

Fershlugginer University Kishwaukee Up-state to Fully Open Spring 2021



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The Fershlugginer University Kishwaukee Up-state,¹ like many other US universities, has thousands of undergraduate, graduate and professional students. As also is common across the country, a shortened fall semester ends at the Thanksgiving holiday, with all finals to be “remote” so no one is coming back to town to share potential infections, other than what might happen from attending football championship games. With students gone in December, non-academic employees will no longer be allowed to work from home for the remainder of the year, because it’s okay if *they* share infections. As the word came down from the chair of the Board of Trustees Committee on Academic Standards & Football, with the start of spring semester, faculty will be required to teach primarily face-to-face back-to-normal classes for all sections. Those seeking permission to continue remote teaching are required to present medical evidence of pre-existing conditions making a COVID-19 infection likely to be fatal as determined by the wisdom of Gwyneth Paltrow, Scott Atlas, Dr. Oz and an in-house veterinary expert on birds’ infectious diseases. Guidance from real experts with relevant expertise might be used at research universities. Or maybe not.

Everyone’s told to never fear. It is under control. Courses will sometimes limit enrollment to 50 percent room capacity, but never mind the arithmetic – [Every other seat] < [6 feet] – because everyone will be well protected when back to normal is the new normal, as someone keeps saying. Faculty are directed to “be creative” to find ways to maintain social distance in classes, despite the lack of excess capacity of classroom or lab seats to provide the space needed for that distance. Extra sections of courses might be needed with smaller class sizes, though no new faculty have been hired to teach those sections and no known classrooms are available.



For many instructors, the university provides clear face shields for class meetings, though these don’t protect wearers or their audiences from aerosols. Masks are available for purchase in the bookstore, leaving instructors to hunt out their own sources for hats, defogger for their eyeglasses and body armor to complete the ensemble. Oh, and disposable gloves, though good luck finding a box around town. Underneath the shirt lapel in the picture to the left is a Bluetooth connected microphone to enable instructors’ muffled voices to be heard though a classroom speaker system that also picks up ambient sounds of trips to the restroom between classes. During classes, instructors can’t sneeze², itch, cough or adjust glasses that would require touching

forbidden facial areas. Flatulence is permitted for its ability to encourage greater social distance. Paranoia also encourages distance (e.g., see: <https://xkcd.com/2285/>).

¹ The university name is never abbreviated. If was named by considering abbreviations, it’d have a different name.

² Have you sneezed in a face mask? It’s not a nice experience. Don’t sneeze!

Instructors also have to be prepared to talk with students outside of class for office hours. Again, thinking of safety first, office desks have installed transparent barriers as added protection, commonly referenced by the unfortunate sobriquet as “spit guards.” Beneath the desks, a special up-blowing fan both cools off the person and keeps germs circulating away from the faculty member. As students and other visitors walk through the office areas, a graduate research assistant follows behind, spraying disinfectant into the air, wiping off any surfaces that are touched, and performing an exorcism on any bad spirits that might flow from visitors. Again, employees are instructed to “be creative” in handling the limitations of work spaces. The university provides large stickers placed on the floor outside office doors that say “stand here” to keep the obedient at bay.



Wherever possible, office and classroom windows should be kept open because air circulation is key to limit spread of COVID infections. That is, assuming the office isn't in a modern building whose windows have been hermetically sealed. But if they can be opened, one of the many great-yet-unsung benefits of global warming results in outside temperatures warm enough at Fershlugginer University Kishwaukee to open windows throughout January, February and March. When summer's intense heat returns in April or May, everyone will. . . . Okay, no one has thought that far ahead.

As an additional line of faculty protection, the areas used for office hours will be set so the students often need to get past a reception desk staffed by underpaid personnel. The reception desk is protected by even higher spit guards that provide greater protection from infection proliferation – receptionists are usually condemned to work



in areas without windows – yet spit guards and noise from exhaust fans make inter-personal communication difficult to be understood unless visitor is able to either use American Sign Language or is a very good practitioner of pantomime. Behind receptionists' desks, newly-installed secret alarms call in an armed SWAT team whenever someone tries to walk into the building without a properly worn mask that is covering all oral and nasal passages, instead of the student-favored placement of a mask which is either worn under the chin, or as a fashion accessory dangling off a wrist, or something kept out of sight tucked in shorts or bras. ('Tis true! Despite the obvious “yuck” factor, many faculty have seen students' masks sticking out from the region of their micturition orifice or *la poitrine*.)

News note: Some university employees have been volunteers in early trials of a vaccine that, as you can see, has the unfortunate side effect of making a young woman look like an old Jewish man.

Stay safe, everyone!

Names are changed so people at more universities can feel guilty.

Illustrations by whoever was standing nearby with a phone.

Signature cat picture was the MTM Enterprises logo for the 1980s television program “St. Elsewhere.”

Remember that the goal is a college experience, not an education.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/10/college-was-never-about-education/616777/>