Sanford:
Good afternoon and welcome to this University of Memphis Faculty Town Hall Forum. I'm Otis Sanford Professor of Journalism in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. We're joined today by the leadership here at the University, hopefully to answer a lot of your questions as we prepare to start back in the fall of 2020 and the school year 2020-2021 before we get started with the questions, let me introduce, our guests today we have president of the University of Memphis Dr. David Rudd. We have the Provost here at U of M Doctor Tom Nenon. We have Raj Kurapati who is the Executive VP and Chief Financial Officer and. Jeffrey Marchetta, who is the president of the Faculty Senate.

Again, we're here to answer a lot of questions that the faculty has presented for the last several weeks concerning our preparations for the start of the fall semester we want to start with some opening remarks by each of our panelists today Dr. Rudd we’ll start with you for any opening remarks you have.

Rudd:
Thank you Otis. Very much appreciate you doing this with us and certainly want to thank everyone for being here and joining us for this effort. As we start, I also want to thank all of our faculty, staff and students, parents for their input a voicing their opinions and thoughts and concerns over the course of the last several months. And as we have moved through a very difficult time in our history, also want to acknowledge and thank the working groups that we put together. But in the leadership of Dr. Nenon Raj Kurapati and Jeff as well in the Faculty Senate's role in that. That's been remarkably important for us to have a good, thoughtful, thorough process.

I want to share a couple of thoughts about where we are in the next step that we're going to take as a University. I think it's important for people to look back at the communications that we have offered a very consistently throughout this crisis. If you go back to the onset of this for a month or so ago. We have consistently noted in all of our communications that we were going to rely on local, state & national data the most recently available, accurate data in health guidance. An always put our people at the forefront of this process and some of the questions that we received were about what kind of data were referencing and so let me just include a couple of things we are fully aware of the latest information on total positive cases and Shelby County. In Memphis, in the state of. Tennessee, as well as across the southeast, we’re aware of positive test rates, hospitalization rates, ICU bed utilization, the availability of testing as well as what has emerged recently. The problem in getting tested so access to testing along with a remarkably long lag time in test result reporting, and we can talk a little bit more about that. I think Dr. Nenon has some thoughts about that. And Raj Kurapati about the role of testing for us over the course of the last two weeks? In particular, it has become extremely difficult to get test and to get results on, and that is a critical factor when we think about the future of our campus about reopening our campus and about how we move forward. If you look at current data, local data, Tennessee data, it is. It has gotten worse over the course of the last several months and over the course of the last couple of weeks, in particular. And we are aware of that and we are responding to that.
Our campus has continued to operate it about 35% capacity over the course of the past four months, and we've been operating, housing limited, dining venues. We've been utilizing staggered work shifts, rotational staffing, and we've had active research activity in some small class work in the laboratory work over the course of the campus. In the summer months now we have done well doing that, we've been able to manage that lower density and we have felt good about that process in terms of safety and security and health on our campus. Now, I would imagine that most of our faculty are aware that we operate both University Middle as well as Campus School, so we have responsibility for both of those. Several weeks ago, we announced a phased return to those campuses. We announced that we would be doing a phased return to Campus School as well as into University Middle. In that it would be predominantly virtual. In the first phase, and what I want to share with people today - and you will receive a detailed email in about 15 minutes or so that provides and articulates these next steps- And you will receive additional communications over the course of the next two weeks with some frequency from both myself Doctor Nenon as well as Raj Kurapati and others in physical plant in, staffing that we will be doing the same thing for our campus. We will be doing a phased reopening, a phased return, an that first phase based on current data will be predominantly virtual and in a remote nature.

Now when I say that and it will be in the email summary as well that it will be predominantly virtual and remote, we will move the we will move current face to face and hybrid courses to online delivery for the campus but we will continue to have some limited face to face activity on campus.

We will continue to have limited face to face activity around clinical training laboratories, some engineering courses and related activities. And also, in terms of the arts in in some of the music and arts courses, will have some limited activity there. All of that will be done in a way that is consistent with our- I think very carefully developed and well-articulated standards in preparations over the course of the last 90 days- and so you can find those documents. There is a link in the email. That provides those documents and you can review and look at those specifically. So be aware that we were making that shift. We're doing it in light of current data and we believe that this is certainly the most appropriate step at this time to protect the safety and the health of everyone, our campus. And that includes students, faculty, staff, parents, anyone that visits are campus now after 30 days. And when we move into September in the middle of September, over the course of the next month, we will continue to evaluate on a regular basis all available data consistent with what I mentioned earlier. But it's actually more expansive than that, so I just mentioned data that revolve specifically around diagnostic rates and access to care and other issues, but we will continue to evaluate a host of data and variables over the course of the next month. And reevaluate the possibility of some limited expansion of return in density on our campus in mid. September and that will be voluntary for faculty and students if it is deemed safe at that time.

So, I'll repeat that that if it is deemed safe at that time, will make that opportunity available
for faculty if they want to do that will make that opportunity available for students if they like to do that, and then we'll arrange to make that happen again. If the data warrants it so let me go ahead and stop there. I know that's a lot to digest. Again, it'll be a written statement that people will receive here very shortly I will let Tom Jeff Raj weigh in as well, fill in some of the gaps of areas that may not have offered as much detail as well, and

Sanford:
I will have some follow up questions, especially to the major announcement that you just may have some follow up questions that in a few minutes. But Dr. Nenon, would you? Give us a few opening remarks.

Nenon:
Well, at this point this is clearly. The only right decision. This is, we've said from the outset that the safety of all the members of our university community is our highest priority, and we were not going to do anything that would be endangering their safety. Our work teams have investigated best practices made very sensible recommendations about how we could do that physical plant. Thank you very much. You have already made this a very safe campus. The fact that we had 700 students in our dorms from March until many now without a single incident tells us that they have done that work well, including their dining halls. Those of us who have come to campus can attest that this is an environment where we have adequate equipment. and cleaning protocols and everything else for all of our faculty and staff and students and Dr. Rudd mentioned that many of these staff members had been here and that we have been able to provide a safe environment for them and that they have all had all the equipment they need to work safely and keep others safe. So, we are obviously disappointed about this. I have to say we're a little worried when we talk to our students at the end of the spring semester. And as we've talked to students who are not yet registered, or students who came to new student orientation not yet registered, we know that many of them really value the face to face experience, and they want to get to see their faculty. They want to see their fellow students, so we're disappointed that after all the work to provide a safe environment for them, that the community conditions are not going to allow that to happen.

In particular, is doctor Rudd said the fact that we're not going to be able to get test results in a timely way means that? Even those people that worry that they may have been infected are not going to know and so at this point we cannot take advantage of all the great work that's been done by the various teams on student life on the mitigation of risk in on ground courses.

But we are glad that the work that was done with the facilities will still be valuable and the work that the remote instruction committee did is all the more valuable now, so we prepared for all contingencies, and this looks like this is the one that we're going to have to opt for at the moment.

Sanford:
Raj Kurapati. Did you have some opening remarks for?

Kurapati:
Yeah, thank you. it is I want to put some numbers specific numbers to the comments that boat Dr. Rudd and Tom made and I think being the numbers guy. That's probably where I'll start. The fact of the matter is, you know we had 700 students living in our dorm dormitory facilities throughout the course of the spring semester. We currently have over almost 200 students actively in our dorms. We've kept a lot of our facilities open. To include dining facilities that the UC, in certain areas, the library to support these students. We made that choice because these students had no other option and we had a responsibility to ensure that they had a safe place to save if they had no nowhere else to go. and I think that was the right decision, as. Both Tom and Dr. Rudd mentioned, in spite of us having 700 students, we establish some very clear protocols and expectations of those students for them to have the privilege of living in our dormitories and our housing facilities. And we had no positive case in the dormitories. We have 25 cases right now. Will actively of students that are reported positive results COVID infections, but none of them were on our campus. All of them where students that are living in off campus facilities in around the campus and at home. I think that's very important to point out. The other thing- I will note that is we were planning on opening us dormitories again to our students and the fall we have right now, roughly 2500 beds. We've already quarantined about 80 beds, for those that may need to isolate as a result of positive case.

Of the 2500 beds 2400 beds are already spoken for. We have 2400 applications of this point and that is very much along the lines of what our experience was lost in recently.

Rudd:
Just emphasize and that's a critical point. So, two things one we have managed very consistently. Students throughout this in our dorms with very significant restrictions in every case that we've had is been outside of our campus outside of us facilities. And so I think that's important for us to emphasize to note, so we will continue to manage that effectively if there is indication or evidence that we are not, we will be transparent and responsive to that, and I think it's Tom said earlier we were going to do what's in the best interest of our faculty, staff, and students.

The other thing I'm going to add is that we have a very significant PELL population. Pell eligible students at the. University of Memphis that do not have access to the resources needed. To continue their education if they're not on our campus on, even if it is virtual or remote predominantly, and so we're responding to that unique need in our community. We will continue to monitor carefully. We will share that data just as Raj did. We will be fully transparent, and if there's any indication of a problem that emerges, we will respond to it and take appropriate steps. So, I just want to make sure I emphasize, clarify that for everyone why we're making that decision.
**Kurapati:**
In parallel fashion to this broader decision, very quickly on the workforce as Dr. Rudd stated, we had about we have about 35 to 40% of our workforce actively reporting to work off that 25% have been there consistently since we went to remote. Remote work after the shelter in place order came out from the County and the city. We’ve had 65 cases reported cases of potential exposure or positive. Infection to COVID, and none of those cases were on campus again. All of those cases were as a result of contact that happened outside of a campus, and again we are monitoring that carefully. And we've been managing that in accordance with protocols that we've established about tracing, which were informed very much by the work that the different committees did and provide a recommendation to us on. So, I want to make sure people understand that we are managing that very carefully, and those 65 cases.

**Sanford: Question:**
I assume that all of them were put in quarantine or how was that happen?

**Kurapati: Answer:**
Yes, Sir. So as soon as soon as the cases reported, if it's an employee, it's reported to HR. HR does a contact tracing effort and identifies all the people that need to be notified. Obviously because of HIPAA and other considerations, we keep that very confidential and work with the local authorities as well to make sure that we report the appropriate cases to their local authorities. And folks have been asked to quarantine and returned to work when they've been cleared by.

**Nenon: Answer:**
Raj, I might note that we have a parallel process for students through the Dean of students in which any student, even if they're not on our campus in classes currently, even if they're not living on our campus, we asked them to let us know, and we did find out because they told their instructors referred, and we have a similar process where they are informed about what's to be done. There's contact tracing in anyone who needs to be contacted about possible testing and quarantining is informed in the same way.

**Kurapati:**
I will wrap up, but I want to again emphasize the value that the work that each of the work groups did that informed a lot of the things that we did. You know, one of the things that came out of that workgroups work was the need for us to have adequate supplies, as we think about returning for faculty, students, and staff in whatever density to campus, and as a result of that, we've invested about 1.2 million dollars in different types of supplies that we need to keep our campus safe we've invested in filters and ultraviolet lights in all of us facilities, in air handling units that actually disinfect and kill the COVID-19 virus. In addition to other bacteria and viruses.
Rudd:
I think that's very important to know, and actually it actually Raj. You might want to repeat that for people because I know there have been multiple questions about air handling. I've been very responsive question with the latest technology for people. So even though people won't be on campus immediately with any significant density outside of these small things we've been doing consistently through the summer. We have upgraded that in responded to that very specifically.

Sanford:
That is one of the questions that was going to be asked about the bad quality and air flow. How is that and how does that impact be in in the classroom, for example?

Kurapati:
I would add that it's a combination of actions that we take in vision to making our facilities, including the air handling units, have the appropriate equipment, having masks, having wipes, cleaning the desks, of the facilities on a regular basis is a combination of all those things that actually makes our campus safe. And we've invested in every one of those needs at a fairly extensive scale. In fact, we continue to order stuff. As an example, we have 22,000 masks. Reusable masks in stock that we will be distributing to our faculty and staff as they return to campus. We have invested in several 100 face shields we’re ordering plexiglass for our classrooms to provide protection to our faculty as a return to the classroom when they return to the classroom. And obviously our staff were also ordering in spaces where there isn't an opportunity to distance there’s plexiglass and things of that nature so that it can be installed well in advance of anything.

Sanford:
I have one quick follow up on that PPE question little bit later, but Jeffrey Marchetta as a representative or president of the Faculty Senate. I'd like for you to make some opening remarks here.

Marchetta:
OK, thank you Otis. So, as you know, we received a tremendous amount of feedback and justifiable concern from our faculty over the course of the summer regarding the uncertainty of how we would reopen the campus this fall. And we've also heard from our students and the parents of our students and in our staff and I've regularly communicated with our staff senate, so we've represented those concerns.

I just want to say on behalf of the faculty. Based on all this feedback, that I want to applaud you for making this decision. I think the leadership is making the right decision and you know; I think we're staying firm on our commitment to health and safety of our University community. I believe that you know the data is important and it should drive these decisions. But I also believe that a lot of that feedback was taken into consideration in the decision making and so it’s an important part of what we do is faculty and staff and students to provide input to our
leadership and they have been receptive and responsive. And I believe this is a result of that process as mentioned by Dr. Nenon. We had 10 faculty that served in the workforce committees, work groups this summer. All excellent faculty and we chose those faculty together as a group. We are lucky to have our own school of public health here on campus to draw expertise on and we did extensively in all of these work groups. These workgroups spent a numerous amount of time looking at all different perspectives and trying to formulate different variations that we should be prepared for as we return to campus. And so even though this is the right decision now, we will be prepared based on a lot of that work.

For what happens in the coming fall, especially if we are able to return to campus in some format, which is what our students clearly prefer, and I really want to acknowledge our faculty here as a faculty member, I've gone through the same process as everybody else I've taught, classes I had to transition abruptly in the spring to remote teaching. Our faculty really rose to that challenge remarkably well, many of them have continued to perform exceptionally in their research while still providing a strong education to our students. And I think we're going to continue to do that this fall, and I have confidence in our faculty. And, you know, I think as a University community we will deal with the other impacts of this decision as they come to us so.

**Rudd:**
I just want to add one comment Jeff, I just want to thank you for your role and representative. As a faculty member, I want to thank our faculty in certainly our staff as well. For those that don't and don't know and may not be aware you are a member of the President’s Council. You have been intimately involved in this process throughout. It has made that process so much better and so much easier to understand the concerns. Universities are entirely about people and I just want to thank you for representing that voice so well. I am doing it in a way that was has been, I think, remarkably productive to help us reach good decisions for this campus, good decisions for this community and you have been an essential part of that, and we are grateful for not just what you've done, but you will continue to do is we grapple with this issue just like everyone else in the country. So, thank you.

**Marchetta:**
Thank you.

**Sanford:**
Thank you. And thank you. And as a faculty member, I agree with everything you just said. Let me start with a broader question here and I'm going to go to you first, Dr. Rudd, because the news that you just made is that we are going to have a phased reopening here. And here we are on July 30th and there were some questions about all the work that's been done throughout the summer. Here we are on the 30th with this this kind of news. Why was it? Repeat some of the factors that went into the decision again to go to a phase reopening so that so that faculty members can understand why this is being made today.
Rudd:
Yeah, absolutely. I appreciate the opportunity to address. That can clarify any concerns. You know, if anything, I think if there's any issue that. We all make agree on is that this has been a remarkably fluid experience in crisis health crisis for this country, but not just for the University of Memphis, but this country that the data ebb and flow, and- I've made the comment elsewhere, and I'll make that comment again. A day’s worth of data today is like a week or a month. Previously. Things change that much, and that dramatically, very quickly. When we made the transition. In the spring we made that transition based on the best available data. We absorbed a very significant financial deficit as a result of that. We have grappled with that very carefully and thoughtfully. We have not moved to the process of layoffs or furloughs on our campus. Many universities nationally have. We wanted to make sure that we make the right decision with the most accurate available data about our future. If you look over the course of the last two to three weeks, that is when you have seen very significant change not just here in Memphis an in Tennessee, but nationally. So, you have seen very significant change. We wanted to make sure we understood that an in parallel fashion we have worked. I think both Jeff and Tom have referenced, we have worked incredibly hard to make sure we're prepared for multiple scenarios, so we have been prepared for every scenario in the heart of that. We want to make sure we deliver the best experience for our students, for our faculty or staff on this campus and we had from the beginning looked at the end of July as a likely decision point for us. It just happens that the data is converging at this time, and I think that I think that Tom referenced it earlier. I'll reference it again that we have seen a spread of the problem in our community and nationally. That has been surprising. I think many of us thought we would be in a similar position to some other countries to Germany, South Korea, Taiwan, others that have had far less spread and have contained this virus. We have not. We are responding to that.

Sanford:
So factors totally beyond the University’s control?

Rudd:
Well beyond the boundaries of this university impacting obviously because we right here in the middle of the city.

Sanford:
Is impacting how we make our decisions, obviously?

Rudd:
Absolutely, and what's layered into that is an awareness and an understanding of elements where there are enhanced risk in our community and we certainly received questions about that and we want to respond to that, but we want to make sure we do it with the latest, most accurate available data that is converged.

At this point we feel like this is a clear, good decision for campus in our community. We will
reevaluate again in a month. So, if you look back from the very beginning and I said this in the first communication and I've said it in every communication sense, we need at least two things consistently patience and flexibility. And I'm going to continue to ask for that for patience and flexibility because we have the best interests of our community heart and we will do that. But we need you to be patient and flexible while we gather data and respond to the consequences of each and every decision.

Sanford:
What is likely Raj- You may want to tackle this first. What is the likely financial impact of this decision now and especially if we are forced because of outside factors to have to go the entire semester with this process, is there? What is the financial impact likely to be?

Kurapati:
Happy to take that Otis? Let me start by reiterating what Dr. Rudd said. We had a significant impact when we went remote in spring. That in that impact was roughly $27,000,000. We been able to navigate through that fairly well. We were able to lean on several things, funding from the state, from the federal government, in the form of the CARES ACT that help significantly. We also leaned into some flexibility we had in one-time monies that in cost savings that we were able to generate as a result of some of our facilities not being actively used.

But more importantly, we also manage down in areas where the revenues were not hitting the targets that we had planned for a combination of that allowed us to effectively manage that deficit down to within a manageable number of roughly 4 to $5,000,000, and we entered the fiscal year. We're still closing it out, but I'm very confident landed on a fairly balanced budget. Walking into this fiscal year, our initial budget gap was $38,000,000. Of that $20,000,000 again we have strategic reserves that we lead into. We lead into some carryforward flexibility, and will lead into some one-time flexibility as well. And we addressed about 20 million of that doing that we have about 17-18 million dollars, that we still need to address. There's a budget coming budget reduction committee that Dr. Rudd appointed a couple of weeks ago, a few weeks ago that's been actively working- It's broadly representative of our campus community. Different folks, groups of our campus community. They are working actively to come up with some strategies and recommendation how we manage that. About 17,000,000, roughly 10,000,000 is one-time money, 7 million is recurring. So, we will. We will address that. I'm confident that we will be able to do that without significant additional actions that we need to take that are drastic. Now one thing that we did not factor into that is any drop-in enrollment as a result of whatever happens right now as of this morning, we were 4.2% down. To put some numbers to that. Every percentage point we're down in headcount translates into about 2 1/2 million dollars in revenue losses. But we were strategic about thinking through when we made these decisions, because again, as Dr. Rudd said, we followed some basic elements that we said will drive all our decisions. One of the things that we were paying very close attention to as what was happening in Washington, we knew that Washington was focused on the Republican and Republican in the Senate and in the house had plans for stimulus package.
Sanford:
The second one.

Kurapati:
Just yesterday we learned what the stimulus package that is proposed by the Republican Senate has in it, and a roughly about 30 million, 30 billion dollars to help universities out as they grapple with reopening an impact of COVID-19 as, it continues into the fall. We have a significant portion of that is that will help defray some of that depth set, and that was a critical element for us to think through what our decision-making process was. They were significant caveats in that that suggested that if he did not open the campus in form some form or fashion to traditional instruction, that we may not be eligible for that. We've been- Dr. Rudd and many others have been working actively with the Senators Office. Our local senator's office and also the national entities in helping them understand the impacts of having that type of expectations against this funding, and like,

Rudd:
I would add to that I was on a phone call yesterday with Senator Alexander's office with a number of presidents nationally through APLU, and two things, one Senator Alexander has a very good understanding of the challenges that we face.

Sanford:
He’s a former president.

Rudd:
He’s a former president of the University of Tennessee and it has a very good understanding of the challenges not just in terms of the management of a campus and the delivery of an education. But also, the financial consequences that are impossible to disentangle from this issue. And so, he's got a very good understanding of that. The other thing I would share is that we are hopeful that this federal relief package will move forward in the next month. But we do, we did feel good. I'm not going to speak for others on the call, but certainly I felt good that they understand the challenges that we have and the significance and the historic nature of these challenges, and I think that's important.

Sanford:
Of course, politics is being politics. We had to wait on that time. Tom, let me bring you into it, because Raj talked about student enrollment here and well, I think you mentioned at this moment we are 4% four percent. Of course, we still have another three weeks before classes actually start, and that's a fluid number as well. Is it likely that- what do you expect to happen with that number right now, will it get higher would it get lower? Do you expect there- was one question here about students who maybe we’re planning to go to other universities, but the cause of Covid? They may look to their own hometown universities resulted us at the last minute, can you address that?
Nenon:
Well, I think here again, Dr. Rudd's remark about one day being like a week is quite relevant. I mean there there's so many countervailing forces in issues here. We do know that in times of financial crisis that typically urban institutions and public institutions tend to have increased enrollment. We're clearly seeing that at the graduate level. We're seeing record enrollments in our graduate programs of tuition paying students, students coming back and enhancing their skills, and being able to go back into the workforce and using this time to improve their employment opportunities. So, we're seeing some of that. We are hearing about students that other schools are making decisions or deciding that they're going to stay here and recognizing the value of the education and the quality that we have here. One indication we had a record number of students who registered for new student enrollment- or for new student orientation. I'm sorry, and so we're seeing the recognition of the quality of the value. On the one hand. On the other hand, the uncertainty is leading a lot of students to wait, and we simply cannot know how that's going to break, and that's why you know we were trying to do everything we can to make sure that those students that wanted robust on ground offerings would have those. Because many students have told us. And out of this 4%, that's the most common remark we're getting is that's what they wanted. So, this move is not without some financial risk, but we didn't have an alternative.

Let me say one thing about the finances at a University. I'll overstate it, perhaps, but you know, a lot of people don't really think about what it means at the University with finances. We are not owned by someone that wants dividends. We are not increasing shareholder value.

When we're talking about money. The main thing we're doing is talking about being able to pay the faculty and the staff members that serve our students. So, if we have less students, then the means to maintain all of those positions that we have goes down. And a lot of our funds are not flexible. We have debt service on the parking garages and in the dorms. Whether we have people parking in them and living in them or not. Right, we have to heat the buildings. We're in the South. We can't leave the buildings unairconditioned in the summer or unheated in the winter, so those are fixed costs.

So the worry is and what we've been trying to do when we talk about enrollment in finances, we are doing everything we can to protect the pay and the jobs of the many faculty they're doing outstanding work working harder than ever right now, and the staff members have done outstanding job in supporting our students, and so that's our concern here. So, it really is, a balancing act of people on both ends their safety, but also their incomes and their employment.

Sanford:
Let me go to some nuts and bolts questions here as a relates to faculty and Jeff. I want to try to get you in on some of these questions because. I had several questions that were submitted having to do with advising, having to do with graduate assistants having to do with research,
and the impact that all the decisions that are being made will have on research and all of that. Let me put that all in one basket and say what is the likely negative impact on faculty members when it comes to advising grad graduate assistants in research?

**Rudd:**
Why would say, uh, uh in remind people we've actually, we've actually had really good activity on our campus for the last four months, so we've had a lot of active research. We've had small classes. We've had, clinical instruction, we've had labs operating, and Jeff, I don't know. I know. I'm on the campus on a regular basis, Jeff. I know you're on the campus. I don't know if you want to speak to that very quickly from a faculty.

**Marchetta:**
Certainly I've been here every day this summer and I- I feel safe. I see the facilities team making improvements for the safety of everybody on campus every day. I wear a mask. I see people wearing masks and one thing I can say is that our research output has remained relatively unchanged. If anything, else, it's actually improved. We've received several NSF careers awards recently, and I think this decision that we're making today is also going to benefit our research. Because I think, by having a less density of people on campus, we will be able to have a little bit less risk for those people that do need to come on campus and do research and continue that level of productivity.

As far as advising, we have great video conferencing tools, I think we'll be able to utilize those. We've had a lot of practice this year and I think our academic advising units are well versed in how to use those tools, and certainly Tom Nenon can speak more to this. But we've invested a lot in our academic advising in our student retention and we have a considerable number of tools that help us track students and work through those tools to help get our students in line with their curricular needs. So, I-

**Rudd:**
I would just add on the advising front, Dr. Weddle-West and Dr. Lawhead could support this. Karen has told me on a number of occasions actually that access has gone up as a result of transition to virtual in remote opportunities that we had a significant number of students that it is easier to do it electronically, virtually rather than getting car and drive to campus from across town or from across town when you're working have to get back to work. That actually the access and availability at one level and overall utilization had gone up, so I would be surprised if that didn't continue. So, it was a bit of a surprise to see that.

**Nenon:**
Are we ready to say anything about the graduate students yet?

**Rudd:**
We do not- You may want to go ahead and comment about that, but we do not have- We have not yet finalized an opportunity for coverage. We’re working on. We are pursuing it. We’re doing everything we can to make that happen.
Nenon:
So we have heard those and there are efforts underway and we're just it's premature to announce what those are but we want you to know that we have been concerned about us graduate students the entire time we have heard your concerns. And we're working very hard on that, absolutely,

Sanford:
In the event that a faculty member does get sick weather was on campus or off campus? Who's responsible for getting back up instructors in that event? Who's responsible for that?

Nenon:
The cases are so different that you can't say in particular what you're going to do. But we know every semester, unfortunately, we have someone who for some reason unexpectedly is not able to instruct.

Obviously, with a serious illness like this in the community, the number of cases like that may go up. We certainly hope not. We hope everybody is able to stay safe, but those just have to be handled within the department on a case by case basis. And if a Department doesn't have those resources and I can tell you that they're not shy about letting us know, and we certainly want to keep the instruction of our students is our highest priority in quality instruction. So, we will provide whatever it is that we need to do to make sure that we have continuity of quality instruction.

Sanford:
Anybody want anything?

Marchetta:
I would just like to add to that, you know, as researchers, each of our lab facilities as faculty, we have the ability to control compliance on best practices in our laboratories and with us students, and I think that's important. So, you know, there's not a situation where students are just not being supervised or anything of that nature.

Nenon:
Let me follow up with that very briefly, we would not have been urging people to come back into an environment that we did not believe could be safe. We actually believe that for those that do come back, when things are better in the community and we have these means that the classroom is going to be about the safest place that they can be after there in a home that let's no one else in.

But we do expect, and we've seen that our students are going to be if they are in a classroom, they're going to be wearing masks, and we have all the seats laid out, they’re going to be socially distance. So, we will not be allowing in our classroom’s risky behaviors. And so, we do expect that people will become ill just like that's happened now, but they are not getting it on
our campus. They're getting ill in the community, so if we will have an illness even of people coming back, I'm going to bet that it's not going to be based on activity on our campus because we have a controlled environment and we have rules that are not the general rules in the community.

Sanford:
Yeah, I want to ask this question directly from how it was submitted and Dr. Rudd maybe you the one to answer. How would the University specifically support female research faculty who may have been disadvantaged by additional care burdens during the pandemic? There has been a great deal of preliminary research showing that Covid associated care work like home schooling and caring for sick relatives has disproportionately fallen on women. How is the University going to ensure that this does not disproportionately result in unequal gendered tenure and promotion outcomes over the coming years?

Rudd:
And I appreciate the question. I'm going to defer to Tom here just second, but I will say that we actually already have procedures and policies in place that allow for an extension of the tenure clock under unusual circumstances or conditions period. That is not gender specific that cuts across. Any possible outcome, issue, challenge, context so we have that in place. People just need to make those requests and those go to the Provost, and so. I'll turn that over to you, Tom.

Nenon:
Dr. Rudd expressed it quite adequately. I can just state that faculty are aware of it. If there's someone listening that was not, then it's we already had stop the clock policies in place that handle all sorts of eventualities and have over the years. I've been observing it, I've been here a long time. I've never seen a reasonable case denied before Covid and I have not heard of any reasonable cases being discouraged or denied during Covid. And we are all very, very aware that this is placing huge burdens on men and women on our faculty, and that we are going to respond appropriately.

We've recruited good faculty in. We've invested in them, and we want to see them succeed. And if that means additional flexibility on our part for the student, for the faculty, just like they're showing it to the students, then we're going to exercise that flexibility to make sure the investment in people we've made is going to continue to pay off for our women faculty as well as for our men.

Sanford:
We've had a great deal of reporting this summer around international students because that, unfortunately, has become a political issue, so we had one question that the ask can you provide basically an update to our current situation with our international students? What especially now that we are going to have phased reopening? How would that impact our international students?
Rudd:
We have been thoughtful about the throughout it I’ll let Tom summarize what we're going to do, but we absolutely will make sure that our international students are taking care of an we provide a place for them.

Nenon:
We've had contingency plans in place for that all along. It's been very, very important to us. We really regret that this did get caught up in politics. We would have had a large number of outstanding international students joining us this fall, but they couldn't get visas. But we're staying in touch with them and they are still very interested in the University of Memphis and as soon as we have administration. Or this administration changes them mind about the value of this international talent coming to America, and as soon as Covid allows, we expect that we will see many more international students on our campus. But for those that are here, we have developed contingency plans. No student needs to worry that they will have their visa status in any way endangered at the. University of Memphis. We have keep working track of each of them and will make sure that each of them has the information in the courses they need to be able to continue their education. Here at the. University of Memphis we value them greatly.

Sanford:
There was also a question around student athletes cause athletics always comes up when you talk about the U of M, but the specific question had to do with athletes using the weight room because. This faculty member understood that while the athlete was headed to the weight room, they were wearing a mask, but while they were working in the weight facilities, they were not using a mask. Can you provide a little clarity about how are our athletes bearing during this COVID-19 and what's the situation with athletics in general?

Rudd:
Absolutely, say two things. One, I'm going to remind everyone of the data that Raj shared that every problem we've had, either with a staff member or student, has been off campus. It has not been in our facilities. It's not been as a part of as a result of us procedures that those issues are happening in the community and being brought in. The other thing I would say is that the American Athletic Conference in the NCAA have very specific protocols and guidelines for COVID-19, for athletes. We're following all of those guidelines and actually they are enhanced. In the availability and persistence of testing is significant for all of our athlete, the ones that are currently back on campus. Now the positive tests on a few athletes that we had were at the beginning, so they were positive when they came in and then they are appropriately quarantine. But I can assure anyone that has concerns about that, that the conference as well as the NCAA has extensive guidelines. You can go to the NCAA website, pull down those protocols. We’re doing not just those protocols, but more. So, we're absolutely taking care of our athletes and its student athletes, and we've not had any issues, and I'm not sure of the time frame that they've been back. It is having been- It’s been several weeks now, yeah so, it’s been a
significant period of time so it seems to be working well. And then we've got some confidence in that.

Sanford:
Assuming that we do go back to more in-class instruction later in the semester and even for the limited ones that we have during the phase then process there were questions around how should faculty handle students who are just unwilling to abide by the rules? Don't want to wear a mask? Maybe even become belligerent as result of it? Of course, some may say for medical reasons. I don't want to wear a mask. What is a faculty member to do as a result?

Rudd:
I'll let Tom respond then I'll weigh-in.

Nenon:
The most important thing is to make sure that all of the members of our community understand why we were asking this and understand their responsibilities. They also need to know that there will be consequences for those very few who come on our campus and decide not to observe the rules that keep it safe for everyone. And that is faculty, staff, or students. That if you do not want to wear mask, you have the option of not wearing a mask, but that option needs to be exercised off of our campus.

Sanford:
Wow.

Nenon:
That if you're coming to our campus that this is a voluntary exercise. We have online courses for you and you need to take those online courses. If you want to be in any public space at our University, you're going to do it. And we make that clear enough, and if you walking around campus, you're seeing signs every place. I think if we make that clear enough, we will only have a very few cases,

Sanford:
But we've seen nationally throughout the summer, people saying, you know you're violating my rights here.

Rudd:
But Otis, let me let me echo what Tom said to reinforce it a couple, and then I'll give you an example. One I agree with Tom- You'll wear a mask if you're on our campus and we have. We have a student Handbook that has a code of conduct an it is covered always. It's covered and we have a faculty h handbook that has a code of conduct and we have an employee handbook that has a code of conduct. That there are basic - that there are basic expectations in any community given the significance and severity of this health risk, that's one of the expectations and so we simply are going to ask students to follow the student handbook in the student code of conduct. And invest in protecting other community
members as a part of the process. Then the other example, I would give you is that we had a protest on campus. A month or so ago and Dr. Nenon was there, I was there and a number of faculty and other representatives in University there- I bet we had over 200 people. Many students. I didn't see anyone who didn't have a mask one. So, the evidence to this point, regardless of what the evidence is, nationally, the evidence in our community is actually been very encouraging. Very positive.

Sanford:
Dr. Marchetta, Let me ask you speaking for the faculty, have you, do you expect that there will be any concerns from faculty members who say, I, you know, I don't want to be the mask police here and will say, well, I don't know if I want to take that responsibility or I don't know what I'm going to do as a result of that.

Marchetta:
Well, yeah, I can. I think I understand that question and concern. One thing that's in our guidelines. We had considerable debates over compliance on best practices and and one of the things that we advocated for his faculty in those guidelines was the ability to control our classrooms. Which is something that we've always had the ability to do, and this is really no different. It's clearly stated in those guidelines that if a student isn't wearing a mask, they faculty member can ask that student to leave the classroom. And if the student chooses not to leave the classroom, then we could call security. But we can also report those students. To the student, the Dean of the students and then it will go through the code of conduct. For a faculty member who didn't want to take that approach. I think you know they would be well within their rights to perhaps cancel their class on that day and then and then make that report to the Dean of students. That would be the approach that I would recommend.

Sanford:
Right, Raj I want to come to you with this question. Does the University have any plans to pay grad students at the end of August as opposed to the schedule end of semester end of September in order to alleviate any financial burdens? Especially given the fact that we have a slightly earlier start date this semester?

Kurapati:
So right now we did not change the schedule for payments that happens on a monthly basis and the first payment will be in September, but they will get a full pay and. I have not heard any specific requests from anybody to otherwise, this is the first time they came up. Right now, there's no plans to change that schedule. We will obviously consider circumstances as appropriate and will make accommodations wherever necessary.

Sanford:
Is there any expectation that we might- this might impact the number of grad assistants?
Nenon:
The number of grad assistants is usually determined by, very frankly, the budget that departments have available. And so, they have a certain number of slots there, typically very competitive, so usually by March or April we know who is going to have a graduate assistantship and who they’re going to be working with in which departments. So that one is. That’s determined fairly early.

Sanford:
And Raj, I want to go back to something you said at the very outset here about staff that's currently working- say even the custodial staff. There is enough PPE available or will be available for people who are on campus working, especially the custodial staff and others.

Raj:
Absolutely, now one thing we need to be keep in mind as you know the it's appropriate types of protective equipment and supplies. Not all. Not all cases called for, you know. Basically, hazard suits things of that nature. We have appropriate PPE available for the types of jobs that folks are doing, and we have plenty in our stock. We continue to order that on a regular basis so that we have adequate supplies to meet all the needs of our faculty, staff, and students when we return to campus now.

Rudd:
And Otis, we’ve had that throughout and we've utilized that throughout and we have followed the local, state and national guidelines on that throughout.

Sanford:
I did have also a question and we almost getting to end about time here. There was the question about accommodations for disability students through the disability resources for student’s area.

If we are having a phase reopening and I've had students- with various disabilities in my class is over the over several years and they run the gamut. What is the protocol, say for those disabilities?

Nenon:
Any sort of disability accommodation should always have the first address, disability resource services. So that's the first address. There are two questions there. I think one is about students who are uncomfortable coming on campus due to an underlying health condition, and they can apply through them, and those are being recognized. And then they work with the department to try and find an alternative to allow them to complete the semester and make progress successfully.

Related to that is the fact that by the other at the other end of the spectrum, there is when we’re having courses were on ground and we had accommodations for that suddenly going
online. Then there's a new set of problems. Sometimes, as you're taking your materials and putting them up.

In our online courses, we handle that through universal Accessibility and we have very, very time intensive. But all of our traditional online courses are universally accessible. When you're moving to remote not everyone knows how to do it, and its pretty extended work. So, what we do is disability resources works with those faculty members, and we provide support. Specifically, for those sections where we know that we have a student would have a hearing disability or seeing disability that in a normal classroom has a different accommodation. So, we provide support to the faculty member to help those students. So whatever kind of disability that is a problem, with now of course, being remote then Disability Resource Services is the first address, and they work with the faculty to make sure that every student has the reasonable accommodation that we can make to allow them to complete them classes successfully.

Sanford:
I have one last question that I wanted to address to you Dr. Rudd because you mentioned testing at the very beginning here and of course testing is a local and state issue here, but this is not a political statement.

This is just a statement that we have not done all that well with the adequate testing and I think we need to deal with this COVID-19. What is your statement about when people ask the question about well can I get a test on the campus? What should I do about if I wanted to be tested? I'm not sure if I'm if I have it or not. What should I do?

Rudd:
Well, I appreciate you asking that. We will have. We will release probably Monday or Tuesday a description of how to go about that process. And how you will get tested if you need to be tested and how to access that?

There will be some limitations in terms of timeliness of results as we mentioned earlier, part of the issue for us is driven by those two variables is our part of the statement that we released this afternoon. One access to adequate volume of testing and then two the timeliness of return of results, and that has been a challenge. And some of that in, Memphis has been driven specifically by the significant spike. In cases and some of the severity of cases in our community. So, some of that's local but you've also seen that across the state of Tennessee as well as nationally and specifically in the South and southeast, it's been Significantly-

Sanford:
I want to give each one of you an opportunity to make- because we have faculty members who watching this they may or may not have some additional questions. I think this has been very helpful, but I want to give each one of you an opportunity to make a very brief closing.
Some closing remarks here as we prepare to go into this fall semester and Jeff, I'm going to start with you.

**Marchetta:**
Thank you. As, I said at the beginning, you know, I applaud this decision today. I think it was the right decision. I believe the faculty based on what they've said to me will overwhelmingly agree with this decision. With that being said, we know there's going to probably be an impact to this, as our CFO has said today, there's going to be a financial challenge.

Perhaps that we're going to need to face. I think this was a hard decision today, and I think our decisions in the near future going to be, you know, more challenging, but I do have confidence that if we use the data, I have confidence, as evidenced by the formation of our budget committee, which is a University committee with representation from faculty and staff that will make decisions that are sound and good for this University. What I've heard in numerous meetings from everybody on this panel as that is everybody agrees we want to save jobs on this campus and that's our next challenge. I think we'll do that I think, will make every effort to do that while taking this also, as an opportunity to increase our institutional efficiency so we'll emerge from this, and I feel confident that the faculty involved in that process.

**Sanford:**
Raj, what about you?

**Kurapati:**
You know, I think I want to echo what Jeff said about how far we've gotten in spite of our challenges. The fact is, we dealt with effectively $47,000,000 worth of a deficit with little to no significant negative impacts on our faculty, staff and students. We’re dealing with another 17,000,000 right now that the budget committee is working on and the recommendations, I've seen come out of the budget committee have been very thoughtful, have been balanced, the need for us to recognize the severity and the importance of these challenges. With the need for us to move forward as strategically as we can so that we're positioning the University for continued growth and success. Because this is a short-term problem and we don't want to take long term, far reaching actions that negatively position the University going forward. I have been very impressed with the way the committee has been working together. There are going to be challenges as a result of enrollment impacts, that is a given, but I think there are some opportunities for us to manage that. Again, some federal flexibility that we may have in the form of direct support and other opportunities for us to rethink the way we do business. We're going to have to navigate those carefully, but I will say you know, being in this role in this time is a very challenging one, but I've been very, very fortunate that we've had our leadership team, led by Dr. Rudd and the President's Council, Tom, Jeff, and faculty staff across campus that have been part of the solution- not part of the problem. That is the best I can say and that's the best circumstance I can ask for being in my position.
Sanford:
Thank you. Tom?

Nenon:
Well, I'll just be brief and thank the faculty since this is a faculty town hall. In particular, talk of the role of the faculty, the students, as you've seen in the meetings in the spring, they recognize the extra efforts. I had one colleague that said to me, that's great - I gotta higher- I thought I didn't teach as well remotely as I did on ground. I'm not sure the students were saying that, but the students in their evaluation of our faculty were higher than previous semesters recognizing the extra efforts that they've taken. I want to thank all of the factory that have invested- the scarcest, faculty resource... their time.

Hours and hours of their time in learning to do things in new ways that we hope will benefit us even when we're not just teaching remotely, but we had 540 faculty members. It successfully completed our summer Academy that was actually very, very comprehensive and time intensive.

And did that, in addition to people that have been doing it on their own. So, I want to thank the faculty and congratulate them. I want to thank our president of the. Faculty Senate, the executive committee, and the Senator for giving us feedback that helps us. Stay in touch. Listen to the concerns and come up with excellent ideas, including our faculty from the public health and other colleges in the health area that are providing the advice that helps us continue to do everything we do with the safety of our students, faculty and staff in mind.

Sanford:
And Dr. Rudd?

Rudd:
Well, let me echo what everyone else has already said. I absolutely agree with it. I started with the comment I made is that you know the universities are communities and communities or people and we know that and that is what we are concerned about. We're concerned about every individual in this community and making sure that health and safety are at the forefront is we make those decisions. I have no doubt that this is the right move for us at this moment in our history. We're also keenly aware of what Raj offered- we are at a point of, I think, were remarkably positive, trajectory and momentum for the University of. Memphis. We have very significant opportunities that are right in front of us as a University and as a community, and I would argue, as a city. We want to make sure that we make decisions at this critical moment in history. We want to maintain that momentum that maintain that trajectory while honoring our values and recognizing our people and I think that we've done that. I think that we will continue to do that based on the logic that Jeff laid out, which is we're going to look at the data, and we're going to look at the evidence. And we're going to listen to our community and respond accordingly. and I think we were doing that. We want to
make sure we make decisions that strengthen our future that do- that in a meaningful way that don't diminish opportunity. And so, I would add that I'm remarkably grateful for the people that we work with, and the people that we live within this community. I think it's times like these that you see the best of people, and we certainly have seen that in this community. That may not always be the case outside of Memphis, but I will tell you that everyone I've worked with on this remarkably challenging period, it's just been stunning, and I'm enormously grateful, and I am thankful on a daily basis for that. The other thing I'm going to remind people as well Otis. I offered earlier; I'm going to ask you to do three things. Be patient, be flexible, and be kind. This is a very stressful period for people. Be patient, be flexible, be kind.

We will get through it. We will get through it stronger and we will continue to offer a remarkably high-quality educational experience that helps our community grow. Get better, move forward, creates opportunity, and does great things, and so let me just end with that. I want to thank you, Otis, we're doing this I really appreciate you. You consistently step forward to help us and we're really grateful for your voice on this campus as well.

Sanford:
Thank you, and. As a matter of personal privilege here, I want to say that I'm extremely proud to be a member of the faculty, to be part of this University, to be a part of the team. I know from for fact that the one thing that we definitely need in this trying time is leadership. In all sectors and we have that on this campus we have strong leadership. We have good leadership. We have decisive leadership both in the faculty, the staff in the administration.

So I couldn't be happier to be a part of this team, and I want to thank all of the faculty members who joined us today for this virtual town hall forum. We appreciate your service. We appreciate your efforts and thank you for joining us, and we're done.