

ADAM HOWELL: OK, let's go ahead get started. I think maybe a few people are still filtering in, but I just want to introduce myself. My name is Adam Howell. I'm the chair of the Employee Assembly and I'd like to welcome you all and thank you for joining us here at our latest open forum for Cornell staff. Again, these are-- we're so happy and so lucky that we've been able to have these open forums since really the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis and that's really a credit to the great partnership and openness that we've had with the university leadership. So I'm thrilled that we're able to continue these.

Just a few points that-- while we're excited to have these and we'll be continuing to have these-- I'll ask the Office of the Assemblies to put the link to our schedule in the chat pod so you all have it. We try to answer as many questions as possible. Of course, we won't always be able to get to them all. But there'll be many bites at the apple over time. So we hope that you get a lot of good information, and enjoy these, and feel they bring a level of comfort to you all as we return to campus and things start to spin up as we get into the fall.

So, as I always say, we're not here to listen to me. I want to be as brief as possible. So, with that, I will turn it over to vice president and chief human resources officer Mary Opperman. Mary, thank you so much for being here and I'll turn it to you to say a few words.

MARY OPPERMAN: Adam, thank you so much and thank you to the EA for being such terrific partners during this really unprecedented time. I'm not going to give my usual opening remarks because we have a lot to accomplish today. I am going to just very briefly introduce my colleagues and my boss. And then I will turn it over to Martha to make some introductory comments, after which we'll go to questions.

So you actually have seen most of us before, but, as a quick reminder, Joanne DeStefano is with us today. She is the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for the university. Joel Malina, Vice President for University Relations. And we're especially grateful to President Martha Pollack for being with us today. As you can imagine, there are many moving parts to this, the situation we find ourselves in. And Martha is in the middle of every moving part. So I'm going to turn this over with my gratitude and thanks to President Pollack.

MARTHA POLLACK: Thank you, Mary. I'm not sure what I think of that image of being in the middle of every moving part, but I know what you mean. And I do want to thank all of the staff members who are here and especially Adam and Hei Hei and the rest of the leadership of the EA for organizing, not just today, but this whole series of these open discussions. They are, I hope, valuable to you and we need the communication back to us as well.

I want to spend a few minutes at the beginning just talking a little bit about where we are, where we are in our plans for the fall, and how we got here. And I want to start with a thank you. Where we are is due to the input of just an enormous number of people around campus and indeed around the community. We had three planning committees I think you know that. There were faculty, staff, and students on them. The work of the research reactivation

committee is already underway as our campus is already open for research. The work of the other two committees is leading us into the fall.

We've been involved with epidemiologists both on campus and in Ithaca and Tompkins County on doing public health analyses. We've been involved with the government. I sit on the New York Forward Committee. Provost Kotlikoff sits on the-- I was going to say New York state, NYS, committees-- subcommittee for CICU. CICU is the commission on independent colleges and universities. They've been providing a lot of the guidance to higher education. And we've been involved with the Southern Tier Regional Control Board.

We've gotten great advice from the Administrative and Cost Control Committee as we've done financial modeling and then, of course, we've tried very hard to stay engaged through a whole series of town halls, participation in EA, and faculty senate meetings, and, of course, surveys that many of you participated in. So thank you to everyone and we will continue over the summer to engage as much as we can.

Let me say a minute about-- order too about what our peers are doing. On the left hand side here, this is from CHE, the Chronicle of Higher Education. This is about a week out of date. But they are tracking more than 1,000 colleges and universities across the country. And what you see is that just shy of 2/3 are planning for in-person education and another 20% are proposing some sort of a hybrid model, so that you can see that in reopening, we are really with the majority of other universities.

I have to confess-- I noticed this this morning, I don't know what this link 1.8% means. I've got to go back to the Chronicle of Higher Education and look at that. But my point is to say that many, many, many universities around this country are reopening. And if you look at our peers in the Ivy League, all of them are bringing some proportion of students back to campus.

Penn, like us, which, by the way, is the only other one of the Ivies that has a large number of students living off campus, is bringing back all of their students. The rest of the Ivies are bringing back somewhere between 40 and 75% of the students onto campus. Most have announced hybrid teaching or some combination of hybrid and online. Only Harvard has said that they will be all online.

So how did we get here? How did we make our decisions? Well, I always want to go back to guiding principles. And as we made these decisions, we considered two things. The first and single most thing was public health and safety, the health of our community. And as we thought about the health of our community, we're an educational institution, we're a research institution, we really worked very hard to draw on the best science and to make a data-driven decision.

Beyond that, as we weigh various alternatives-- and we've had to weigh a number of alternatives and, as you know, make some very hard decision. We went back to the four guiding principles that we set out back in March. Caring for our students and, in particular, ensuring

that all of our students get the financial resources they need to complete their education, so getting them additional financial aid as their families have seen economic dislocation.

Safeguarding our future as a world-class institution, we all want to come out of this with Cornell as strong, if not stronger as ever. Maintaining our staffing. You the staff are critical to who we are. We don't run as an institution if we don't have you working and so we're working very hard to do as much preservation of jobs as we possibly can. And then seeking new knowledge, seeing what we can learn as we move through this pandemic together.

I want to have a minute about science and data. I don't know whether many of you have had a chance to look at the epidemiological study that we commissioned. It was done by Professor Peter Frazier and a team of data scientists. There are a lot of charts in it, but this to me is the key chart.

So what Professor Frazier and his team did was they modeled the likely number of infections and the likely number of hospitalizations under lots of different conditions, but two big ones. One is where we reopen, where we bring our students back and have these hybrid classes, some online, some face-to-face. And the other's where we don't reopen, where we're just fully online.

And what you're seeing here are hospitalization counts. So what's the probability that in the Cornell community a certain number of people will be hospitalized. And, importantly, the orange-- just look at the top for the moment-- the orange is in the case in which we reopen. So what you see is sort of roughly a probability. We predict, under the best estimates we have, the best data we have, that somewhere between five and 18 people may be hospitalized this fall. Now, there's a lot of uncertainty, but that's what the models show us and you see that the peak here is at about, it's a little hard to see, but maybe 10. So there's-- that's your best guess there.

In the case in which we don't reopen, what you see is that the predicted number of hospitalizations is somewhere between 60 and 70, with the peak at about 65. So it's significantly worse not to reopen than to reopen. And that's very counterintuitive and I'll explain that in one moment. But I just want to show you these two slides down here. So when you do this sort of modeling, the other thing you do is what's called sensitivity analysis. You say, OK, I have my best guess about things like what percentage of students will come back to campus, bringing the infection with them.

But what if it's much worse and what if it's much better and you play with different parameters. You try out different parameters to see whether your conclusions change. This bottom left, these are the optimistic parameters this is if, for example, many fewer students than we would currently expect return infected and this is under pessimistic parameters. And what you're seeing is in the optimistic case it's not that different at the low end. In the high end, it's a little bit better now. The peak is at about 40 instead of at about 60. This is over the course of the whole semester.

In the pessimistic case, it is worse. But, again, the numbers are much lower for reopening than not reopening. That's a surprising result, so why is that?

The reason is that our entire reopening plan is based on a very aggressive virus testing program. It's a program where every single student who comes back is going to have gateway testing. And that means, where possible, they'll test at home before they travel here. And then when they come back, they will be tested again. And they'll be quarantined in a hotel until we get the result. We'll get a rapid result. Moreover, they will be tested every five to seven days. Every student will be tested every five to seven days. We'll also have testing of faculty and staff. The period will be determined, encouraged. And then depending on the conditions, might even be required.

After testing, and this is really important, we'll do contact tracing and then quarantine and isolation. And by supportive. I mean we're not just going to stick a student in a room and they have no one to take care of them. We'll provide food. We'll provide supplies. We'll have nurses check in and so on, just as we did this past semester with students who were quarantined.

And so the difference between opening and not reopening is that if we're open and the students are enrolled, we can absolutely require this frequent testing, and this follow-up, and this quarantine. And we can have a series of very significant sanctions if they don't cooperate. If we're not open, what we've learned both from surveys we've done from our students and from communications with the local landlords, is that a number of students are going to come back to Ithaca anyway.

In fact, if you drive around college town right now, you'll start to see the students coming back. They're back. They had leases as of July 1. If we-- and, by the way, we're going to start having optional testing next week for those students who are back. If we're not open, the fact that a student is living in Ithaca and taking online courses really doesn't put them in a different category than the students who's living in Atlanta, or Chicago, or Los Angeles. We're not going to be able to mandate this frequent testing. And this testing with quarantine and isolation that lets us very quickly pick up and contain any outbreak.

That's why you get this very counterintuitive result of fewer infections and, thus, fewer hospitalizations when we open than if we were to go fully online and students came back anyway. And that's what drove our decision. That's the primary factor. Because remember public health is number one. That drove our decision. That was the key decision. There is a number of secondary condition-- decisions. I'm not going to go back into all of them. We're going to bring back all the students. More than 50% live off campus anyway.

We'll have a modified calendar. We're going to start a week later. That gives us more time to prepare. And it also lets us have a much longer, more staggered moving period where we can initially quarantine students for a day or two until we get the results. We're then going to have all the students go home at Thanksgiving and complete their semester online, that way they're not going out, and coming back, and bringing the disease with them. We're going to start

spraying a week later-- that has less than-- we have fewer people here during the flu season and so on. Again, if you want to know more details about all this we can talk about that in the Q&A period.

They are then a whole-- many, many, many additional recommendations that were made by the planning group and that are going into the plan-- there are many people hard at work at implementing this now, everything from the daily check, which I hope all of you are doing before you go on campus-- you go and get your email, you go on that site, you make sure you have no symptoms, you get cleared, modifications of facilities, changing of classrooms so that students aren't sitting close together. Provision of personal protective equipment to staff-- actually to everyone, we'll have masks for everyone. Policies around travel, we're going to limit-- we're basically going to restrict business travel by faculty and staff, visitors, and so on.

I also want to mention this last one. We're going to monitor things very carefully. I mean, there's an enormous amount of uncertainty associated with this disease. We're all learning about it. And we're going to have a lot of data from this testing that we're doing. We're in very close collaboration with Cayuga Medical System and with Tompkins County Health Department. We're going to have their data. And we're going to be monitoring very closely. And if we need to, we'll change strategies. We'll enforce things even more heavily. We'll do group quarantine, whatever we need to do to try and ensure the safest possible conditions we can.

There is another report online. Again, I'm not going to go into the details here, but, if you're interested, you can go and take a look. This is on the best practices from teaching. Because, remember, even when we're teaching face-to-face, we're going to have to have remote ability for a student who's quarantined or a lot of our international students, who can't get back, for them to access things. And there are-- there's lots of very important recommendations about academic integrity and about how we make sure that what we put online is accessible to people of vision and hearing disabilities and how we deal with-- how we provide a student experience that-- some of which must be online for safety reasons. And, again, you can read that all online.

Now, I want to stress this. We're not saying there's zero risk. I cannot sit here and tell you there is zero risk. What I'm telling you is that the best science we have showed that the risk was lower if we reopen than we don't reopen. There are still risks. We are working extremely hard. There's a team of people working extremely hard on the implementation to make sure that we have everything we need to pull this off, including all the mechanisms, the collection facilities, the people, the machinery-- we have the machinery actually already-- to do the testing, and we're working in close collaboration with Tompkins County.

Another risk is unreasonable expectations about the extent to which we can modify student behavior. Students our students. They're 19 to 21-year-olds. You hear a lot about they're going to have parties. They're going to do whatever they do. It's true. But we are working very hard on a public health campaign. We are working hard on the set of public health ambassadors who are student leaders, including from the Greek life community. We are working to build this

culture of challenging one another and holding one another to a high standard of mutual responsibility.

We are also putting in place sanctions that will escalate as students misbehave. And, again, I want to come back to this idea that if students come back, they're going to have parties anyway. So we're better off having the ability to test them and quarantine them. And that's what we're going for.

Once the false starts, the big risk is the emergence of a more serious outbreak than we anticipate. That could happen. I can't tell you that can't happen. This disease is very unpredictable, and it could spread through the local health system. Although, again, A, the local health system is working very closely with us and they do have surge plans to increase their capacity, if needed. And, B, we're going to be doing very careful monitoring and we will react and readjust as quickly as we possibly can, if needed. But we can't have zero risk. There will likely be some serious illnesses. There will likely be hospitalization. That's true no matter what we do.

I also want to talk a little bit about the budget because I know that's on everyone's mind. If-- you've probably seen these numbers, but let me remind you that for Ithaca and Cornell Tech, the impact for the year that just ended a few days ago-- the fiscal year ended on June 30-- was about \$45 million. And we're projecting that for next year it will be about \$210 million.

The biggest factor, by far, is the additional financial aid need of our families. And I am fully committed to ensuring that all our families, all our students get the aid they need to complete their education. We also have significant extra operating costs the costs associated with COVID cleaning costs, testing cost, Plexiglas screens, all of that. We had to give-- we gave housing and dining rebates last year when the students left early. And we're going to have shorter semesters, kids go home at Thanksgiving. So we'll have less revenue from there and we'll have some reduced enrollment, particularly at the master's level where we have a lot of international students.

We-- as all of you know, back in, I think it was, April, shortly after all this started, we put in place a number of initial actions. A hiring pause. Restrictions on travel and spending. Suspension of capital projects and more. That allowed us to take care of this \$45 million and, as I'll show you, in a minute, will take care of part of next year's budget challenge as well.

I'm not going to say a lot about Weill Cornell Medicine. They're seeing a combined impact of more than \$200 million. They have a very different business model and they're-- the main cause of their challenge is that while they were sort of at the forefront, the epicenter of treating COVID a few months ago, they had to seize all their related clinical services. They are-- their budget is handled separately a differently from ours. But I just want to point out that we, also, as a university, are dealing with this impact.

Now, what about for the coming year? So, as I said a moment ago, we're looking at \$210 million that we need to take care of. If you look at the continuation of the things we've already put into place like the hiring pause or the travel pause and then you add the other things we've announced, you get up to about \$205 million. And one of the things we've decided to do is live with a \$5 million deficit and put it-- push it forward.

And I've highlighted in yellow these three things because when we came to Employee Assembly and we came to faculty senate and we talked about this line here-- the need to reduce retirement contributions and have phased salary reductions, we heard loud and clear that people thought we should share the pain into the future. And so we listened, and we did go back and do that, and we're seeing that in these three items. Let me say a little bit about the endowment because I don't think people always necessarily know what an endowment is or how it works.

The endowment isn't just one pot of money. The endowment is a huge collection of funds. Donors give us money and we invest that money. And they give that money for a particular purpose, maybe to support a center, maybe to support a named faculty chair and it pays that faculty's salary. And they give it with the expectation that it will support that purpose forever. So it's up to us to invest that money in a way that brings in not just enough to pay for the-- say, it's a faculty salary and we're paying \$100,000, it's not just the \$100,000 this year. We have to invest so that the following year it's \$100,000 plus what the SIP is. We have to account for inflation. And we have to do that over time forever.

We pay every year out of our endowment a little more than 5%. So we got this big endowment, although on a per student basis, it's not as big as you might think. We have a lot of students. And every year part of our budget makes use of 5% of that endowment-- a little more than 5%. That's actually at the upper limit of what's considered to be financially sound to ensure that you have this money forever. If you start paying more than that, you're going to be short in the future and you are going to have to make it up later. And because of that and because it's the responsibility of the board of trustees and my responsibility to ensure that Cornell stays strong forever, it is highly unusual, highly unusual to increase endowment payout because what you're doing is harming your future. You're just going to have to figure out-- you're covering today's costs trying to figure out how to fix it later.

That said, this is such an extraordinary moment that we did go to the board and we said to them we wanted to do two things. We want to increase the endowment payout and some of the fundraising that we would normally do towards endowment, we wanted instead to shift to what we call current use, money we would use today, this year to fill the gap. That's what this-- it's actually \$30 million just explain this 12 and this 15 while Cornell Medicine-- some of the increased endowment pay out goes-- \$3 million goes Weill Cornell Medicine. So that's why there's this 12 and 15.

We're taking basically \$27 million dollars that would have gone to endowment and we're using it to close the gap this year. And that did not allow us to not have any reduction of retirement

contributions or phased salary reductions in the contract colleges, but it allowed us to reduce it rather than remove them entirely, that along with the fact that we're willing to say, OK, we're going to kick \$5 million down to next year and we'll figure that out later.

None of this was an easy decision. I mean, this-- I-- none of us wanted to do this. We really were working extremely hard to just try and balance everything we could in the best possible way we could. And this was what we found to be the best possible way.

Now, there are some other things in the budget. Several people asked about whether they could take reductions in appointments and hours. And if you'd like to do that, you know you should speak to your supervisor. All of you I think know about the voluntary retirement incentive program. The entire budget-- we-- Adam, I think, can get this link out. The entire budget is up online. You can take a look at it, including the slide I just showed you.

And what we are committing to is very carefully tracking the budget performance and reporting back out to the EA and the faculty senate in six months. And, if possible, we will restore as much of the retirement contributions and salary reductions as we can. But, again, have to be honest, there is a lot of uncertainty. We don't know what's going to happen with this virus. And we're just going to have to do the very best we can.

And I want to float-- conclude then-- close or conclude going back to these guiding principles. Number one, we look at public health and safety. Number two, our decision to reopen, but also in our decision in managing budget, we look to care for our students, to make sure they have the financial aid they need, to safeguard our future as a world class institution, to use some of the endowment because it is so important, but not spend more-- actually legally we can't even go that far. Legally we're at 5% and the state limit's at 7%.

Maintain our staffing. We've been working extremely hard to keep as many jobs as we possibly can and then seeking new knowledge. So, again, thank you for your time. Thank you for everything you're doing for Cornell. I know everyone is working incredibly hard. And I this is a very, very difficult time for people for all kinds of reasons. And I just appreciate what each of you does for this university. And, with that, I think I'll stop sharing the screen and turn it back over to-- Mary? Who am I turning it over to?

MARY OPPERMAN: I think I'm going to-- thank you so much, President Pollack, for that. I appreciate it greatly. Adam, are you going to kick us off, or Hei Hei, on the questions?

ADAM HOWELL: I just want to say briefly, once again, thank you all. Thank you, President Pollack and all of our panelists for being here. And with that, I will introduce the executive vice chair of the Employee Assembly, Hei Hei Depew, who's going to get us started with some questions. So Hei Hei, go ahead and take it away.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Hello, everyone. So we've collected about 55 questions from the Qualtrics for this form. And I will be reviewing the Q&A section of this Zoom. So I will be toggling between the two questions that we've compiled.

So I want to start with a question from the Qualtrics. And it is, why is the university only willing to take an additional approximately less than 0.2%, \$15 million, from the endowment, but have taken up to 9% to 10% of employee pay through SIPS, CURP, and salary reductions that will not be repaid?

MARTHA POLLACK: Yeah, I mean, I can answer that. It's just kind of a follow-on to what I already said. So here's another way to think about it. As I said, we already pay out about 5% of the endowment. The state limit is 7%. You can't legally spend more than 7% of the endowment.

And when you look at the endowment, again, most of it is for particular purposes. If a donor has given money to support a particular center, that's what that money has to be spent for.

So as a way of trying to figure out what was an appropriate level, one thing you can do is you can look at what percent of the endowment is unrestricted. And that turns out to be about 15%, which is about a billion dollars. We're already spending 5% of that. The limit is 7%. So if you take that 2% gap, what you come up with is about \$20 million. And what we felt comfortable doing and what the board felt comfortable doing-- and I should say, felt comfortable-- it is extraordinary to go to this level. This doesn't happen. Many of our peers don't do that-- was to use about 3/4 of that \$20 million. And that gives you the \$15 million.

But I do want to note that on top of that is the money that we said we're going to raise. I mean, it's really \$25 million. Because we also said, instead of adding to the endowment this year, we're going to focus on the current use of money. So that's kind of roughly how we think about it. It's not the mechanics of how it works, but that helps give a number.

I don't know how to stress strongly enough, it is extraordinary for a board who is tasked with the long-term health of the university to approve this extra money. And I am extremely grateful to the board for their willingness to do this.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. The next question from Qualtrics is, what recourse does Cornell have if students living on and off campus refuse testing, quarantine, mask-wearing, social distancing, and other COVID-related requirements?

MARTHA POLLACK: You guys want me to take that one too? So as I say, we have a series-- we're working very closely with Vice President Lombardi to implement a number of things we can do. Now, students are going to make mistakes. People make mistakes. If you don't have your mask, we're going to go up and challenge one another. We're going to try and create this culture of mutual responsibility. But we are also going to have sanctions of increasing severity if there is continued or egregious violation of health policies, up to and including having students being required to withdraw for the semester.

Most important is the testing. It is not optional for students to be tested. This will be mandatory. And if you don't do it you will be sanctioned.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Are you able to guarantee that, on July 1, 2021, employees will receive back their 7% in retirement contributions? And also can you assure us that the decision to take away from employee benefits was very well thought out and was an absolute last resort?

MARY OPPERMAN: I think I'll give it a try here, and start with this one. So I understand and appreciate the question, but I need to stop and say, I think any employer during this time would be unwise to use a word like "guarantee."

We have worked really hard to have science drive our decisions. But as we've seen over the last few weeks, this virus moves in ways that are difficult to anticipate. That said, we hope very much that the plan we have in place will take us through the semester and beyond. And as, you heard from the president, we have committed ourselves to not only reviewing this at the end of the 11 months, but to take a step back at six months, see how we're doing, and if we are doing better than we currently have planned and budgeted for, consider restoring all or some of these cuts.

No one-- no one-- wanted to do anything more than we absolutely had to. And so we used our guiding principles, as the president has said. And maintaining our staffing to the best extent possible was a driving factor in this.

So just in conclusion, we modeled all sorts of approaches. I'm starting to feel like our team could model almost anything. And we've talked about this before. Keep in mind that, of our operating costs, actually over 60% are in the cost of our most valuable resource, which is our people, our faculty and staff. And so when we look at how we bring ourselves close to an alignment, it is very difficult to find enough funds when the deficit is as big as we are projecting, other than to look at ways to reduce those costs.

And so I can guarantee you that we looked at any and all alternatives before we centered on this. And I do want to say one more thing. We listened to the feedback that we got from the Faculty Senate and the Employee Assembly when we came with our initial approach. And you can see the modifications that we made after that. So I don't know if anyone else wants to add to that.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Seeing nobody volunteer for that, I'm going to move on to the next question, which is a combination of one we've received back from the Qualtrics, and also what I've seen in the Q&A. The fiscal year '21 cost reduction slide indicates that \$25 million will be saved from reductions in common support functions. When can staff expect to hear more about these reductions? Can you speak a little bit more about them?

JOANNE DESTEFANO: Happy to take that one. So I also saw one of the questions was, what are common support functions. And basically what they are, administrative functions that have both a central and college campus unit, processing or whatever.

So if you look at the cost reduction slide that President Pollack shared, and you look down the list of items, almost every item is a one-time savings for this year. And if you look at the hiring pause, it's \$20 million. That equates to about 5% of our workforce. They're already out of the system. And we have, currently, the Voluntary Retirement Incentive applications coming in. We could conceivably see another 5% of the workforce leave as a result of that, on the voluntary retirement. That means we could be down 10%.

We cannot continue to operate the same way we have in the past with, potentially, 10% fewer people. So what we attempted to do was create these functional reviews in all of the administrative areas to run some scenarios. The scenarios have just recently been submitted. We'll be making decisions in the next several weeks of what scenarios we want to be implemented for each functional area.

It's likely that it's going to take through the end of August before there's real communication. But the goal is to strategically change the way we do business so that when the hiring pause is eliminated, we don't just add all of those staff back. We're looking for real, creative structural changes to the way we operate.

One of the questions and concerns, I know, is what about staff? Am I going to lose my job? We really think that there's so many vacant positions that if we can be creative, the job loss will be minimal. And just as our principles have been all along, we want to minimize the amount of job loss. There still may be some in the end. But the goal is to minimize as much as possible. Does anybody want to add to that?

MARY OPPERMAN: The only thing I think I'd like to add is just to remind folks-- I've said this before-- we have had reductions in the past. So when we went through the Great Recession, we eliminated over 800 positions, not only because we had a current problem but because the administrative cost structure had become difficult for us. Over time, we grew back all of those lines.

And some growth is to be expected. But when we have administrative operations where we haven't agreed on a framework, that growth is sometimes occurring in places where, upon reflection, we don't want it to grow. And so this is an attempt on our part to formalize the administrative structure so that we can manage our growth going forward. This is the healthiest way for us not just to get through this situation but to not find ourselves in this cycle where we grow, then there's the financial downturn and we have to respond. And that's very unsettling for all of you. And it's not the best way for these functions to operate. So the intention is to create best practices for ourselves that can create better services and also a clearer framework going forward.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. Anybody else? All right, moving on to another question. Provost Kotlikoff spoke to the choice that faculty have in teaching in person or virtually, and referenced that many faculty members are in an age range that increases their susceptibility to the symptoms of and even potential death from COVID-19. What safety options are you offering the rest of the Cornell community that are also in the same situation as faculty, keeping in mind that many of them do not have the ability to do their work remotely?

MARY OPPERMAN: Yep. So thank you for that question. We do have a-- and it's in the workplace guidance-- we do have a process, if someone has a medical condition that they feel places them in a vulnerable category, for us to look at ways to support and accommodate them. And I would encourage people who feel that they're in that position to reach out to medical leaves and discuss what those options are.

We are trying as best we can to create accommodations that will allow people to continue to be fully productive in their roles. And also we're looking for creative ways to address issues that are not as simply accommodated. So we're doing the best we can. But I think the key element there is not every job can be done from home, but lots can. And we really do need people who can work effectively remotely to continue to do that until we are in a different place with this virus.

Martha, did you want to add--

MARTHA POLLACK: No. No, that was the one thing-- I want to emphasize there is a sense of, "I want to get back into the office. I should be back in the office." It is best for this community, if you are able to do your job at home, to work remotely. And if you're a supervisor, please, if there's any way that your employees can do their work remotely, please be supportive of that. Because that's the best thing for this community.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. A question from the Q&A-- are furloughs or layoffs still on the table to make up the fiscal year '21 budget deficit?

MARTHA POLLACK: Mary, do you want me to take it or you? I can take it.

MARY OPPERMAN: It has been our hope all along that there would be as few furloughs or layoffs, and if possible, none. As Mary said, it would be crazy for any employer to guarantee that there will be no furloughs or layoffs. I mean, we don't know what's going to happen with this disease. So far, the budget has been balanced with minimal furloughs and layoffs. And we believe that with this 5% exercise, that we can do that with open positions and with attrition, and possibly some reassignment. As it gets up more towards 10%, if we need more at the 10% level, we can still get most of the way there. But I can't guarantee that there will be none. But it has been one of our guiding principles all along to do everything we can to protect the jobs of our staff. We care about our staff. We didn't say, oh yeah, let's cut benefits. It's not what we wanted to do. We want to protect people to the fullest extent we can.

But I got to be honest, we don't know what's going to happen tomorrow with this disease.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. There is a perception that the retirement contribution decrease that endowed employees experienced as a result of COVID-19 impacted their total compensation package much more severely than the salary wage decrease that contract college employees experienced, particularly for those earning lower amounts. I understand that the cuts need to be applied to endowed and contract employees in different ways. Would it be possible for you to speak to why the impact of these cuts need to vary as well?

MARY OPPERMAN: Yes, so thank you. I'll take this. And then when I get myself into trouble, Martha will step in and help.

MARTHA POLLACK: Joanne will. Joanne will. [CHUCKLES]

MARY OPPERMAN: So let me start with the question that we often get-- why is it that we didn't tier or change the approach to the reductions in the CURP account? And the simple answer to that is we have a plan design. And the plan design is based on a singular contribution.

And so it is not easy. And we have gotten this from all different angles. It is not actually possible within our plan framework to have people choose how much they want in, say, a pay cut versus a pension reduction.

So what we did is what we were able to do within our plan design. That said, let me address directly the question of why was there more taken from endowed versus contract. First of all, I can tell you I had a very busy email and lots of people feeling really comfortable sharing their strong opinions. And I appreciate that. They have come in on both sides of this.

So there are those who feel that the pay cuts were much more painful, and those who feel that the CURP cuts, because they are bigger, are much more painful. In the end, we balanced the reality of cutting somebody's take-home pay with the decision to forego CURP contributions. And we've looked for a total savings package that we felt was doable. And that's how we came to this balance, recognizing that there is not parity, but it depends on where you sit as to what you think that parity should be.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. With regards to the "cannot have zero risk" statement from the slides, how do we weigh what level of hospitalizations and death to community members is allowable? I'd like to question the framing of statement that even more illness is likely without reopening, which seems to be centering Cornell student audiences, and erasing other county residents in the cost-benefit calculations.

MARTHA POLLACK: Yeah, I can take that. Look, I would like to say no deaths are allowable. I mean, we're not saying, oh, we'd open only if they're were this many deaths or lower. What we're saying is that if we are able to mandate testing, tracing, an quarantine, then to the best data we have, the best science we have, then the number of infections, and thus the number of

hospitalizations, and thus, presumably, the number of deaths-- and deaths, we hope, will be extremely low, but I can't guarantee that-- will be less than if we can't mandate that.

Now, the model that we did isn't just for students, it's for the Cornell community. It's for faculty, staff, and students. But when there's more illness in the Cornell community, it just sort of follows that there'll be more illness in the larger Ithaca and Tompkins County community.

So it isn't that we're somehow saying, oh, we're going to put a bubble over Cornell, and as long as we can keep illness down there, we don't care what happens in the larger community. Quite the opposite. And that's why actually, like, within a day of releasing our plan, the Tompkins County Health Department actually posted a letter saying that they supported this plan, that again, the science is uncertain, there's a lot changing, but they agree that this is the best way to protect the county and not just our own population given what we know today.

But it is scary. I mean, I can't lie to you. It's scary. I'm not saying to you, oh, it's OK if only 40 people die. That's not how I feel at all. I'm terrified about people dying. But I'm terrified about people dying no matter what we do. And we're trying to find a path that minimizes that to the best science we understand.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. Will the supported quarantine and hotel also be available for staff? Or just students who test positive?

MARTHA POLLACK: As of now, just students.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. It can be argued that messaging and punitive measures have not been effective in getting Greek organizations to comply and behave safely, as evidenced by the recent death of a Greek student. Why do you expect this campaign to be more effective and successful?

MARTHA POLLACK: OK, so a couple of things-- and my mom used to say, I don't mean to sound like a broken record. I don't mean to sound like-- younger people don't know what a broken record is. But again, if students come back, and we're not open, and we can't mandate testing, they're going to have parties anyway. So at least if we're open we can go in and try and control that.

Now, I'm not naive. We're not going to control every single party. But our hope is, first of all, that students-- not all students, but there are students themselves who want to show leadership. This is a very different situation. Just like all of us have never faced this, students haven't either. And Vice President Lombardi is already working with student leaders across campus who are anxious to be-- I think he's calling them public health ambassadors, and to try to challenge each other.

Are we going to get project compliance? No way, absolutely not. But we're really hoping that we can get better compliance than we might have in the past because this is more serious and

students recognize that. And again, that the being open and this rigorous testing will make a difference. If we see too much misbehavior, if we see infection rates growing, we're going to have to reassess and we're going to have to change the approach we're taking.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. I want to take a moment to address some of the feedback I'm seeing on the Q&A and through the Qualtrics. There's been a lot of gratitude expressed from staff members for the transparency, for the communication, and for the direction from leadership. So I wanted to interject with that comment right now because I'm seeing that in the Q&A and also from the Qualtrics. So there's a lot of appreciation for senior leadership being available for these opportunities.

Moving on to another Q&A question, the existing remote work arrangements do not require a remote workplace agreement. This has allowed supervisors flexibilities with their teams, and has been a great benefit. Will Cornell continue to allow remote work within a formal remote workplace agreement to continue?

MARY OPPERMAN: So I think it's the question without a formal workplace agreement to continue. Right now our plan is to continue with the way that we're approaching remote work right now. But I will also say that we are beginning to look into more ongoing remote work strategies.

So I've seen people ask questions about costs and impacts. And we're working on all that right now. We have an implementation team that is looking into remote work and how to continue it. But for now we are not requiring the remote work agreements, because we don't know how long will it be in remote work. But it's all under consideration right now.

MARTHA POLLACK: And Mary, if I could just jump in for one second, you might remember that the last of those guiding principles was seeking new knowledge. And I think one of the things we are just learning so much about is where remote work works, where it doesn't. Maybe in the future-- people around the country are talking about hybrid models, where people work at home some days, and go back in. I think we're learning a huge amount that, in the long run, once we get this all behind us, will enable us to work in new ways that are better for the employees and the university.

MARY OPPERMAN: Yeah, absolutely. And I do want to just call out and thank a couple of faculty from ILR who are assisting us with this. Their research is in this space. So more to come. But it's actually, I think, a great opportunity for us going forward in the future, to think more broadly about the places in which people get work done and how they get work done.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. Since the decision has been made to open the campus in fall 2020, do you know when the hiring freeze will be lifted?

MARY OPPERMAN: So I'll start, but Joanne may want to add in. Right now, the hiring freeze is on, and will stay on until we feel that we have a strategy going forward as to how we bring back

positions. Just to go back to the original, a question we had a while back, what we know is that we just have so many hopes and dreams, and creative people, and people that want to do the very best in the area that they're in, is that, unmanaged, we tend to grow. And so what we've learned over the last couple of financial downturns is that when we do that, we grow without regulation. We find ourselves later in a position that we don't want to be in, which is having to make hard choices.

So until we have an agreed-upon position control strategy and until we know that the finances will permit it, our intention is to keep the salary freeze on. Joanne?

JOANNE DESTEFANO: Yeah, the only thing I would say is-- and I think we shared this at least the last time we had employee assembly-- is we also know that we are projecting about a \$40 million to \$50 million dollar deficit over the next couple of years. And if we live to our principles that we don't want to furlough or lay people off unless absolutely necessary, we're trying to do everything we possibly can to reframe and restructure our workforce at a smaller level so that we can get through the next couple of years without any significant hardships.

MARTHA POLLACK: And Mary, you misspoke and you didn't mean to. You were saying the hiring freeze, not the salary freeze. I just want to make sure people didn't--

MARY OPPERMAN: Yeah, the hiring freeze. Although right now the salary freeze is on as well. We'll look at both of those. And we'll probably look at them slightly differently, by the way. But yes, thank you very much, the hiring freeze.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. I understand the necessity of cutting salaries and retirement contributions for the next year, but most of us are also incurring additional expenses working from home-- furniture, equipment, increased utility bills. Some of us have been informed that we will be working remotely permanently even after the current situation clears. What measures have been considered to address these expenses?

MARY OPPERMAN: Yep, thank you. So that was by reference to the fact that we're looking at remote work right now, and how to make that something that's sustainable for those that will either stay fully or partially remote. I do need to say we've got to consider that within the overall framework of where we are financially. But we are looking at that right now, and trying to figure out the right calibration.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. When will we receive news regarding the university's plans for the Statler Hotel? If parents and other guests are not allowed on campus, what will the university do for all the other freshmen parents who were counting on staying at the Statler for freshman orientation, especially in light of the fact that other hotels are fully committed for these dates?

MARTHA POLLACK: I don't actually know that. Joel.

JOEL MALINA: Yeah, let me start. It's not a complete answer, but just to be clear, the plans for move-in will be very restricted, in terms of parents who are dropping kids off are not going to be allowed out of their cars. The opportunity is to disincentivize them from staying. They will be, depending on what states they come from, be subject to the governor's executive order around quarantining for two weeks. So again, we are not going to be able to control individual parent behavior, but we will do all we can to make those options attractive.

MARY OPPERMAN: And to the question about the staff, we know that the hotel is closed. And that has caused us to have to furlough a number of people. We are working right now with the school and the college to try to understand that situation. As you know, we are not allowing visitors on the campus right now. That's a safety issue. So we are aware of this, and we're and we're working on it right now.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. How is the mental health of staff going to be addressed as many of us are told to maintain our remote work? I worry about many who are quite literally alone here in Ithaca, and how mental well-being will be negatively impacted by being required to isolate throughout the year, especially during the winter. Will staff have the opportunity to decide not to come to their offices? And if so, can we maintain some kind of human interaction?

MARY OPPERMAN: Yep. So thank you for that. There's a couple of upcoming forums on this very issue. So we are looking at how to create a sense of community and a virtual or mixed environment. And we're looking for your input on that. So that will be coming up-- I'm sorry you don't have the date-- soon. And we also have one, I believe, on remote work, and how to create a sense of community through remote work.

So we know this is an issue. I will also say we've added to the faculty and staff assistance programs counselors. So we've added another counselor. And we're extremely aware of the stress that's caused by the situation that we're in. Honestly, whether you're on the campus or remote, this current situation bears little resemblance to anything any of us have gone through before.

And so we're aware that if you're alone and isolated that is particularly stressful. So we encourage FSAP, the use of our online ENI-- so that's a call-in-- and also your telemedicine opportunities, to go to see someone through telemedicine. If you need help, we have the services and resources available. They're up on the website. Or you can email me and I'll put you in touch with them.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. Will staff and students be provided with a mechanism to report concerns about social distancing and mask use? Will CUPD be allowed to enforce the same?

MARY OPPERMAN: Let me start there, and then perhaps defer to my colleagues. We are strongly emphasizing our collective and individual responsibilities to engage and have conversations with all of our community members about appropriate behaviors and the risks of failure to abide by them. The provost will be sending out a message as early as today with some

very specific guidance to all of us, that if we see someone in a building that is not masked and should be, we want to encourage each of us to be able to go up and say-- go up with six feet distance and indicate, put your mask on. We want individuals to know that they should expect to be approached if they are in a building or if they're walking outside and not keeping that six-foot distance and being unmasked.

We're going to be adding another layer. We're going to be doing something we've really not done before, which is mount a pretty comprehensive public education campaign, again calling on individuals to not only be aware but to do the right thing and to call out those who are not. We need to be careful, especially in our current environment, about putting police in situations of having to enforce.

We certainly recognize that there will be interest, and many of us will likely get emails and texts saying, we just witnessed that, witnessed that. I would certainly volunteer my team and the community of the Office of Community Relations to be a funnel for that feedback. I mentioned that as well in a town hall forum we had last night for the general public. So we certainly want the feedback, but I don't think it's going to be as clear cut as, call CUPD, call the Ithaca Police Department.

MARTHA POLLACK: And I do think, to go back to this emphasis on science, the science, at this point, is overwhelming about the benefit-- for a while, we were just saying, it's just for everybody else. But even for you, the benefit of wearing a mask is really strong. And I think everyone, it just should be without question, you should wear a mask. It will reduce your risk and it will reduce the risk of the community as much as 65%, I've seen. So people just have to wear masks. You've got to do it. I do it.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. So one quick last question, and then I'll send it to Mary. In the light of--

MARTHA POLLACK: I'll put my mask on.

HEI HEI DEPEW: I'm sorry?

MARTHA POLLACK: Let me put my mask on.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Nice. [CHUCKLES] In light of the pandemic financial implications we're currently experiencing, are certain benefits programs, namely the Employee Degree Program, or the Child Care Grant Program, and the ability for staff to take courses impacted at all?

MARY OPPERMAN: So just to go back, when I said we looked at lots of modeling, we looked at lots of modeling. now As it stands right now, those programs are continuing apace. And that is our hope and our plan. So assuming all continues to go in this direction, we don't have plans to change those now.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Thank you. And with that, I would like to forward it back to Mary. I think we are done with the questions portion. But I want to thank everybody on this panel. I know it's not easy to take these questions. And there are a lot. And they're very good questions. And so I think a lot of the answers were very well answered and addressed as well. So thank you all.

MARTHA POLLACK: Thank you, Hei Hei.

MARY OPPERMAN: Thank you, Hei Hei. And I know Adam has had some issues with his internet. I had them yesterday. So it's good that both of us are having them at the same time. So I know that he would want us to thank the office of the assemblies for all their work in getting this done. We wouldn't have them if it wasn't for their work behind the scenes.

A special thank you to all of the EA, and the executive board, Adam, Hei Hei, and others. Thank you to my fellow panelists. At the very first one of these, I tried to do it by myself. I guess you can teach an old dog new tricks. And I realized I couldn't answer all the questions. So thank you to everyone, to Joanne, to Joel, and particularly to the president, who is being pulled in a million directions, for spending an hour with us.

And then my final thank you is to all of you. These are very difficult times. These are very confusing times. And our emotions, all of us, me included, are understandably heightened. And so I just want to say to all of you, we're going to be fine. We will get through this. We appreciate your partnership so much. And we know that some of the decisions we've had to make have been difficult for many of you. But I do want to point out the grace and professionalism and understanding that we've gotten. It just reminds me so much how fortunate I am to be all of your colleagues. And so with that, thank you all very much.

MARTHA POLLACK: Thank you.

MARY OPPERMAN: Bye Bye.