When they come in at night, it is a huge risk. Is Cornell going to be moving to have custodians to stay home? If not, are there ways in which they are being protected with no masks being available? What is being done?

Mary: So it's he a great question, and let me just say that one of the reasons we de--dens...
here can practice social distancing. And in social distancing
and
hand washing, the risk to an individual of being in a
relatively
is Relatively low. Well, let me stop. I don't know that.
I'm not a health
professional. In order to increase the protection of
individuals, if a
custodian feels that I or she is unsafe in
doing the work they're doing, implore them
to talk to their supervisor. Implore them to do
that. Also, please read the actual information that we have on
our websites so that the best you can
, you can separate for yourself what you're feeling
that feels like fear and what you're feeling that feels like
concerns
you can get answers to. It will help you to figure out what
you want to ask and what you want to do.

It is true that other places have made the decision to
let go and stop paying the individuals that have been doing
this work. to date we have tried to find ways
as we have the we can to keep workers in pay as long as
possible.
And when we have work, we're
asking people to do it. I understand that may feel very
frightening to some of
you. Please, if you want to, you can call me and talk to me.
Let's figure
out why. In we can understand why you're having that reaction,
then maybe we can figure out what the best next step is for
you.

Mary, this is Tony again. Again, from Bill and Cara
Cara. Appreciate all of the concern for custodians, but just
to share, for general knowledge
, all custodians receive extensive train
ing on cleaning, personal protective equipment.
They have everything available to them: Masks, gloves, training
procedures
. There's special training being set up now for cleaning
isolation
rooms. And it's
always, to my knowledge, custodians have always
been able to loca localize if they feel that they're in if an
unsafe situatio situation. So
it's really appreciated, but another perspective
custodial staff kind of feel proud that, you
know, they're seen as being essential and this is part of their
daily
mission and an extension of that. So not to speak for them,
but
that's a sense we get. And again,
somebody says I'm not comfortable being here, they can go home.
I don't feel I should do this,
then don't do it. So yeah, custodians are not forced
, nor would they be to do anything

they're comfortable doing and they are totally properly prepared
and trained to do

what they do.

We have a question from Catherine Burke online. Mary,
can you please
explain the purpose of the extra half days and when to use them
I've heard difficult ways people
have been interpreting how to do [Indiscernible]

Mary: Thanks for asking the question. They are added
to your banks.
For most of the campus, it's a half pay. For
some we have sick banks. So what we've done is
we've broadened the access to HAP
to help your own, to care for someone in
your care and for personal reasons.
Those are just days. So I do know that people are asking
questions about
that.

Some other questions we've been asked online, some
people want
to know what the likelihood of the university closing is. What
would be the implication for their jobs?
Mary: Right. Not there
yet. And
so we are doing our very best to remain open and to continue to
do
the things what we can continues to do. I think that's very
important for our workforce
. We also think it's important for our
ability to come back after this
situation. But we just aren't there yet. Right now we're open
. We're continuing to
do work and that's where we are today.

What advice do you have for those who, even though we're
practicing social
distancing, there might be times when they might have to
congregate in the
same space if there are time clocks that
require people to be clocking in and these time
clocks accommodate 30 plus people. What is your recommendation
in instances like
this? Both facilities and campuses serves have made changes
to the clocks so they can spread them out
and not find them congregating at the clock. If you find
yourself in
the situation where you're not social distancing, remove yourself 6 feet away
and have the conversation with the individual so we can provide for that next time. You're not perfect with this, but I know we're staggering start times and using social distancing as an expectation.

I think we're reaching about the end of the questions. And also probably the end of the allotted time. If Nick has any other questions, please submit to me via the chat. Again, I'm seeing a lot of individuals expressing their gratitude towards this opportunity to be able to engage. I know that there are technical difficulties that we've experienced, but I think a lot of this is growing things and trying to figure out how to make the necessary accommodations in these times that we're finding ourselves in. And things occurred that we were not anticipating, like the zoom room chat.

Can I say something before we all depart?

Mary: I just want to thank everybody. You know, when we open to questions, we get the hard questions and we get people's fears and anxieties, and I actually really actually grateful that people felt comfortable enough to answer those questions. I think it says a lot about our community. And I also want to thank you all for being so flexible and resilient during this time. It's very difficult to be dealing with something so unknown and filling out how to make all of these changes happen. How you're doing or why you're doing it. I just couldn't be prouder of everyone. I know we're making lots of mistakes and we're stumbling here and there and you're not getting all the information and I wasn't able to answer a lot of questions. But I university really appreciate how dedicated everyone is and how much concern you're all showing for each other and I ask you to continue that and also to please, please take care of yourselves. Please take care of yourselves. Do things that help you see how to kind of breathe through a situation that none of us have ever been through before. So it's
just my parting words are ones of gratitude and admiration.

Some last minute questions. Some individuals have asked if there are any plans to address any potential burnout in the future from staff members who have been asked to work and who might be feeling some stress from that -- staff members.

Mary: Yes. That's a great question. We're looking at things like how to manage the isolation of being remote. How to deal with this ongoing stress. And what you can look forward to is that we're looking at putting some short videos up, at least a couple of two tips a week, is some from me. Although you're probably sick of looking at me. Some from me, some from others with helpful tips and tools to try to deal with such a changing situation. The so when we do those, we'll try and make sure you all know where you are so you can see them. And if you have advice for other things we should be addressing, please let us know.

Thank you.

Adam: I guess to kind of wrap things up, Mary, I really want to thank you for your time, for being here and answering these questions. I know that it's a great help to everybody who was able to join us. And also, I apologize to everybody who could not get through. We're going to try to work through this. We're all dealing with this as an abnormal situation. So we're going to try to see if we can -- what we can do for the future. And thank you to all the staff members joining us and just to echo Mary's comments to everybody else out there who are keeping the lights on and keeping things running as best as possible. What you do is truly appreciated. I think the staff are being great stewards of the university at a very trying time, and all of those efforts are truly appreciated.

Thank you all, once again. And hopefully we'll see if we can do something in the future, but I appreciated you all being here and joining us for this and staying healthy. Take care, everyone. Have a great rest of your week.

[Event Concludes]
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