

[sent on August 28th]

Dear Mark,

This is a follow-up to our PSC walkthroughs. This message details not only issues identified in the third walkthrough August 17th, but also some of our broad overall concerns. We also look forward to specific responses to the punch list we sent you previously.

We believe that the college must put safety first in any reopening policies. Given the high local infection and high citywide delta variant transmission rates, individual staff and faculty members should be given the authority to determine the start-up modality for their work and courses, until an enforceable vaccine mandate is in place. As of today, the local 7-day rate is 169; the “high” transmission threshold is 100.

For the College counsel to threaten that ‘in-person’ and ‘hybrid’ faculty who choose to start their courses online under these conditions may be penalized is simply unacceptable. The Provost’s letter, sent last night, denying that chairs could authorize faculty to start their hybrid and in-person classes by appropriately starting on-line, flies in the face of CUNY Provost Dan Lemons writing 7/29 about the wisdom of chairs being able to make decisions until the end of the enrollment period.

Other concerns are detailed below.

Infection on campus - Reporting and Dashboard

We are alarmed by failures to communicate consistently about positive COVID cases on campus. Despite your recent email about a positive case, nothing indicates that a health reporting system is operational. No cases appear at all on the school COVID-tracker website for John Jay, despite the fact that, as we have already discussed, there were three infections we learned of informally in July.

(<https://schoolcovidreportcard.health.ny.gov/#/collegeData;sedCode=310300823105;redirectToHome=true>). The website indicates “Date of submission: 6/20/2021.”

The results of testing are supposed to be publicly available, in dashboard reporting on all of these numbers. To date, we have not seen any of that information or been informed where it can be found. When we visited the testing center in North Hall on 8/17, there was no sign of the computer equipment that must be employed to have an efficient reporting system. This is crucial since the conditions for closing down campus include a threshold of 100 infections on campus or a high proportion of infections in the community.

Enforcing the masking mandate

The enforcement of the mandate seems drastically insufficient. Occasionally even public safety officers are not completely masked. No signage indicates what the consequences are of not masking, nor what constitutes correct mask wearing. Students need this.*

We are also concerned whether there are going to be sufficient personnel to respond to requests to enforce mask mandates. Finally, public safety should be prepared to issue

masks to individuals who come to campus without them, and not simply require masks when they arrive.

Ventilation in North Hall

North Hall ventilation is problematic and, based on our walkthrough, we think it unfit for occupancy. The HVAC system was turned off when we toured the space. We walked through spaces on the ground and second floors; all were very warm. The COVID testing area on the ground floor was the only North Hall space that had moving air. It had a single portable air conditioner moving air around. Despite that, we found the space was still too hot. That the COVID testing area is without appropriate filtering of air is problematic. This is not safe for our members.

The portable air conditioners are OceanAire model OWC6032. According to the manufacturer's site, this model contains electrostatic filters. We are not qualified to judge these filters, but a quick web search finds results indicating that they do not remove particles as small as those removed by HEPA filters; their MERV values are about 6, and not the MERV 13 rated filters that we had been assured is in place in the HVAC system in Haaren Hall. (Unfortunately the manufacturer's site does not appear to give any information about the electrostatic filters' capability. It does say portable air conditioners are appropriate for use in negative pressure COVID rooms - but that does not address the filter capability. Perhaps management can provide us with evidence that the MERV rating of these portable units is sufficient for dealing with COVID.)

Ventilation elsewhere We request again the background numbers that informed the Ramboll report. Please note that ASHRAE (engineering) standards for COVID, which Ramboll claims to be based on indicate that HVAC systems must be run with demand-control systems OFF—which means that if there are computer controls that allocate air flow on the basis of occupancy or temperature, there will be problems with individuals working in small areas. Also stated is the need to run ventilation systems (HVAC) for several hours before and after working hours.

One psychology lab, NB10.7, includes an interior interview room that appears to have the same issues that made the Registrar's office in BMW need grates to secure air flow. All computer labs and other spaces in which a mixed population will be congregating should be equipped with air purifiers to assure air circulation. The foreign language lab in the New Building has only one at one extreme end of a very long room; another one is requested.

Social Distancing

No signage yet appears in spaces with mixed users (staff and students) indicating the 6' social distancing requirements that CDC issued for spaces used by vaccinated and unvaccinated people together. This signage would have to include all classroom spaces, in which moveable desk-chairs should be spaced so as to provide for 6' social distancing. There should also be sufficient room at the front of the classroom to allow the instructor to be socially distanced from the students.

We have been informed and signage indicates that elevators in NB can have 6 people in them. But we reject the idea that such spacing is adequate given CDC guidelines and how

long people may be in elevators together. The existing floor stickers in the elevators should be matched with similar signage for only 3 people.

Space and Equipment for students taking online classes

Students who are on campus for in-person classes will need access to computers for their online courses. The places named on the student Coronavirus information page don't have computers set up yet, or even electrical outlets. Also, the Shiva Gallery is listed as a workstation, but it is dedicated to Public Safety ID processing at this time.

A list needs to be made available to students that accurately lists all spaces where computer equipment and plugs will be made available to students. Will students be given loaner laptops, or be able to access desktop computers? In response to a query posed to Public Safety, a member of the department said that they are only aware of computers for students in the library and in the 2nd floor lobby in the rear of Haaren Hall.

Finally, once computer access spaces are identified, a scheduling system needs to be in place to prevent overcrowding in these spaces, including the library.

We appreciate the efforts we have seen on some of our prior punch list items. We feel strongly that the issues highlighted above, particularly those concerning the sharing of summary health data and the ventilation issues in North Hall, are urgent. Lacking those and any markers whatsoever that the administration is tracking the community's health greatly concerns us.

Submitted by,

John Jay Health & Safety Watchdogs

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* On Tuesday, 8/24 one of the 2 students in the "Hound's Square" area at 1 pm wore a mask below his chin, and even when the subject of masks was brought up seemed unaware that it should cover his nose. This person self-identified as a graduate student in a health-related field.
