

William Johnson:

Hello, and welcome to Orientation 2020. It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to Fairfield University, the Class of 2024, along with your families. My name is Will Johnson, and I have the pleasure of serving as the dean of students here at Fairfield University.

During this session, we will be discussing life outside of the classroom. Present with me today are several of my colleagues who represent various offices and departments within the university, each of them who will have an opportunity to share with you some detail on the services and resources available through their offices. Our goal is to provide you with a general overview of each of these units. We want you to leave this session with a greater understanding and more information on how the university supports students in their academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experience.

At this time, I would like to provide the panelists with an opportunity to introduce themselves and the office they represent. We will begin with John Carroll.

Johnathan Carroll:

Good morning, everyone. My name is John Carroll, and I am Fairfield's chief information officer. In this role, I lead Fairfield's Information Technology division.

William Johnson:

Thank you, John. Mr. Jim Fitzpatrick.

Jim Fitzpatrick:

Thank you, Dr. Will. Good morning, everyone. My name is Jim Fitzpatrick, a proud member of the 50th anniversary class, the Class of 1970, and also the Graduate School of Education, 1972. I'll have 120 seconds to make sure you know everything you have to about food, bucks ... books, bus, and mail, which I'll try to do. Glad to have you with us.

William Johnson:

I hope you can share with all of us a little bit about the bucks bit. I would love to be in on that. Kamala Klem.

Kamala Klem:

Welcome to Fairfield, everyone. My name is Kamala Klem. I'm one of the associate dean of students, as well as the director of the Office of Student Engagement.

William Johnson:

Next up, one of the people with the best names on campus, Pejay Lucky.

Pejay Lucky:

Thank you, Dr. Johnson. My name is Pejay Lucky. I'm the director of student diversity and multicultural affairs.

William Johnson:

Thanks, Pejay. Eli.

Eli Olken-Dann:

Morning, everyone. I'm Eli Olken-Dann. I'm the director of recreation.

William Johnson:

Great. Thanks, Eli. Meredith Smith.

Meredith Smith:

Good morning, everybody, and welcome to Fairfield. My name's Meredith Smith and I'm the associate director for living and learning, and the Office of Residence Life. We're so excited you're here.

William Johnson:

Thanks, Meredith.

Now we will begin to dive a little bit deeper into each of the areas that the representatives on the panel represent. I have asked each of the panelists to provide a 90-second elevator pitch, not 120 seconds, like Mr. Fitzpatrick said, about the role of their office or department within the university. I'm going to start with John Carroll.

Johnathan Carroll:

Well, hello again, and on behalf of the entire information technology team, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Fairfield. In terms of the role that IT is going to play in your time here at Fairfield, I thought I'd break it down into three core components.

Let me begin with support. We are here to support your computing needs, whether that be a hardware or software question, a question about which laptop you might want to purchase, or access to any of Fairfield's systems. In addition, this includes support of the many high-tech teaching and learning spaces around campus, which you're going to get to experience first hand real soon. Our help desk is reachable in many virtual ways, but is also physically located in the library, so when you're on campus, please stop by and visit us. And let me also just add that this support starts now, so feel free to reach out. We're here to help you.

IT offers many services that will enhance your experience on campus. A small sample of these include robust WiFi in all residence halls, study rooms, classrooms, and common spaces, and in addition, many of the open areas on campus have WiFi access as well, so as you travel from building to building, you're going to be covered. In terms of printing, we have 21 network-connected printers strategically located around campus. You can print from your residence hall and go to any one of the printers to collect your documents. In conjunction with our media center, we're happy to offer the Philo TV streaming service. Just bring your internet-ready TV, your laptop, or Roku-type device and start streaming.

And lastly, in terms of general information with respect to technology, a key place to remember is our portal, and that could be found at my.fairfield.edu. This is a great place to start when looking for access to key systems that you'll be using. In addition, I encourage you to go to the app store for your respective mobile device and download the Fairfield U mobile app. I believe this was mentioned in your checklist, so you may have done this already.

I'll just end with, although I've not mastered my TikTok skills quite yet, I do encourage you to follow us on the other social media networks that we have listed here on this slide. So again, welcome to Fairfield, and we look forward to seeing you real soon.

William Johnson:

Great. Thanks, John.

Since you do have quite a bit of information to share, Mr. Fitzpatrick, I will grant you that 120 minutes to provide all of your information.

Jim Fitzpatrick:

Thank you, Will, and I have absolutely no TikTok skills at my age, so I apologize for it. This is my 51st orientation, and my first virtual one, so bear with me, everyone.

Let me talk about dining, in terms of our priorities. Our first priority, obviously, is going to be the social distancing. Second priority is going to be student safety and parental peace of mind. The third priority, which is going to be a challenge, is to continue a robust dining program, and speed of service. We've been working about eight weeks on this, and we think we've come up with some ways which we think we can achieve this.

We've taken our Tully main dining room, which houses 750 students, and reduced the seating down to 320. We've added four different locations on campus. All first-year students will be eating in the Barone Campus Center. We've added Grab & Go or Grab & Sit options, so your son or daughter will be able to come into the dining hall and make a decision that they want to take the meal out, or they want to sit with their friends in a socially distant area. We've added micro-markets around campus, which will assist in them coming and going from class to grab something on a very quick basis. And finally, we're going to add food trucks between 4:00 and 8:00 on class days, and they will be able to use their swipes from their meal plan on these to just give the students other options, as far as what's available on campus.

Let me switch to books. Our book store provider is Follett. Book store list and the class schedules will be up in some time early August. We ask that you do consider using Follett. They have a price match program, so they will match the price of any of other book that you have on campus. And the second thing we ask is you consider to please have those textbooks sent to your home. It will ease the burden on our mailroom.

That's a good segue into our campus mailroom. Each student, sometime in early August, will receive a mailbox number. We ask that you use that mailbox number, and not use the student residence address, and that will help out, once again, with the mailroom.

As far as the bus, we have a bus that goes into town every 30 minutes, beginning at 7:00 in the morning, and until 10:00 at night. It goes to the Fairfield train station, which provides stops, and you can take Metro-North to Amtrak in Bridgeport or in Stamford. We also have a bus that goes to the Stamford Mall every Saturday. We have a bus that goes to the airports, LaGuardia and JFK, on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter breaks, 8:00 AM and 2:00 AM, two trips that go to the airports free of charge, where students can sign up sometime about 30 days before that trip. And that helps them get around. The bus in town goes to Super Stop & Shop, and also goes to CVS and Marshalls.

I think I hit the 120 minutes, so I think I did well. It's all yours, Will.

William Johnson:

Great job. Just one small correction. I'm sure this was a Freudian slip on your part. You mentioned the bus on the weekends going to the Stamford Mall.

Jim Fitzpatrick:

Oh, that's right, yes.

William Johnson:

I believe what Mr. Fitzpatrick meant is the Trumbull Mall, Trumbull Mall on the weekend [crosstalk 00:08:46]

Jim Fitzpatrick:

Yes. Been a long eight weeks.

William Johnson:

Yes, it has been. It has been.

Jim Fitzpatrick:

It goes to the Trumbull Mall, not Stamford Mall. The Stamford Mall's closing. Sorry about that.

William Johnson:

Yeah, no problem, Fitz. Thank you. Kamala, how about First Year Experience in the Office of Student Engagement?

Kamala Klem:

Thanks, Will. Hi, everyone. I am happy to talk about the First Year Experience. This program is dedicated to, obviously, to our first-year students in supporting their transition to the university. Each of you are assigned a First Year Experience group with a New Student Leader, whom you should have met either on the phone yesterday, or will be meeting later today, as well as a Community Associate who is a faculty or staff member who will be co-facilitating the class with the NSL in the fall.

Together, the NSL and the CA will be meeting with you all weekly. You all will be placed in seminar groups in the size of around 20 to 25 students, depending on what theme section group you're placed in. And the curriculum is essentially geared toward supporting your transition and helping you feel a sense of connectedness, not just to the university, but to each other, as well as to a peer educator and to a faculty and staff member. The curriculum is also situated to helping you navigate the academic life, the social life on campus, as well as the emotional transition that can take place when you're transitioning from high school to college, as well as living away from home for many of you.

In addition to the seminars which you will be participating each week, part of the First Year Experience program is attending FYE events, whether that may be in person or virtually in the fall. These events, it's to help you, again, feel connected to other resources at the institution, as well as to help you explore critical topics that we're dealing with now in society, as well as potentially on campus. So, that's a little bit about the First Year Experience program.

More about our office, which we will be advancing the slide. Thank you all. So, as I mentioned, I am the director of the Office of Student Engagement. Our office is charged with the responsibility of coordinating the undergraduate student life, graduate student life, as well as international student life. Our office oversees your orientation experience, as well as your full welcome experience, the First Year Experience program, which I just spoke about, the New Student Leaders, who are a critical component of your sense of connectedness at the institution, and as well as mentoring and coaching you through the first year. As well as we'll be providing monthly parent/guardian webinars for our parent and

guardians to ensure that they're equipped with the resources and tools to help guide their student at Fairfield University.

We also work on a number of different campus community events, such as Welcome Week, Alumni Family Weekend. We work very closely with our student government association, known as the Fairfield University Student Association, in implementing the concert, President's Ball. We also host the Activities Fair, which houses around 120 clubs on campus, as well as we have the fun experience of hosting a beach event called Clam Jam, typically in April.

Not only do we work on campus community events, we also work on helping our students develop their leadership skills and competencies, as well as help [inaudible 00:11:59] to engage and to understand their responsibility to be a civic citizen within the U.S. So, we educate them on how to vote. We also have an Across the Aisle Series to help students explore different political views. And as I mentioned, we also implement leadership development initiatives.

I wanted to briefly talk about Fairfield University Student Association. We work closely with this student organization, the student government, in an advising capacity, and this student association implement a number of different diversity inclusion initiatives. They also oversee the clubs and organizations on campus, as well as implement a number of different programming opportunities for our students. Again, if there's a club and org that is not available here at Fairfield, you have the opportunity to actually create your own club and org. Last but definitely not least is our Fairfield @ Night crew. They're charged with implementing late night and weekend events to ensure that we have wonderful engagement opportunities for our students over the weekends.

In order to learn more about these wonderful opportunities at Fairfield, we also work on managing the Life @ Fairfield platform, which many of you should have had exposure to via your checklist. If you haven't seen this item on your checklist, please let us know. We encourage you to log in and look and explore Life @ Fairfield. It's essentially a Facebook platform with all of our clubs and orgs and ways to join these clubs and orgs, and learn about the events that they're coordinating.

And then, please, we encourage you to check your emails frequently. It is through the TheWeekender eNewsletter that we actually educate you all on the events and resources that are available to you here at Fairfield. Thanks, Will, and I'm so sorry that was over 90 seconds.

William Johnson:

No problem at all, Kamala.

Next up, Pejay Lucky, student diversity and multicultural affairs.

Pejay Lucky:

Awesome. Thank you, Will.

The Office of Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs seeks to develop and implement programs and services that increase engagement and activities that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion among students within the Fairfield University community. Our university Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Statement mentions four values, inclusive excellence, a diverse community, global engagement, and radical hospitality.

But today, I would like to highlight radical hospitality. We want to ensure that our class, our incoming class, is aware that we're looking to advance our mission here at the university, especially with radical hospitality. Radical hospitality is a way of relating with others, shaped by our Jesuit traditions. We recognize the importance of learning about, and learning in, an increasing interconnectedness in our

intercultural world. Our office strives to ensure that our university community is a microcosm of the global community in which all are unconditionally welcome and respected and valued. We want to make this happen through our programs and initiatives that our office hosts and partner with so many others on campus.

We have some programs such as Academic Immersion, Career Personalities, Safe Space Training, our Multicultural Retreat, our Men of Color mentoring group, our Women of Color mentoring group, and our Fairfield United, which is a consortium of all our affinity student clubs. Our Care Team, which is a group of students in place to help support students throughout their college journey through different conversations and dialogues on social justice initiatives. Our office works also very closely with Project Excel, a TRIO program that helps first-generation college students and students of color.

I believe education is a passport to the future. We hope to prepare all of our students for their future through diversity, education, and support. Thank you, Will.

William Johnson:

Great. Thank you very much for that, Pejay.

And next up on our list is Eli Olken-Dann, talking about recreation.

Eli Olken-Dann:

Great. Thanks. Good morning, everybody, and welcome again to Fairfield on behalf of the Recreation Department.

I want to highlight three key areas of recreation for all of you this morning, our recreation facility, our recreation program, and our recreation services. Our recreation facility on campus is the Leslie C Quick, Jr. Recreational Complex, affectionately known on campus as the RecPlex. It's an 85,000 square foot facility that went through a major renovation in 2015/2016.

Some of the amenities in our facility include over 80 pieces of cardio equipment, like treadmills, ellipticals, stair climbers, and stationary bikes, dozens of strength and conditioning options, such as bench presses, plate-loaded machines, Selectorized equipment, racks, and free weights. We have an eight-lane indoor pool, with adjacent men's and women's locker rooms. There are five fitness and group exercise facilities in our lower level, two large studios that can accommodate approximately 25 individuals for group classes, and two smaller studios for more individualized exercise and personal training. We also have our spinning studio on the lower level, with 25 brand-new Stages spin bikes.

We have a racquetball court in our facility, as well as an elevated, four-lane indoor track above our Fieldhouse. Our Fieldhouse has three courts equipped for basketball, volleyball, and tennis, but we also play a wide variety of other indoor sports in our Fieldhouse like indoor soccer, badminton, and pickleball.

The newest addition to the RecPlex is an eGaming lab in our building's lobby. This facility is nearly completed, and will feature 10 state-of-the-art computers, specialized gaming chairs, flat-screen TVs, and the technology to host Esports competitions.

Pivoting to our Recreation programs, I would like to highlight our fitness and group exercise classes, which include yoga, Zumba, and spinning, as well as our competitive sports programs. We have a robust club sport offering, which includes clubs like men's and women's basketball, men's and women's lacrosse, ice hockey, and volleyball, men's and women's rugby, soccer, baseball, softball, swimming, and running, among others. And we also have some niche clubs like equestrian, sailing, and martial arts. Our intramural sports offering include marquee sports such as flag football, basketball,

soccer, volleyball, softball, and dodgeball. We offer men, women, and co-reced and open leagues and tournaments throughout the academic year, and all of our intramural sports offerings are free.

Finally, in highlighting some of our services, we offer equipment rentals, like basketballs for shooting a round, jump ropes and resistance bands for stretching, and yoga mats for fitness and group exercise. We are also one of the largest employers on campus in the areas of building staff, intramural officials and scorekeepers, and supervisors. We also offer free personal training services, as well as free body composition analysis that provides students with vital statistics related to their health.

Recreation plays an important role in the life of Fairfield University students, with over 75% of students participating in at least one area of recreation, so with that, welcome to campus, and we look forward to engaging with you in the fall.

William Johnson:

Great. Thank you, Eli. Appreciate those comments. Next up we have my good friend, Meredith Smith, from the Office of Residence Life.

Meredith Smith:

Aw, thanks, Will. Good morning ... oh. Good morning, everybody. The Office of Residence Life is here to support the transition, sense of belonging, and student success of all students, both residential and commuter.

I have the privilege of working with a team of talented, caring, and mission-driven individuals whose goal is to support our students in their time at Fairfield. Each community has an area coordinator who is a masters-level professional who has a degree in counseling higher education or in other related academic fields. And each has extensive training and passion for working with college students. As an office, we are truly dedicated to our Jesuit mission and values.

The residence halls are a vibrant community with many co-curricular experiences designed to promote students' transition, belonging, and success. Each residence hall community has a team of peer leaders called Resident Assistants, as well as Commuter Peer Assistants in the commuter community. These student leaders were selected from a competitive pool of incredible students. I mean, Fairfield students are amazing in general. The Resident Assistants and Commuter Peer Assistants serve as peer mentors and guides for you and your experience as you begin your journey at Fairfield.

Our entire first-year class will be housed in one of our first-year residence halls in the Quad, which are Champion, Jogues, Regis, Gonzaga, and Loyola. This coming year, we're also excited to offer our award-winning living and learning opportunities for first-year students in the areas of STEM, honors, health and wellness, and leadership through service.

We also have a phenomenal group of student leaders in the residence halls called the Inter-Residential Housing Association, which is students' voice in their home. We hope you'll consider getting involved with IRHA. They put on incredible programs and serve as the advocacy group for the residence halls.

At the end of the day, we're so excited to welcome you. This fall, we're going to have some clear guidelines to ensure that we keep each other safe, but at the end of the day, we'll be a welcoming, empathetic, caring, and respectful community. So, I can't wait to see you. Take care.

William Johnson:

Thank you, Meredith.

And although I didn't complete a slide for this, I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to speak with you about the Office of the Dean of Students. Along with each of my colleagues on the panel, in addition to our colleagues in our academic dean's offices and other academic units on campus, the Office of the Dean of Students upholds all of our community standards, which encourage open communication, values-based decision-making, ethical behavior, and resilience within a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment.

The office advocates for students and assists students in resolving concerns which affect them and the community as a whole by connecting them with the university and community resources best available to support. Our office is often a good starting place for students and their family when someone has a question or a concern, but they're not really sure about who is the best, or what office is the best, one to address it.

In order to dig a little bit deeper at this time, I'm going to ask several questions of the panelists in order to further showcase the work that they do. The first question, I'm going to give several of the panelists an opportunity to answer, although some of them did give some commentary on this during their initial reports. But the question has to deal with our current COVID-19 environment, and what does the work of your particular office look like in that particular environment, and what are we doing to make sure that we're sustaining the student experience during that time?

I want to start this question with John Carroll. From an ITS standpoint, technology standpoint, what are we doing to best support our students in this environment?

Johnathan Carroll:

All right. Thanks, Will. Great question, and let me begin like many that are on this session today. In mid-March, a real pivotal time for us, we transitioned not only our own department but also the broader university to a mostly remote teaching, learning, and staffing model.

I mentioned support earlier. I'm happy to say that we are able to provide most, if not all, of our technology services to our faculty, staff, and students in this new operating mode. This, of course, includes access to our key academic and learning systems. Access to our systems, sustaining the ability for our students to interact with key support functions or departments on campus, including professors and advisors, is extremely important to us.

In a true partnership with many of the divisions that are on the webinar with us today, we've been able to make this a reality. It's been a real team and a partnership approach across the university, and technology just plays one role in that partnership.

William Johnson:

Great. Thank you, John.

Perhaps Meredith Smith, again, you touched upon this a little bit in your remarks, talk a little bit more about the environment and what it's going to look like within our residence halls [inaudible 00:24:41]

Meredith Smith:

Awesome. Thank you, Will. I notice there's a question in the Q&A about masks and social distancing. To echo John's words, since early in this current COVID-19 pandemic, we've been working closely with many campus partners and with the state of Connecticut to develop guidelines and safety protocols. What we do know now is that students will most likely, probably, be wearing masks in all residence hall

common areas, but not in their rooms, and this will probably go for the rest of campus. Students will be required to wear masks while out and about on campus.

Rest assured, we have a phenomenal team that is planning to ensure the formation of community within a socially distanced environment, so this may take the form of programming with small groups of people, and micro programming and outdoor programming as well. Our team will also be available for students during the day and evening, in the evening, to connect with their residents. That includes their area coordinator team and our Resident Assistants. We'll be rolling out some more information throughout the summer, and I encourage you to check out fairfield.edu/reopen. We'll be adding some key information on there.

But rest assured, we're really excited. The RAs are really excited to come back and to provide great programming for students, again, in this socially distanced environment.

William Johnson:

Great. Thank you, Meredith.

Eli, the recreation complex, one of my favorite facilities on campus, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, noontime basketball. One of the more frequented facilities on our campus, probably, after the Tulley Dining Commons and the library. What's recreation going to look like? What's fitness going to look like in the RecPlex, come this September?

Eli Olken-Dann:

Sure. We've gotten a lot of inquiries from first-year students, and also our returning students, about this topic.

First and foremost, I guess, we'd like to say that we are following Connecticut state guidelines related to this matter very closely. My staff and I have also been attending recreation webinars over the last couple of months to learn of industry best practices in preparation for reopening the facility, and repopulating our programs. I personally have also been meeting weekly with recreation directors from across the state to formulate a cohesive plan for recreation within our institutions as it relates to state guidelines.

So, what I can tell you at this time, as it relates to the RecPlex facility, is that masks will be required when entering and exiting the building, moving about the building, and conversing with others and staff members. But masks will not be required while working out or participating in fitness program or sports.

The state has encouraged fitness facilities and sports programs to ease the use of masks in these types of environments, as there has been some studies showing adverse health effects to exercise or recreating with a mask on, things like lack of oxygen and hyperventilation. So, the state has encouraged fitness facilities and recreation programs to adopt 12 feet of social distancing to allow users to remove their masks, once they have reached their machine or piece of equipment, or being their exercise program or sport. We'll also be requiring users to wipe down their machines and equipments and weights after each use. Our student staff will be frequently sanitizing high-touch-point areas, and frequently used equipment. Restrooms will be cleaned every hour, and water fountains will be turned off, leaving only water bottle refill stations available in the facility.

We will be encouraging frequent hand washing after each workout, or between workouts. We'll be limiting access to the building to Fairfield University students, faculty, and staff only, as we traditionally have other membership types that use our facility, such as alumni, prep students, and spouses of faculty and staff, et cetera. And finally, we'll be focusing on education and signage

throughout the facility outlining our updated policies and procedures, as well as best practices on exercising in the midst of the pandemic.

Turning quickly to our programming for the fall, the state has maintained that we may pursue fitness and sports programs so long as we follow state guidelines, which, of course, we intend to do. So, some of the highlights we know right now that may be in place for the fall are looking at 25 individuals for indoor sports. That includes coaches, players, officials, trainers, et cetera, and 50 individuals for outdoor sports. We will offer fitness in group exercise classes in our Fieldhouse, adhering to the 12 feet of social distancing. We will also offer those classes both virtually and in person as we understand students may feel uncomfortable entering the facility, so they can participate in the comfort of their residence hall or their home residence. We'll also be moving our spin bikes out of our studio and onto the Fieldhouse floor, as that is traditionally one of our more popular fitness in group exercise classes.

In terms of competitive sports and intramurals, the practices will be in groups of 10 or less. There'll be no travel on buses or using campus vans. There'll be no overnight travel. Masks or face coverings will be worn at all times when on the bench or not on the field or court, as well as when entering a facility or an arena. There'll be no huddles or sportsmanship best practices such as high fives, fist bumps, or hugs. We know that these guidelines are going to impact club sports more than intramural sports, and so we'll handle club sports on a case-by-case basis.

What the state is recommending, in terms of intramural sports just local to the university, is that we focus mostly on individual sports, such as racquet sports like tennis or badminton or pickleball, and having skills challenges instead of leagues. So, for example, we would consider having a three-point shootout in basketball instead of a full five-on-five full court league.

I think the bottom line is that it's just a little too early to tell what type of programs or sports offerings we'll be able to have in the fall. We expect that the guidelines may change again, if not multiple times, as we get closer to the fall semester, but we'll be sure to communicate with all of our first-year students as well as our returning students as we get closer to reopening. Thanks.

William Johnson:

And Eli, I just want to let you know that back in my neighborhood, growing up, I was the 10-time defending horse champion, so I'm ready to take on all comers.

Eli Olken-Dann:

Noted.

William Johnson:

Fitz, anything you'd want to add? I know you made mention of some of the changes within dining services, but anything you'd like to add, just in terms of the COVID-19 environment and how it's going to affect food and dining on campus?

Jim Fitzpatrick:

Absolutely, Dr. Will. Let me focus on two areas, spacing and safety. In terms of food, all our foodservice workers will have their temperature checked in the morning when they come on to a shift. I think that's very, very important to know. And we're adding production shifts to cut down on the number of chefs and cooks in the kitchen, so that's a important safety thing to remember.

In terms of the bus, we're looking at getting an open-air trolley, which will have the ability to take students into town. And we've added a bus, so now rather than going to town every 60 minutes,

we'll go into town every 30 minutes. In terms of the book store, we're adding curbside pick up. And all of this is done to try to eliminate the long lines that usually happen, especially at the beginning of the semester.

And most importantly, we've partnered with Amazon and [TC 00:31:52] Lockers, one of the leading locker companies in the country, to add lockers in the Barone Campus Center. So, when your son or daughter gets that special package from home with chocolate chip cookies or cash, then they'll get it right away. Hopefully, the notice will go right to their cell phone. They get a notice to go to the locker and they can pick up everything.

So, we've been focusing on safety and we've been focusing on spacing, and I think that's going to make a difference with your son or daughter coming in to [inaudible 00:32:24]

William Johnson:

Please do not send cash via the mail. Please, please use a cash app or a direct deposit into bank accounts. Thanks, Fitz.

Second question, and I am particularly addressing this question to Pejay, Kamala, and Meredith. If you all could speak a little bit to the work your office or department engages in, with respect to educating our students on the topics of diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and civic engagement? I'd like to start with you, Pejay.

Pejay Lucky:

Awesome. Thank you, Will.

To start off, I just want to highlight a group of our students leaders that are based out of our office again, which is our Care Team. They do a lot of this work where we do some training and co-facilitating around diversity, equity, and inclusion. I mean, these care leaders are responsible for cultivating a community that allows students to come training and engage in dialogue around difficult topics.

We talk about racism, sexism, oppression, heterosexism. I think about once we went into quarantine, or into this global shutdown, we actually held a program called Creating Unity During Isolation, where the Care Team led a discussion on xenophobia and discrimination, how certain races and groups of people were being discriminated against during the current COVID-19 pandemic. So, these group of students leaders, they're holding some programs at least monthly to really help educate and support and really make sure that our students are educated and are aware of what's going on and happening in our world.

I also want to highlight two other groups, specifically, one group that actually, Dr. Will Johnson works with me on, which is our Men of Color group. And now we have a Women of Color group, which my Associate Director, Yolehema Felican, is the lead for, where we provide a space, a safe space for students of color in particular, to really have a space where they can check in and learn from each other and support each other through our process. We know that Fairfield is a great place to be, and we want to make sure that we have spaces for all different types of students, for them to feel comfortable and supported throughout their journey.

As well as our office, we have a bunch of different programs where we partner with our campus partners. We partner with counseling, we partner with different professors, like Dr. Erica Hartwell. But all across campus, we partner with so many different people to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion work is happening. So, thank you, Will. That's where I'll end that. I can keep on going.

William Johnson:

Yeah, I'm sure you could, but thank you for giving us a nice snapshot.

Kamala, I think earlier you mentioned civic learning and democratic engagement, that initiative that's operating out of your office. Could you maybe speak to that, and perhaps any other opportunities for your student engagement?

Kamala Klem:

Sure, yes. Absolutely. Obviously, we're heading into an election year, so there's even more of a need for us to ensure that we're creating spaces and opportunities for our students to engage in dialogue, and to be educated on the current political climate, as well as some of the issues that are quite polarizing. Our office, again, through the Across the Aisle Series, will be creating those spaces for students to come together. We ourselves, as an office and as a division of Student Life, will be continuing to educate ourselves around these issues. We are constantly learning, and we're definitely not the expert in any one particular area around some of the societal issues that we're dealing with right now.

I also want to highlight the role of the First Year Experience program, and the role of the New Student Leaders. Through the selection of our NSLs, we are ensuring that our students understand that there's a strong commitment to social justice in creating inclusive spaces within these FYE seminars. And so, we do extensive training and development with our New Student Leaders, and with the Community Assistants, who are co-facilitating these groups. We do have several sections of FYE that are dedicated to social justice, whether it's the service learning ones or the ones that are literally called social justice.

In addition to that, all FYE sessions will have one or two seminars that will be dedicated to understanding bias and privilege and power dynamics that exist that people need to be conscious of, so they'll be working with the first-year class and through that program in helping to raise their consciousness around those issues.

Last and definitely not least, I want to just underscore the role of our Student Government Association. In the last two years, I think recently, actually, they created a branch called Diversity and Inclusion. And the reason for that is that they want to make sure that as a university, we are paying attention to these issues as it relates to the student body. They've been a wonderful advocate for the students, as well as pushing us to be better and to be pushing out better programming. They themselves also have a budget for the program that they're pushing out as well.

So, those are some of the ways that we are working to promote social justice. And the last thing that I'll mention, in our office, we have something called Student Life Financial Assistance program. Some of our events do cost a bit of money, depending on the kind of event that you want to attend, and we would recognize that we definitely don't want any student to be excluded from these events because of financial reasons, so there is a special fund that's set aside to help support students to engage in events and other co-curricular experiences.

Thanks, Will.

William Johnson:

Great. Thank you, Kamala. And certainly, an environment where many Fairfield University spend a lot of their time is in our residence halls. Meredith, might you talk a little bit about initiatives within residence, to address these topics?

Meredith Smith:

Absolutely, Will.

The Office of Residence Life is dedicated to cultivating a welcoming community where students are valued, celebrated, and appreciated. Social justice is at the heart of our Jesuit and Catholic identity as an institution, and as an office, we are thrilled to be a team, one of the most diverse teams, of both professional and student staff, in terms of identities, experiences, and opinions. We look to continue to educate ourselves as we work with our students. Our student leaders are extremely well-trained, in terms of how to respond and how to communicate through difficult topics. In our office, we like to say, "We rumble through things," because we do. We really talk about topics head-on and work to increase and improve our environment.

In the residence halls, we look to have an environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all. We celebrate our differences as a community, and we look to respond to what's happening locally, nationally, and globally. One of the key areas that this happens is actually in our sophomore residential college communities, specifically, the service for justice community. They host open forums and events that bring all of campus together to talk about what's happening in the world, and we do partner very closely with some of the folks on this call, namely, the Office of Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, and the Office of Student Engagement, to ensure that all students' voices are being heard and amplified. And we are specifically focusing on communities and under-represented voices as well.

That's just a little bit of what we're doing in residence life. Again, we're continuing to educate ourselves and to move forward as an office and as a team.

William Johnson:

Meredith, while you have the floor, one of the common questions, as you know, that comes up during orientation, and particularly this year, is move in. What is the move-in process going to look like this year? We know that it's going to be very different than our traditional move-in day. Maybe you could just spend a couple of minutes to describe to folks what move in is going to look like.

Meredith Smith:

Sure. Thanks, Will.

As you've probably heard, our plans are very much evolving. We are in close communication and contact with our colleagues in the state of Connecticut. What I can tell you right now is that we're planning an efficient and smooth move-in day process that'll focus on social distancing for our students and their families.

Some other key details is that we will be assigning families a specific move-in time that you'll receive a little later in the summer. We'll have robust safety, including guidelines and protocols for move-in day, and throughout the semester, that will be posted a little later in the summer. I can say that our move-in dates for the first-year class are August 26th and 27th. Again, we're spreading this out over two days so that we ensure proper social distancing. And we are excited to welcome you to campus. We'll have more information on our website, again, fairfield.edu/reopen, a little later in the summer.

Additionally, when we do send out roommate assignments, which will be coming out the second week in July, we'll include some robust information about what move-in's going to specifically look like, including a packing list of what to bring, what not to bring, as well as specific details about that day. So, really excited. If you have additional questions, feel free to email us at residencelife@fairfield.edu.

William Johnson:

Great. I see there's a question in the chat about orientation. I think this is a little bit of a continuation of the comments that Meredith just provided. Orientation is going to ... It's an ongoing process is the way I like to look at it, particularly for our first-year students. We like to look at it as orientation and transition, so we will be continuing to guide students, as Kamala mentioned earlier, connecting them with their New Student Leaders throughout the summer. And certainly, when first-year students arrive on campus in August and early September, there will be additional orientation, fall welcome, transition opportunities for them at that time.

If you haven't gathered already, we have a great, great group of professionals here at Fairfield University, who are prepared, willing, ready to accept with open arms the responsibility of helping to guide, helping students to navigate through this experience here at the university. I think the people here, in my opinion, is part of what makes Fairfield University a great place. I think it's part of the reason why you've been on the journey to this point with us is because you've really been impressed with the people and the opportunities that our university offers to our students, and to our larger community.

But I wanted to wrap up this session by posing a question to the panelists, and allow them, anyone who wants to answer, to jump in, and that is the question of, what is it that makes a Fairfield University experience unique? And with this question, I'd like to start with John Carroll, who I think has a really great story to share with you.

Johnathan Carroll:

Yeah. Thanks, Will. Yes, you're right. This is one of the great things, great topics I do like to share.

One item that I didn't mention in my introduction is that I have a couple of things in common with those of you that are on the webinar with us today. Let me begin to our students, I'll say from one Stag to another, I personally welcome you to the Stag family. I, along with some others in this session, am an alum, so I've been in your position before, and it certainly is an exciting time. To our parents and guardians, I'll also mention that twice in the last four years, I, along with my wife, who is also an alum, have been in your position, as we've joined our two daughters as they've embarked on their journey here at Fairfield.

So, if that doesn't say, "Fairfield's a special place," I don't know what does. Thanks, Will.

William Johnson:

Great. Thank you, John. And Eli, you, I think, of all the panelists, have been with the university the shortest amount of time, and you've decided to stick with us. Maybe you might share with everyone a little bit of what you've seen that made this Fairfield University experience unique thus far.

Eli Olken-Dann:

Sure. I've been at Fairfield for just about a year now. This is my fourth institution in higher education, and out of all the institutions I've worked at, I definitely feel the collaborative spirit is much higher here at Fairfield than everywhere else that I've worked at. I just can't say enough about how welcoming the faculty and staff, and of course the students, have been to myself in embracing our department the way that they do. I think I mentioned some of the statistics regarding the participation, and recreation is certainly an outlet that students come to rely on. I just can't say enough about the level of engagement, about the students, faculty, and staff here at Fairfield.

William Johnson:

Great. Thanks, Eli.

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And as we wrap up our session, on the screen briefly you'll see the contact information of many of the offices that are on our panel right now. I want to leave you with, orientation is just the beginning of your journey with Fairfield University. We have every bit of confidence that you will be successful and extraordinary students here at Fairfield University. We pledge that we will guide you as you develop, grow, and learn, and we are here to support you, both in your successes, but also your disappointments and your failures, inside and outside the classroom.

We encourage all students to make sure that you become the change leaders of the future. We hope that you all enjoy the rest of your summer. Be safe, and we look forward to seeing you back on campus in August and September. Thank you.

Jim Fitzpatrick:

Go Stags.