

**DEEP SPRINGS**  
DEEP SPRINGS COLLEGE, CALIFORNIA  
*Founded 1917*

David Neidorf, *President*

June 16, 2020

Dear Students and Parents of the incoming Deep Springs class:

I write to verify that in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are indeed open, and preparing for the arrival of our new students and the beginning of our summer term on July 3. For everyone coming to Deep Springs, please bring your mask. Students should have more than one.

I also want to let you know that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, life at Deep Springs will be different than it was when the new class visited as applicants. Re-opening the college was not a decision taken lightly – it requires the agreement of not only students, but also county health authorities, our board, and the staff who live and work here. We have worked hard to come up with policies and procedures that will make all of those groups feel that the increased risk that comes with increasing the college population are reasonable.

The attached spreadsheet gives the basic outline of our rules for physical distancing at the college. We cannot eliminate the possibility that the coronavirus will spread throughout the community, but we have worked hard to establish procedures that minimize the chances of that spread. To review some of the main points:

- Incoming students – along with anyone else traveling to Deep Springs from elsewhere – will be in what the spreadsheet calls “Group 3” for their first 14 days.
- Incoming students will be in an “isolation group” for the first 14 days of your time here – sharing a dormitory suite, a bathroom, and a unique entrance/exit. The goal is this: if anyone comes to the college carrying the coronavirus, we hope to confine its spread to that small group.
- During that first 14 days, you may not enter any other buildings. We will eat, socialize, and hold classes outside, or on the porches of buildings. (There is internet access on the porches of the central building.)

As you can see, these practices may disrupt the easy sociality of our usual community practices. We are already practicing these procedures, and while they do not impose social isolation, they do mean that we have to be somewhat deliberate about making sure we create chances to get together and talk with one another. We’re planning to do just that during the first weeks of the term, but since we’ve not done this before, we don’t yet know all of the challenges that will arise. We will have to figure those out and meet them together.

These procedures have another aspect; they have constrained the territory of student body self-governance. Usually, for example, the student body decides how to arrange life in the dorm and respond, if necessary, to people who defy agreed procedures. But exercise of that authority often

takes a long time and considerable deliberation, and these covid-related procedures need to be adjusted and (if necessary) enforced rapidly. So, we have a governance committee to make the necessary judgments and adjustments – the committee does, of course, include students on it.

In spite of what amount to the caveats above, please know that all of us here are looking forward to beginning a new term with the new class in July. We are glad we've crafted a way to keep going during the pandemic – thank you for your patience with us during this time.

**Traveling to Deep Springs:** Ordinarily, we encourage visits from the families of students when new students arrive, and during academic breaks (when the isolation policy is not in effect) thereafter. But during the pandemic, we want to minimize extra exposure to the viral world outside of our valley.

**If students are arriving at Deep Springs accompanied by their parents or other family members,** we ask that you arrive as close to 2:00 PM PDT as possible. We have designated 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM as the period during which we can welcome parents, provide rest room access and some refreshments, give them a walking tour of the college (including looking through some windows), and take the time to answer questions about life at Deep Springs. Since we will have to organize more carefully than usual, we do ask that families confine their presence to this 2.5-hour period.

For families that will be accompanying students, please help us plan by emailing [DS20Arrivals@deepsprings.edu](mailto:DS20Arrivals@deepsprings.edu).

**If students are planning to travel to Deep Springs alone,** please let us know your plans as soon as possible by emailing the same address: [DS20Arrivals@deepsprings.edu](mailto:DS20Arrivals@deepsprings.edu). Once we know how many people are traveling this way, we can figure out how to help. If you have not yet bought tickets to a local airport, please check with us before doing so.

Again, thanks for your patience,

Sincerely,



David Neidorf