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HIGH **84**  
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# NIU STUDENTS REQUIRED TO GET TESTED BEFORE MOVE-IN DATES

A look at Northern Illinois University's plan for students to return to campus

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**DeKALB** – Students returning to Northern Illinois University by move-in day in August will need to get tested for COVID-19 and then provide proof of a negative test before moving in.

Each student living on campus will receive one face mask from the university.

Like most educational institutions this fall, back to school in a month will look significantly different, as public schools and higher education campuses try to balance the importance of continuing education amid an ongoing global pandemic.

NIU President Lisa Freeman on Thursday announced the school's detailed plans for re-entry, from how classes will work to moving in, to dining and housing. The plan, dubbed "Protecting the Pack" was compiled using scientific data from public health officials, feedback from students, staff, faculty and administrators and is subject to change pending further surges of otherwise, documents show.

"This plan – 'Protecting the Pack' – was created through collaboration, with input from across the university," Freeman said in a statement Thursday. "It reflects our science- and values-informed approach for facing the challenge of returning to campus this fall, as well as our desire to foster student success and community, and to maintain scholarly activity and services during these exceptional times. 'Protecting the Pack' also acknowledges the diverse needs of Huskies and provides options to accommodate those who return to campus and those who stay connected remotely."

Freeman said the nature of the virus means that, despite best efforts, COVID-19 cases are likely to occur on campus this fall, but spread and risk can be mitigated if students and personnel follow strict public health guidelines and understand NIU's fall plan may change on a case by case basis.

## Move in

New student move-in dates are spread out among three days, Aug. 19



Mark Busch file photo – mbusch@shawmedia.com

Northern Illinois University President Lisa Freeman on Thursday announced the school's detailed plans for re-entry, from how classes will work to moving in, to dining and housing.

**“This plan – ‘Protecting the Pack’ – was created through collaboration, with input from across the university. It reflects our science- and values-informed approach for facing the challenge of returning to campus this fall, as well as our desire to foster student success and community, and to maintain scholarly activity and services during these exceptional times.”**

**Lisa Freeman**, Northern Illinois president

through 21 with appointments for each student. Returning students will have scheduled move-in times as well, from Aug. 21 through Aug. 23.

All dormitories this fall will be single-use only, although shared bathrooms will be an option for those who

live in suites or otherwise noted.

COVID-19 testing is required for all students before moving in, and students should be tested no sooner than seven days before their move-in date, according to the plan.

All students are required to submit

their test results to NIU Housing no later than 24 hours before their scheduled move-in date. More information on how to submit test results is expected to be sent to students in early August, according to the plan.

For students who test positive for the viral respiratory disease, they'll be required to isolate at home for 14 days before moving in and contact NIU. Students who test negative will need to provide those results to NIU Housing and won't be allowed to move in until they've done so.

## Classes

The course plan for the fall remains unchanged since May, with in-person classes offered but limited in size and

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mostly pertaining to laboratory-type class, single-person dorm rooms and no large lectures.

Details have emerged, however, which will require all students and staff to wear face coverings unless inside private offices or outside where 6 feet of social distancing can be maintained. Face masks will be provided to students and those who need them, but NIU is encouraging students to bring their own masks as well.

Face shields will be provided to instructors for lectures if they desire.

Noncompliance with the face covering rules in classrooms also is addressed in the new plan.

“A student who fails to comply with a request to wear a mask in class will be considered to have disrupted the educational environment,” according to the plan. “If a student chooses not to comply with the request, the student will be asked to leave and, ultimately, the instructor has the authority to can-

cel class.”

Room capacities for classes will be 20% of normal size, and no more than 50 people per lecture hall will be allowed, with seats set up to accommodate social distancing and faculty encouraged to use assigned seating.

All students taking in-person or hybrid classes also are asked to limit contact with others for two weeks before the first day of classes Aug. 24, according to the plan.

**Cleaning and COVID-19 testing**

Restrooms and public spaces will be cleaned and disinfected daily, and staff will sanitize high-touch surfaces often, with each hall outfitted with multiple hand-sanitizing stations. Students also should bring their own thermometers and multiple face masks, according to the plan.

If a student tests positive for COVID-19 on campus, they’ll be required to quarantine themselves at home if they can, or NIU will provide a staff-monitored facility for them to stay in during isolation.

Public health officials also will con-

duct contact tracing and ask anyone who has had contact with a positive case to also isolate.

Students living off campus or in Greek houses are not required to undergo testing but are “strongly encouraged,” according to the plan.

If a student doesn’t have health insurance or can’t get a ride to a testing site, they should contact the DeKalb County Health Department, which will be able to arrange accommodations, according to the plan.

**Campus life**

There are more than 300 student organizations on campus that will continue in some capacity this fall, according to the plan, although details still are being worked out.

Official requirements for the university’s more than 40 fraternities and sororities has been deferred until the spring; however, monthly presidents’ meetings will be held virtually, and virtual activities also will occur.

More specific guidance on events in the fall are forthcoming, but gatherings will be limited to 50 people or fewer.

The Huskie Line bus system will continue operating, but all passengers are required to wear masks and socially distance. Cleaning occurs on the transit buses twice per day, and capacity for all buses is limited to 12 people per ride.

All routes, expect Route 12 to the Elburn Metra Station, are fare-free at this time, but that is expected to change “in the near future,” according to the plan.

Freeman said by working together and supporting one another, the NIU community will get through this.

“Our Northern Illinois University community has been purposeful, proactive and vigilant in our efforts to support the health and well-being of our fellow Huskies during COVID-19 and its many challenges,” she said. “Even during this period of uncertainty, our legacy of caring for each other and helping our neighbors, along with our passion for teaching, learning and discovery, and our unwavering commitment to equity and inclusion, have sustained us and kept us moving forward.”