

Appendix 17: Public Health and Behavioral Influence Communication Needs and Tactics

University Relations, in partnership with Cornell Health, Student and Campus Life, Human Resources, Environmental Health and Safety and Facilities and Campus Services, will develop and implement a comprehensive public health and behavioral influence strategy for Cornell's Ithaca campus. This plan will be developed following decisions from university leadership related to fall reopening and will be reviewed frequently and at key decision points during campus reopening to assess the effectiveness of the tactics, success in reaching our target audiences and the strength of the messages. In the meantime, we have identified a set of communications needs and tactics that will be considered as part of this plan.

Communications Needs

- **Leadership messages:** Strong and consistent leadership messages from the president, provost, deans and vice presidents about the standards for our community during the pandemic (i.e., How ought we to act?) and the values we hold (e.g., Cornell as a caring community) can foster a culture of shared responsibility (i.e., a "fair" approach) with a common goal of getting back to "normal" as soon as possible. Equally important will be leadership and reinforcement of messages from supervisors and student leaders.
- **Policy statements:** communications to students (and parents) to set behavioral expectations and relay potential consequences in order to deter risk-taking.
- **Social norms messages:** campaigns to promote a positive culture by identifying positive norms within the student body and communicating them through media messages. Use tailored approaches within subpopulations (e.g., Greek life) and individual groups (e.g., student organizations, identity groups, athletic teams, and fraternity and sorority chapters).
- **Risk-reduction information:** messaging should include *universal* precautions pertaining to the whole campus (e.g., how to socialize safely), and *selective* messages for students to reduce the harms within high-risk situations (e.g., parties with alcohol).
- **Bystander education:** guidance about how to engage someone whose behavior poses a significant risk of spreading COVID-19 can increase the likelihood of interventions.
- **Peer influence initiatives**
 - **Peer ambassadors:** an SCL organization of trained peer health "ambassadors" who could engage in in-person interventions/education with other students on and off campus to promote adherence to health guidelines and/or behavior contracts. A peer-based educational approach can reduce the need for interventions by law enforcement officials.
 - **Training for organization leaders:** education about how to hold lower-risk social events and challenge those who attempt to hold high-risk events (e.g., large, unregulated gatherings).

Tactics

A broad campaign approach will begin support the above messaging needs with the following tactics, including but not limited to:

- **Partner toolkits:** The Communications Working Group will create "toolkits" for campus partners to ensure consistency and to eliminate duplication of efforts.
 - **Messaging:** Approved messages related to public health and safety. Messaging will be tailored to specific audiences, for example:
 - What you can do each day to help prevent spread of the virus
 - How to safely physically distance
 - How and what to clean at your desk/in your dorm
 - Encouraging others to do their part
 - Importance of the daily health attestation

- **Signage on campus:** Consistent use of university-level signage in all Cornell building. Current set is available for download here: <https://covid.cornell.edu/resources/graphics/>
 - **Signage off campus:** Local landlords have expressed interest in placing signage throughout their properties and would welcome having Cornell provide it to them.
 - **Social media:** Students are most active on social media. Recommend utilizing Twitter and Instagram stories as well as catchy TikTok videos and Memes as the primary social media vehicles for this public health campaign.
- **Leadership messages:** This will include top-line messages from President Pollack to the Cornell community; VP Lombardi to all students, and so on. It will also include more granular messages from deans to their college community; HR to supervisors; and so on.
 - **Existing vehicles:** In addition to leadership messages, all campus partners should use standing communications vehicles – weekly messages, newsletters, websites – to include public health information.
 - **Virtual town hall meetings:** Continued and expanded use of virtual town hall meetings to discuss safe reopening strategies and expectations for behavior of each audience.
 - **Student organizations:** Engage student groups, clubs, and Greek organizations to disseminate health guidelines among their membership in a way that emphasizes the “behavioral norm” aspects of this campaign.
 - **Community partners and local media:** The office of Community Relations and Media Relations has standing relationships with key community leaders, organizations and media outlets. As more decisions are made about fall reopening, it will be important to keep these groups updated so they are aware of our plans and safety measures.
 - **Event training for organization leaders.** Provide leaders with education about how to hold lower-risk social events and challenge those who attempt to hold high-risk events (e.g., large, unregulated gatherings).