



Date: July 9, 2020
To: Fall 2020 Students and Families
From: Dr. Gail Gibson Sheffield, Vice President for Academic Affairs
Re: Curriculum Delivery and Academic Support Fall 2020

Last week, President Eden sent [messages out to family and students](#) outlining our plans to welcome students back to our Putney campus. In that message, the President indicated that we would follow up with details about the semester schedule and structure, and specific safety protocols and requirements. VPSA Michael Luciani has provided a comprehensive guide outlining the new guidelines we have put in place to meet or exceed the State of Vermont's mandatory guidance for Colleges and Universities. Landmark College will be hosting an open forum for parents (July 14) and students (July 22) to give you the opportunity to ask any questions of the President or the leadership team.

This message outlines information specific to curriculum delivery and academic support.

Given the fluid nature of this pandemic, Landmark College reserves the right to make additional changes to policies and practices as needed to comply with Vermont and Federal safety mandates and guidelines.

Classes will resume on August 31st. The complete Academic Calendar for 2020-2021 is available [online](#). Student Affairs is providing the information related to how we are staggering student arrival and managing the move-in process.

The 15-week fall semester will be divided into instructional blocks. A block delivers the equivalent amount of instruction over a condensed period of time. We currently already run block programming in J-Term and in the Summer. In a block format, students will engage more intensely in a course over a shorter period of time to earn the equivalent credit. The coursework and final assessment should be concluded for that course by the end of the block. As full-time students, individuals will still have the opportunity to earn 12-16 credits over the 15-week semester, but most students will only take two or three courses at the same time. To meet federal guidelines for financial support, students must be registered for credit or non-credit courses over the whole 15 weeks. Block scheduling will reduce the number of classes most students are taking at the same time, thus reducing the number of contacts and facilitate better contact tracing.

We are currently in the process of revising the schedule of courses to fit this block format design. Students currently registered for the fall semester will be re-enrolled in face-to-face (FTF) courses for the first 12 weeks of the semester. After the Thanksgiving break, the students will be enrolled in additional coursework offered online for the remaining three weeks of the semester.

This will require us to rebuild student schedules for the fall. Our goal is to complete that work so that students will have access to their revised schedule by the middle of August. We will do our best to re-register the students back into the courses they originally signed up for in the spring, but there may need to be some changes. We are prioritizing the

students' need to stay on track with their academic plan for completing their declared degree. During the two-week time frame, when students will need to be following quarantine guidelines either at home or on campus, students will be able to review their schedules with their advisor and develop a time management and academic support plan for the semester designed to help students get the most out of this new design.

Courses in the first 12 weeks of the semester will be offered in either a 12-week block or in 6-week blocks. Students can take 6-week block courses concurrently with 12-week block courses. For example, a sample student schedule for the fall semester may be:

Table 1. Sample Fall Schedule

Course Title	Number of Credits	Number of weeks
MAT1641 College Algebra	3	First 12 weeks
COM 2021 Interpersonal Com	3	First 12 weeks
WRT 1012 Research & Analysis	3	First 6 weeks
PSY 2061 Positive Psychology	3	Second 6 weeks
SOC 2031 Human Sexuality	3	Final 3 weeks online
Total Semester Credits	15	

**This is just a sample and may not represent the actual courses available in these blocks*

In the sample described in Table 1, the student will be taking 3 courses at the same time all semester, but will complete four courses by Thanksgiving, then the student will complete the semester by taking 1 course online to after Thanksgiving. If the student successfully completes these courses, they will have earned 15 credits toward their degree in one semester.

Once the semester begins, all **students, faculty and staff must make a commitment to the Landmark College Health Pledge** which includes complying with a complete daily health screening prior to interacting with anyone on campus, including going to class, going to a dining hall, or participating in any campus activity.

Face coverings must be worn by all faculty, staff, students, and visitors when in the presence of others and in public. This includes, but is not limited to, during class sessions. Masks are required; however, faculty may wear a face shield while teaching. Students whose accommodations include an inability to wear a mask, may also get permission to wear a face shield in lieu of a mask. Course syllabi will include a statement indicating that students are expected to abide by the College's Community Health Pledge, specifically, wearing a mask. Failure to do so may result in being asked to leave a class with related conduct consequences.

Courses will be scheduled into class periods held on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Wednesdays will be reserved for academic support, community meetings, various student activities and wellness programming. 6-week block courses will meet all four days; 12-week block courses will meet two of the four days. Our intention is to keep students actively engaged throughout the week. We are doing this in partnership with student affairs. To that end, **there will be no long weekends that result in cancelling classes during the semester.**

FTF courses will be delivered in a hybrid class design. Faculty will define the best way to meet instructional goals, learning outcomes, and academic support using a mix of FTF and online delivery. Each class should include a minimum of 1 hour of continuous FTF meeting time with each student for each day the class is scheduled to meet. All courses will be supported by a comprehensive Canvas site that includes content and assignments so that a student or faculty member can access and complete the course online if a situation develops requiring remote learning.

Classes, labs, studio sessions are being held in spaces that have been approved for the number of students enrolled in the course to be able to attend class while practicing physical distancing guidelines. Classroom and meeting spaces will have a standardized sign posted at the entrance clearly stating the occupancy limit for the space at the current level – faculty will ensure that this number is not exceeded. Each classroom, meeting room, and public space will be set up with seating arranged so all individuals using the room can stay 6 feet apart when seated in the room. Classes with more students enrolled than the meeting space allows will be divided by the instructor into separate groups. Faculty will then divide the class period so that the smaller groups are able to meet FTF within the timeframe scheduled.

We are taking a community responsibility approach to keep us all safe. Current guidelines suggest that air-borne respiratory droplets from one individual to another has the highest transmission rate, which is why we are emphasizing the need to wear face masks. However, proper hand washing and disinfection is also important. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed at the entrances of each classroom. Faculty and students will need to sanitize their hands with the classroom sanitizer dispenser upon arrival to the classroom. Before classes begin and at the conclusion of the class session, faculty and students will wipe down their instructional space using supplies provided for each space. Deep cleaning will be done nightly by our cleaning services. Campus Safety and Student Peer Leaders will monitor the hallways and entrances to buildings to remind students/faculty/staff about safety guidelines, which include, but are not limited to, wearing masks. These monitors will be able to take temperatures if there is any worry.

Academic Support services will continue to be provided both online and face to face. Advisors will create scheduled appointments for either academic advising or coaching services. Students will need to schedule appointments through the Drake Center for academic support or supplemental executive function coaching. Face to face academic support and some coaching services will be provided in the designated spaces that support larger gatherings (e.g. Drake, Library, larger lab, classroom, or studio space et al.). Seating in these support centers, including the library, will be arranged and partially removed to promote physical distancing while maintaining an inviting a comfortable ambiance. Students will need to wear their masks in these settings. Faculty office hours and supplemental course support may be held in classrooms, large offices, or online.

While all efforts are being made to keep our community safe, **we have also developed contingency plans** if a student or faculty member displays any COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for the disease.

If a student displays COVID-19 symptoms, the student will be tested as needed and will go into isolation with the ability to continue participating in the course online until the test results are returned. If the student tests positive, all the FTF courses in which the student is enrolled will go online with the approval of the VPAA while all pertinent students and faculty are tested. **If a faculty member or member of the academic staff displays COVID-19 symptoms**, all the courses that faculty member is teaching or the support provided by the staff will go online. The employee will be tested. If they test positive, all of the students in their courses, or with whom they have had contact, will be tested. If the assigned faculty member is unable to continue to facilitate the course, the department will be able to identify an individual who can facilitate the remainder of the course using the comprehensive Canvas site materials provided.

We realize that, even with all the safety protocols we are putting in place, some students and families may need to take courses completely online. Therefore, we are in the process of developing 100% online courses that can be available to all students online. Online only students will start the 15-week semester in an orientation to online learning support module. The official start of online only courses (Block C) will be September 14th. These courses will run 10 weeks and will conclude by Thanksgiving. After Thanksgiving, online students will continue in the 3-week online block. A sample registration schedule for online students (Table 2) may be:

Table 22. Sample Fall Schedule – 100% Online

Course Title	Number of Credits	Number of weeks
WRT 1011 Composition & Rhetoric	3	10 weeks - online
FIN 1011 Personal Finance	3	10 weeks - online
COM 1011 Intro to Communication	3	10 weeks - online
SOC 2031 Human Sexuality	3	Final 3 weeks online
Total Semester Credits	12	

**This is just a sample and may not represent the actual courses available in these blocks*

Online programming will be supplemented with online academic support, advising, and social programming. If this option is of interest to you, please contact advising@landmark.edu

As you can see, there are a lot of moving parts to try to provide the best academic experience tailored to meet the individual student needs while also keeping our community as safe as possible. To get ready, we need your help. All matriculated students must use their landmark.edu email account to confirm their intentions for fall through this link: [Landmark College Fall Registration Confirmation - Click Here](#) This is how we will determine what kind of schedule to build for each student this fall. The link will ask students to indicated if they:

- Will return to the Putney residential campus for fall 2020
- Will remain away from campus this fall and enroll online only
- Will not enroll at Landmark this fall
- Are undecided about what they want to do for the fall and need more information.

We recognize that these are difficult times for everyone. We hope we are providing you with enough information to make informed decisions that are best for you. We feel confident that we can provide a quality academic experience for our students during this time, especially since we are a small rural community that prides itself on our student-centered operation that is accustomed managing risk, which gives us an advantage over some other larger Universities. We are all in this together. As always, please reach out to us with any questions, needs, or concerns you have by emailing PublicHealth@landmark.edu.

As the President said in his message last week:

“We are Sharks, fierce and determined, but not alone. We will navigate these difficult times as a dedicated, cohesive community. Our students will emerge stronger, better equipped, and fully prepared to meet their goals.”

Take care and we hope to see you soon!

Thank you,



Gail Gibson Sheffield, Ph.D.

Vice President for Academic Affairs