



My Dear Friends,

The mission of Yeshiva University is to enrich the moral, intellectual and spiritual development of each of our students, empowering them to become people of impact and leaders of tomorrow. Next year's studies will be especially instrumental in shaping the course of our students' lives as character is formed and developed in times of deep adversity. I am encouraged for our students' future knowing that they will have the experience of working through the difficulties, issues and opportunities posed by our Covid-19 era with our stellar rabbis and faculty, as well as their close friends and peers at Yeshiva. This is the kind of teachable moment that Yeshiva University was made for.

We are working diligently to reopen our beloved campuses. I carry the very consideration of bringing our students and faculty back to campus with the same measure of responsibility that I would have with a member of my family. We at Yeshiva University are a family. Our connections run much deeper than a degree. We share communities, we share values, and we are building our future together. In that vein, below are the four central aspects of our framework for considering a reopening of our campuses: **Our Operating Principles, Plans and Protocols, Inputs, and Options.**

Operating Principles

- **Health and safety of our community:** Our chief value is the preciousness of life. We will take every reasonable measure to protect the safety, health and security of our students, faculty, staff and neighbors in this great city and state.
- **Educational Mission and Standard of Excellence:** The hallmark of Yeshiva University is our excellent education. We will ensure that the standards of our educational experience reflect our sacred mission to educate the next generation of leaders.

- **Flexibility as Conditions Evolve:** The evolving health situation requires us to continue to monitor and update our plans as new information becomes available.
- **Financial Health of the University:** We continue to take important steps to ensure that the financial foundations of Yeshiva University remain solid and secure. The Jewish people and the world need Yeshiva University and we are responsible to safeguard the wellbeing of this essential institution.

Plans and Protocols

- **Protocols for Allowing Students, Faculty, Staff into Buildings:** Four factors are being put in place in order to allow access to our university buildings: (1) Testing (2) Monitoring (3) Tracing (4) Isolation. Each of these factors will ensure that we can closely gauge the health of our students and faculty as well as create a safe and immediate response in the event of illness.
- **Safety and Social Distancing Plans:** The campus is being carefully mapped in accordance with social distancing requirements, including classrooms, residences, public areas, and dining halls. Additionally, we are securing the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all people in our buildings as well as proper cleaning protocols to ensure our campus is continually re-sanitized.
- **Educational Plan for Online and Hybrid Models:** To maximize our capacity to adapt and deliver our education to all of our students whether stationed on or off campus, we are carefully developing an educational plan that considers multiple permutations of in-person, online, and hybrid components.

Inputs

- **University-Wide Working Groups:** I am leading a university-wide task force that is formulating our plans for the Fall including our academic programs, student experience, employment conditions, IT and communications. Working groups throughout the university have been established in this comprehensive work.

- **Federal and State Government Guidance:** We are in close contact with authorities from the state and local levels to keep apprised of the latest developments.
- **Medical Experts:** We are working in close collaboration with medical, infectious disease and public health experts, including leading doctors and faculty from our affiliate Albert Einstein College of Medicine and our partners in the Montefiore Health System.
- **Students, Parents and Faculty:** Students, Parents and Faculty input are crucial to our process. To make sure everyone's needs and concerns are being properly heard and addressed, we have initiated surveys and focus groups in each segment of our YU community.
- **Higher Education Collaboration:** I am in close contact with university presidents throughout the city and state. Many of our challenges are regional and we are working with other university leaders and administrators in higher education to share ideas, plan together, and develop best practices for our entire educational community. We are also in contact with universities in other parts of the world, such as China and Israel, to learn from their experiences of returning to campus.
- **Lay and Industry Leaders:** The world of higher education faces many similar challenges confronting Covid-19 that are found in the world of industry. We have developed several cohorts of lay and industry leaders from our Trustees, President's Council and YU friends to gain insight from the practices and strategies of key business and organizational leaders.

Options

Any return to campus assumes that the health situation has sufficiently improved in New York City to the point that institutions of higher education are given clearance by the Governor and Mayor to reopen. When it comes to planning for reopening, I find the imagery of the light fixtures in my home instructive. In our more formal dining area we have a typical light switch—it can be turned on and off. In our family den, however, we have a dimmer—the light can gradually be made lighter and darker. Some challenges are like our dining room lights. There is a clear before and a clear after—the light is either on or

off. The Coronavirus outbreak, however, appears to be in the latter category. Much of our country, and the whole of New York City, have been darkened. The way forward will not simply be like flipping a switch. It will be like our dimmer in the family den. It will slowly get lighter. And even then, we may still need to adjust it backwards. I wish, like everyone, that the future could be more clear cut. It is not. What will be safe in September may change a few months later. In our plan, we will have the capacity to adjust our lighting as needed throughout.

In broad brush strokes, there are several options we are now considering for campus reopening.

- **Starting Fall semester on campus with a hybrid program.** We are working towards starting our Fall semester in person, on campus with all of the necessary preparations and protocols in place for maximum safety and protection. Even so, we anticipate that many of our students and some of our faculty will be joining us online from off campus and we will provide them with an educational framework that will allow for their full participation and involvement in the classroom experience.
- **Starting Fall semester online and moving in person after the holidays.** In an evolving health situation, we are considering the possibility of starting online in the beginning of the semester but allowing students, faculty and staff back on campus after the Jewish holidays. This would come in phases with careful consideration of density and populations allowed on campus.
- **Fall semester held completely online.** If the situation calls for it, we are fully prepared to deliver an enriched and full YU online experience throughout the Fall semester. We are providing faculty professional workshops over the Summer to enhance our teachers' proficiency with remote learning so that they are familiar with the best practices of teaching successfully in this format and have the time and resources to design engaging online experiences. We are preparing a full online student experience with a comprehensive program of interactive extracurricular activities. We have also adapted all of our student services to the virtual world, including career services, academic advisement and student counseling. Our rabbis and professors are prepared to offer their trademark personal attention and care to our entire student body.

Choosing the Right Option: In all scenarios our educational plan for next year will feature a high quality student experience that prioritizes personal growth during this Coronavirus era. The combination of a rich academic experience together with the personal connections and attention from our rabbis, teachers and mentors will be especially important during this formative year in our students' lives. Special attention will be given to our first-year students that includes a new robust engagement program that will begin as early as June.

As the health situation continues to unfold, we will gain greater visibility as to who will be on campus and when. We anticipate being able to share our initial assessment towards the end of June.

Rebuilding, Together: YU Forward

In many senses, there will be no return to a pre-Covid world. The world of Jewish and higher education is moving forward and we are finding and developing areas of new opportunity in concert with our core character:

- **Values Driven:** Throughout this crisis and beyond, our institutional response is driven by our values, furthering our essential mission of educating the leaders of tomorrow.
- **Deeply Rooted, Future Focused:** The four pillars on which we are building YU in the future - (1) Innovation and Entrepreneurship, (2) Science and Technology, (3) Great Jobs and Impactful Careers, (4) Values and Leadership - are needed now more than ever. In a rapidly changing world, these pillars ensure our vitality and purpose.
- **Built on Kindness and Love:** The world, Psalms describes, is built upon chessed, kindness. Yeshiva University is an educational institution that is built on our abiding love for each of our students, the entire world and our Creator. As we move forward into this new era, we do so with an enduring commitment to rebuild this wounded world through love and kindness. Chessed is how the world was built and it is also how it will be rebuilt.

Together, through kindness, we will rebuild our wounded world.

Warmest wishes,
Ari Berman

Emergency Scholarship Campaign

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