



**THE “RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITY” INITIATIVE**

**AT BEACON COLLEGE**

**AUGUST 2020**



## **The “Responsible Community” Initiative at Beacon College**

### **A Preamble: Affirmation of the Board of Trustees**

Among Beacon College’s primary responsibilities as an institution of higher learning is the delivery of effective undergraduate instruction and support. The College pursues this goal and its distinct mission by prioritizing an environment that promotes the health and well-being of its citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges for American higher education, circumstances that have required communities like Beacon to take actions apt to change based upon the latest best practice recommendations of informed external agencies.

The Board of Trustees commends the Administration for implementing policies and processes that represent the College’s best thinking and application about the COVID-19 emergency. We likewise affirm the individual responsibility of each Beacon community member to exercise vigilance in adhering to these best-effort guidelines for your personal welfare and the campus collectively. These initiatives represent our best efforts to fulfill the College’s mission within an ever-changing and fluid environment.

### **The “Responsible Community” Initiative**

Challenge is nothing new to Beacon College or its students. As with the larger society, the COVID-19 era has tested us individually and collectively in ways that have demanded a renewed devotion to core principles and Beacon’s signature moorings of realism, grit, care, and unity in purpose. The pandemic has proven a far-reaching, cunning, and erratic foe that has affected every aspect of our lives. Yet, even in this unprecedented scenario we stand prepared.

As the scope and intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic manifested nationally, higher education simultaneously experienced an awakening: for many student profiles, remote learning alone proved an inadequate substitute for the on-campus classroom experience. Beacon began planning in late April to return to the safe delivery of onsite undergraduate programming anchored to the “high-touch” collegiate environment. Safeguarding the health and safety of our students and employees remains the lodestar for all of our analysis, decision-making, and preparations.

**The “Responsible Community” Initiative** at Beacon College defines the scope and details of Beacon’s comprehensive and coherent effort to address the new realities of living and working safely in the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 world. This campus initiative takes its direction and substance from this reality: every Beacon community citizen is as **responsible** for the protection of others as we are for our own health and safety. And yet, the College also recognizes that even the best conceived plans and protocols for one moment are mutable.

Since early April, Beacon’s COVID-19 Task Force — now supplemented by an external Professional Community Support and Review Team — has dedicated its energies and expertise to researching and continuously updating best practices. The College’s ambition: meeting or exceeding all Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state public health standards.

Each element of **The “Responsible Community” Initiative** — spanning pre-arrival and entry testing to the on-campus protocols and safeguards through semester’s end — is designed to mesh into a coherent system that affords Beacon citizens a climate of deserved heightened protection. Our success in the COVID era will be bound to our fidelity in honoring the **RCI**’s well-considered provisions and reporting accurately and efficiently the impact of the initiative on the “wellness climate” of our campus. To that end, Beacon will report daily on the College’s COVID “wellness” status, placing on our website a matrix that scales current campus conditions:

<b>Baseline Climate</b>	Post-COVID-19 Benchmark: The “new normal” with sustained evidence-based precautions.
<b>Level 1</b>	No active COVID-19 cases reported in Leesburg and/or Lake County, but conditions exist that warrant precautionary measures in accordance with the “Responsible Community” standards.
<b>Level 2</b>	No active COVID-19 cases on the Beacon campus, but cases reported in Leesburg and/or Lake County.
<b>Level 3</b>	Isolated active cases on campus. Beacon can effectively manage and contain through “Responsible Community” standards including active contact tracing and surveillance testing.
<b>Level 4</b>	Limited active cases on campus. Beacon fully is implementing its “Responsible Community” protocols with necessary outside resources and isolation measures.
<b>Level 5</b>	Cluster cases exist. On campus, a larger scale outbreak has occurred that becomes more difficult to manage and contain.

Listed below are the interdependent protocols and actions that frame Beacon’s **“Responsible Community” Initiative**. We urge you to become an informed citizen of a proud and health-inspired community — understanding that your every responsible action protects us all.

### **The Path We Have Chosen**

Survey research on the effectiveness of long-term remote learning delivery alone for collegians has been disappointing — despite its necessity and urgency in a moment of national crisis. A significant majority of our students and families — Beacon’s faculty and staff, too — strongly desired to return safely to the known effectiveness of the “high-touch” campus community.

- On May 18, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees endorsed President Hagerty’s recommendation that Beacon should initiate planning in hopes of safely reopening the campus for the 2020 fall semester, preceded by a rescheduled summer session in late July (allowing for the traditional delivery of services with some flexibility for selected remote learning).
- The College’s COVID-19 Task Force — a representative body of essential all-campus academic and service personnel (commissioned in April) — began the arduous task of researching, crafting, and continuously updating the policies, protocols, and standards recommended to the President and senior staff for the reopening of the campus by July 1 (approximately a month in advance of the arrival of students).
- In July, the College reached out to trustee Al Moffett, MD, a respected Leesburg physician for over 40 years, to organize and guide the Professional Community Support and Review (PCSR) team to: (1) support the College in gaining essential local/regional cross-disciplinary expertise during policy/protocol development and implementation, and (2) establish for Beacon a sustained, collaborative network of external public and private resources upon which the College can rely now and in the future in the arenas of public health, medicine, local hospitals, mental health, and emergency management. The Team’s work continues in tandem and coordination with Beacon’s internal COVID-19 Task Force.
- We live and work in extraordinary times that demand extraordinary measures for an institution to carry out its mission and to mitigate risks in this COVID era. In all of the College’s reopening plans and preparations, the community has held fast to a unifying purpose: affording our students the collegiate rigor and support that defines the singular “Beacon Experience” while endeavoring to meet or exceed all Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state public health standards and recommendations.

## Embracing the Measures that Keep Us Safe: Daily Life on Campus

Whether on a micro or global scale, the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the critical difference that fidelity to healthy individual habits can have on safeguarding the well-being of others. We at Beacon affirm that our safety on campus is largely dependent upon the consistent, preventative actions we take individually. In essence, every citizen of the Beacon community is as **responsible** for the protection of those with whom we share Beacon's campus as we are for our own health and safety. In a COVID-19 world, we will abide by the following:

### The Daily Responsibilities of Beacon Citizenship in the COVID-19 Era:

1. Daily Self-monitoring: Ask yourself the **Key Safety Questions** each day (*in the Key Questions section that follows*).
2. All students and employees must wear a **cloth face mask** at all times on campus, unless they are alone in their room in their campus residence (for students) or their private work space (for employees). If necessary, students may purchase masks at the College bookstore.
3. All members of the community must practice **physical distancing** by maintaining at least a six-foot distance from others with no handshaking or other personal physical contact.
4. Good hygiene is especially important in safeguarding our health, including frequent **handwashing** (preferably for 20 seconds with soap and hot water), refraining from touching faces and eyes, and regularly cleaning personal work and living spaces.
5. It is strongly encouraged that students **carry all necessary academic and personal items** that they will need while on campus during the day (e.g., pens, pencils, paper, calculators) so as to minimize the need for sharing these accessories between parties.
6. All resident students will be required to **remain on campus** at least for the first month of the semester, unless approved for a supervised activity such as necessary shopping or doctor's appointments.
7. All members of the community should **immediately report any COVID-associated symptoms** or exposure to a person who has recently tested positive for COVID-19. Undergraduates should remain in their residence or home (if a commuting student) and to report your concerns either on the **MyBeacon** App or via a phone call to the College Health Office, a residential staff member, or one of Beacon's Life Skills Educators. Employees should remain at home and inform your immediate supervisor directly by phone or email.

***By taking ownership of what we each control and our own actions, we, collectively, will make a notable impact on our community's public health and well-being.***

## Protect Yourself – Daily Self-Monitoring Using the Key Questions:

The College has followed, and in many cases exceeded, the CDC and state public health guidelines to create as safe a campus environment as may be feasible during the COVID-19 era. Central to the protections recommended by the CDC is daily self-monitoring framed by a series of key questions. All students and employees must ask themselves the following and report any items of concern if you believe that your response is in the affirmative:

### Self-Monitoring Key Questions for COVID-19 Symptoms:

1. Have you had any **symptoms** of illness (cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, gastrointestinal upset, etc.) in the past 14 days?
2. Has anyone in your **immediate household** or **student residence** had any **symptoms** of illness in the past 14 days?
3. **For residential students:** Have you **traveled** anywhere off-campus without authorization of the Beacon staff in the past 14 days?  
**For commuting/off-campus students:** Have you **traveled** anywhere beyond a 25-mile radius of the College in the past 14 days?  
**For employees:** Have you **traveled** anywhere beyond a 25-mile radius of the College in the past 14 days?
4. Have you been in **contact** in the past 14 days with anyone **suspected**, or **confirmed**, as having COVID-19?
5. Has anyone in your immediate **household** or student **residence** in the past 14 days been in **contact** with anyone suspected, or confirmed, as having COVID-19?

***As noted in item #7 in Daily Responsibilities, should you feel ill or respond affirmatively to any one or more of the preceding key questions, you are required to take the following action:***

*All members of the community should immediately report any COVID-associated symptoms or exposure to a person who has recently tested positive for COVID-19. For undergraduates, you should remain in your residence or home (if a commuting student) and to report your concerns either on the **MyBeacon** App or via a phone call to College health officials (i.e., the College Health Office, a residential staff member, or one of Beacon’s Life Skills Educators). Employees should remain at home, and please inform your immediate supervisor directly by phone or email.*

## Embracing the Measures that Keep Us Safe: The College’s Spaces and Places

### Know the Definitions and Distinctions of Social Distancing, Isolation, and Quarantine:

The terms self-quarantining, physical (social) distancing, or isolating have been used to characterize approaches for fighting COVID-19. Here's what those terms mean at Beacon:

- **Social distancing:** Keeping space between yourself and others outside your household to prevent the spread of disease. *At Beacon College this means every effort to keep a six-foot distance from other people at any indoor or outdoor location on campus (and during approved and supervised off-campus activities).*
- **Quarantine:** Separating people and limiting the movement of people who have or may have been exposed to the disease to see if they become ill. *At Beacon College this means that, if you are not feeling well or may have been in close contact for more than 15 minutes with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or who is reasonably suspected of being COVID-positive, you will be directed to remain in your campus residence or at home until such time as you are cleared by the College to return to regular daily campus routines with others.*
- **Isolation:** Separating people who are ill from others to keep the disease from spreading. *At Beacon College this means that, if a student or employee tests positive for an active case of coronavirus, the person must isolate for at least 14 days from the date of testing either: (1) in the "isolation undergraduate residence" designated and monitored for students by the College, or (2) at home distant from the Beacon campus (for employees, commuting students, or those residential students who, at their discretion, wish to recuperate at home). The isolation period for all community members is 14 days, requiring a negative PCR test result before being approved to return to campus.*

#### The Creation of a "Closed" Campus for the First Month of the Fall 2020 Semester (as Circumstances Warrant):

Understanding that every facet of life imposes some risks, Beacon College is nonetheless making every effort to mitigate against those risks in order to keep the community as safe as might be possible. In this regard, Beacon desires to keep its undergraduates within the boundaries of our campus property, away from any unnecessary off-campus exposure for at least the first month of the fall semester. The College is, therefore, implementing a system that:

1. Requires entry and surveillance testing of all students and employees;
2. Mandates that: (a) masks be worn at all times outside of your private space (residential room or office), (b) all citizens of Beacon practice required social distancing of at least six feet, (c) hands be washed regularly, (d) good personal hygiene practices be followed, and (e) all personal and public places be regularly cleaned;
3. Asks all students and employees to self-monitor daily by examining the five COVID-related key questions that are ubiquitous on campus and are, further, easily accessible on the **MyBeacon** App and by referring to the College's online COVID-19 policy. As a precaution during at least the first month of the semester, students in all classes will

begin by affirming that they have self-monitored that day and have not responded “yes” to any of the questions;

4. Unless approved and supervised by an appropriate Beacon representative, residential students will remain on the College property, where the baseline population has been tested upon entry. Our policy of surveillance testing two weeks after the beginning of the fall semester (and, possibly, thereafter should conditions warrant) is intended to further safeguard and assure the well-being of the campus community; and
5. Students residing off campus and employees share a special responsibility to ensure that they are in good health and have taken seriously each day the key question self-monitoring process. The College reserves the right to conduct random checks, such as temperature measurement, at any time during the fall semester at the College’s discretion.

### **The Development and Application of On-campus Distancing and Safety Guidelines for All Interior and Exterior Spaces:**

The College’s COVID-19 Task Force has continuously focused on the safety of Beacon’s interior and exterior campus spaces and places. By so doing, the College is endeavoring to provide both a learning and living environment where healthy students and employees can enter common venues where health risk has been mitigated to the greatest extent possible. Prominent among the College’s efforts in this regard are:

#### **Interior:**

1. Hand-sanitizing stations have been distributed widely throughout all campus buildings and will be maintained to assure their full operation regularly each day. [Additionally, all students and employees will be provided at the beginning of the fall semester with a “Beacon Bag” that has an 8-ounce refillable (at College expense) hand-sanitizer container, with a reserve cloth mask provided as well];
2. All academic spaces, including classrooms, the Fogg Library, the Weiner Writing Center, Math Lab, and the Center for Student Success, have been arranged to assure appropriate social distancing for students and personnel, with cleaning and sanitizing instructions provided to those responsible for supervising any of these interior spaces during the academic week;
3. All public areas of residential spaces on campus will be cleaned and sanitized a minimum of twice daily, with students responsible for their own personal space (assigned bedroom and bathroom). Residential students will be monitored and guided by Life Skills Educators and residential staff in maintaining the cleanliness and hygiene of their personal spaces. In addition, residents will be asked to commit in writing to a cleaning rotation or schedule with their apartment or suite mates. The student judicial system will be used, if necessary, to enforce the frequent cleaning schedule;
4. Sodexo Dining Services, the College’s food service partner, has created a “safety first” dining environment in its temporary location in the Student Center. In addition to

following all of the protections required by the Beacon College COVID protocols, the food service staff have brought to bear the resources and knowledge of Sodexo International in establishing the protocols by which our students and employees will be served. These protocols include extended hours, traditional and to-go dining, and a tented outdoor grill and dining area for those wishing a more open setting. Sodexo will also leverage the resources and services of the Navigator Café to supplement and add flexibility to Beacon's dining options for students and employees; and

5. Employing the resources and knowledge of our Sodexo Facilities partners, the College will institute proper industry-specific cleaning and disinfecting protocols aligned with CDC guidance that attend not only to the cleanliness of the surfaces, but also to the quality of the interior atmosphere in the College's buildings. As appropriate for public spaces, including classrooms, Beacon will purchase and place HEPA filter air purifiers and air scrubbers, as well as air out all indoor facilities at regular intervals. Sodexo Facilities staff will continuously replace HVAC air filters to help eliminate contaminants and to maintain the best possible air quality.

**Exterior:**

1. Some research shows that outdoor environments may inhibit the person-to-person transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, as part of the College's planning for social distancing and safety-enhanced environments, Beacon is creating tented areas on campus to provide: (a) outside classroom space for faculty who desire this teaching environment, (b) designated areas for students waiting for class to reduce indoor contact among students before classes, and (c) open social and student event venues offered by the College on weekdays and weekends; and
2. All recreational activities organized and delivered by the Department of Athletics, Fitness, and Recreation will provide the protections that define the College's safety protocols for interior spaces. As necessary, these departmental activities may be modified to assure social distancing and other COVID-related protections. The staff has created a second intramural athletic field and will supplement traditional programming with virtual recreation classes as well to accommodate a full range of programming. All equipment, whether in- or outdoors, will be spaced to encourage maximum social distancing, with all items cleaned and sanitized after use or handling by any individual.

## Embracing the Measures that Keep Us Safe: Testing

Although current CDC guidance to America's colleges and universities does not recommend entry testing of students and personnel returning to campus, Beacon believes that both entry and surveillance testing is a sound and responsible strategy for enhancing the community's safety. In so doing, the College is establishing a baseline of health as students, faculty, and staff enter a deliberately risk-mitigated environment and will continue to monitor those on campus.

### Summary for Students

- Prior to their arrival on campus, all students registered to attend the College for the fall semester must submit to an FDA-approved COVID-19 test and provide official medical certification of a negative result.
- Any fall semester student registered for on-campus attendance who tests positive for the active COVID-19 virus as a result of this process must quarantine at home for at least 14 days, be re-tested, and provide certification of a negative FDA-approved **PCR** test result prior to being allowed on campus. *Students in this rare situation will be encouraged to participate in the academic program remotely until such time as a negative test result is certified and on-campus arrangements can be made.*
- Upon arrival, all fall semester students registered for on-campus learning (both residential and commuting) will be serology (antibody) tested. Students with a negative result (indicating no exposure to the COVID-19 virus) will be cleared to fully engage the community (under the purview of the **RCI** provisions).
- A student who tests positive for active COVID antibodies (IgM – indicating recent exposure to the virus) will be quarantined and sent immediately for a rapid PCR (virus) test at the University of Florida Health/LRMC or an equivalent clinical setting. Should this PCR testing result in a positive confirmation, the student will be directed, depending on individual circumstances, to either: 1) be quarantined in a designated campus residence (allowed to take classes remotely); or 2) return home until a 14-day waiting period and re-testing is completed.
- As part of the College's health monitoring protocols, all students will again be surveillance tested for the presence of COVID-19 antibodies (serology testing) two weeks after their arrival. Such testing may continue at varying intervals during the semester as campus conditions warrant.

### Summary for Employees

- All Beacon personnel (faculty and staff) and Sodexo-affiliated employees must be tested using the same FDA-authorized serology (antibody) protocol as that administered to all students. A negative test result must be confirmed by the administering nurse and the Office of Human Resources before the employee can enter the campus for the fall 2020 semester.
- As part of the College's health monitoring protocols, all Beacon and Sodexo-associated employees will again be surveillance tested for the presence of COVID-19 antibodies (serology testing) two weeks after their arrival. Such testing may continue at varying intervals during the semester as campus conditions warrant.
- Any personnel who tests positive for active COVID antibodies (IgM – indicating recent exposure to the virus) will be re-tested immediately utilizing the serology test procedure. If the retest is positive, the employee will be asked to immediately leave campus for home until such time as a rapid **PCR** test can be scheduled.
- Should this **PCR** testing result in a positive confirmation, the employee must isolate at home for a 14-day waiting period, be re-tested via the **PCR** method, and provide to the Office of Human Resources a certification of a negative test result prior to being approved for a return to campus. *In the event that a quarantined employee's condition allows, the individual may work remotely with the supervisor's authorization.*

**NOTE:** It is important to recognize that, in its testing protocols, the College effectively employs both surveillance (antibody) and **PCR** (viral) testing as complementary and responsibly calibrated strategies to effectively monitor and protect the community's well-being and that of its individual members. Beacon College is not a diagnostic center. We do, however, believe that the institution is obligated in as timely a manner as is possible to know whether our students and employees have been exposed to the virus. If they test positive (for IgM) using the serology (antibody) protocol, these individuals are sent immediately to an FDA-approved clinical setting to undergo a PCR (diagnostic, viral) test to determine whether he or she is COVID active (at which time isolation protocols take effect).

## Embracing the Measures that Keep Us Safe: Enhanced College Programming with Campus Safety in Mind:

As a sustaining element of the **RCI**, Beacon has determined that certain enhancements to the College's traditional programs and staffing would be beneficial in supporting Beacon's obligations to provide both a safe and success-oriented experience for our undergraduates. Among the most prominent reforms in the academic arena, student services support, and accessibility are:

1. The College has instituted a range of learning options for the fall 2020 semester that provide the flexibility that our undergraduates need as they transition and adjust to the impact of COVID-19 on their lives. Academically, while Beacon is executing a return to a full-time on-campus experience, the College is implementing for the short-term three instructional options: (a) traditional classroom, (b) HyFlex instruction, and (c) remote learning. Depending on the circumstances confronted by a student at any time during the fall semester, one or a combination of these instructional options may be appropriate to foster a student's academic progress (with College and faculty approval);
2. The College has implemented for the fall semester of 2020 the **Canvas** Learning Management System (LMS) as a tool that will enhance and support learning regardless of instructional mode;
3. The College's Division of Student Engagement and Success has created a coherent structure and aligned professional staffing to allow for a more purposeful and accessible system of wrap-around services for students. In the arena of residential life, the position of the Life Skills Educator has been created to help students succeed in maintaining effective social relationships, adjusting to the expectations of collegiate life, and fostering good personal care. These new members of the Student Engagement and Success team are expected to be joined by an additional healthcare specialist (nurse), who can provide supplementary "extended hour" coverage;
4. Similar to the HyFlex instructional delivery that can be implemented in Beacon's classrooms, the learning specialists at the Center for Student Success will make available — based upon an individual student's (a) need or preference, and (b) institutional best practice — remote or physical space mentoring and open learning. The mode can change weekly, according to the factors described above; and
5. The **MyBeacon** App now allows students ready access to a broad base of College information, including updated materials on COVID-19-related policies and protections. A further benefit of this "palm-of-hand" platform is the ability to log into both the Canvas LMS and Beacon's Student Portal.

## Embracing the Measures that Keep Us Safe: Open and Regular Communication

In examining how to best return to campus, the fundamentals of what have kept us safe, individually and collectively, remain a top priority for us all: wearing a cloth mask, maintaining proper physical distancing standards, frequently washing our hands and maintaining good hygiene, taking good care and ensuring the cleanliness of our private and public spaces, answering the daily wellness questions before going to class or work, and staying at home or in the College residence when we don't feel well.

It is also important that the College maintains regular and open contact with our constituencies — our students and employees the most prominent among these. This has been a priority since the profound impact of the pandemic on Beacon College and the country became evident in late February, well before the community was forced to pivot to remote instruction and support. The **RCI** cannot be executed without the College's reaching out openly to inform and allow for feedback from students, parents, employees, and others whose interest are embraced by Beacon's mission. Prominent among our comprehensive communication efforts (both prior to the **RCI** and now with its implementation) have been:

1. From late February of 2020 on, Beacon maintained an updated web presence, readily accessible from its homepage. Originally designated as the "COVID-19" site, the portal from the homepage icon was renamed in late June to the "Fall 2020 Opening" site. This College-authorized site provided a broad range of timely, comprehensive, and detailed information, including:
  - a. Scheduled community letters from the President that provided the most up-to-date announcements on Beacon's actions with respect to the College calendar, programming modifications and logistics, campus safety precautions, and other essential information evolving from the circumstances of the COVID-19 emergency;
  - b. A substantive list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that were itemized for the following audiences: current students, new students, parents, and Beacon employees;
  - c. Beacon's comprehensive COVID-19 Policy, an electronic document that is regularly monitored and updated as new guidance becomes available from the CDC and state health officials; and
  - d. This **RCI** document.
2. The effective use of the College's social media platforms, including the Beacon College Facebook page, the Beacon College Parents' Facebook page, Beacon's Instagram platform, and, occasionally, Twitter. This information draws much of its substance and focus from the documents contained within the Fall 2020 Opening page detailed in Item #1, to assure consistency and accuracy in reporting.

3. Employing the College's preferred virtual communication platform, Zoom, to conduct the internal operational functioning of the College, when social distancing or other COVID guidelines cannot be safely implemented.
4. Using the Zoom platform as well for consistent communication with the multiple constituencies of the College, including (but not limited to):
  - a. Parent information sessions individualized for the families of incoming students, sophomores, and juniors/seniors;
  - b. Student forums at which our undergraduates can communicate and interact virtually with Beacon representatives on an array of "top of mind" subjects; and
  - c. Regularly scheduled community forums for all employees when social distancing constraints (limitations on large groups) are in force.
5. The launch of the **MyBeacon** App, available for downloading from the AppStore (for iPhones and iPads) and the Play store (for Android devices). This application for mobile devices will serve students (and others) interested in Beacon as well with navigating the College's campus and resources, with its homepage devoted to COVID-19 information and reporting.