



**2020  
IN  
ACTION**



# WENTWORTH OVERCOMES COVID-19 CHALLENGE TO COMPLETE FALL SEMESTER



“I remember thinking that, while the impact of the pandemic on higher education would likely be significant, Wentworth was better positioned than most to respond effectively,” said President Mark A. Thompson. “I had confidence in our faculty and staff and their ability to pivot and innovate to ensure that our students’ academic and support needs would be met.”

In late April, various working groups of faculty, staff and administration came together to develop scenarios for how to reenter campus safely in the fall. This included a working group focused on academic planning.

“We agreed from the start that all lecture-based courses would be delivered remotely and we should focus on labs and studios for in-person learning options given the importance of achieving learning outcomes through a hands-on experience,” Thompson recalled.





Putting health and safety first, the university ended up offering 25 percent of its courses in-person, with most faculty teaching remotely and those that were on campus averaging four to six hours per week in safe environments.

“We designed and implemented a re-entry plan that has proven to be a success story in higher education,” said Thompson (pictured above). “A lot of teamwork allowed us to accomplish what we set out to do.”

The campus was reconfigured and sanitized, and a complex testing and contact tracing program was established. Wentworth also set up quarantine and isolation housing for students, and as cases started increasing across the country, began testing twice weekly in November.

The numbers posted to an online dashboard tell the story. By December 14, Wentworth had conducted over 40,000 tests, with a total of 110 testing positive for the virus (.28% overall). The state’s 7-day percent positive then was 5.6 percent. Boston posted a 14-day percent positive rate of 2.82 percent. Conversely, Wentworth’s 7-day percent positive percentage was 1.11 percent.

[Read the full article at wit.edu/news/covid-2020-overview](https://wit.edu/news/covid-2020-overview)

# HOW A GROUP OF LABS STAYED COVID-FREE DURING THE FALL SEMESTER



A semester's worth of labs in 2020 with no COVID-19 transmissions sounds like a miracle, but data indicates that's exactly what happened this fall with lab technicians and a team of co-op students at the helm.

Two-hundred and forty-two students enrolled in on-campus Chemistry classes for the Fall 2020 semester. Labs ran in 38 distinct rooms between the Ira Allen and the Center for Engineering, Innovation and Sciences buildings in order to help de-densify spaces.

"The Chemistry labs already had rules and regulations in place, so adding a mask was not a huge deal for students," said Chemistry Lab Technician Kate Kerr. "And I've already been used to being the PPE (personal protective equipment) enforcer."

Kerr notes that she would sometimes rap on the glass of other labs, telling people to fix their masks if they were slipping down on the face. "It was rare that we would find someone not taking safety precautions seriously. Students were so cooperative and wanted to make this work," she said.

Any persons entering the labs had to first check in with the CoVerified reporting and tracking app. Once they were cleared, they would have to adhere to the typical rules of the lab spaces—including wearing closed-toe shoes, safety glasses and other equipment—in addition to using newer PPE like face masks.

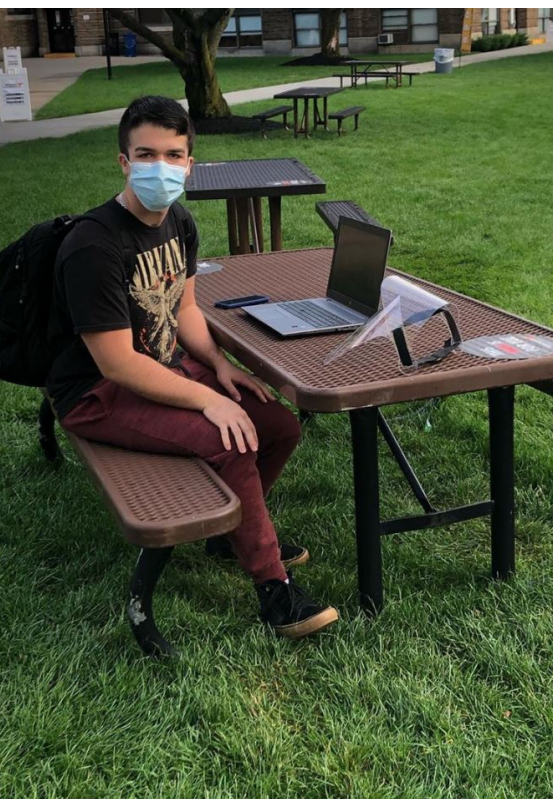
Fume hoods are often shared by up to four students but were limited to one person apiece. And the overall average of 16 students in a room was trimmed to between four and eight. Kerr carried around a two-meter measuring stick to make sure students were maintaining a proper distance from one another.

“Students were able to actually get more direct interaction with the instructor due to the decreased ratio,” said Kerr,

Similar dedication and success were found this semester among labs in Biology under Lab Technician Kim Foster, Physics under Ramon Santos and Biological Engineering under Franly Ulerio-Nuñez.

**[Read the full story at wit.edu/news/covid-free-fall-labs](http://wit.edu/news/covid-free-fall-labs)**





# FALL 2020: BY THE NUMBERS

The Department of Facilities was among those at Wentworth Institute of Technology who went the extra mile in Fall 2020.

Janine Murphy, director of project administration, shares some of the numbers from the fall months.

**203**

## GALLONS OF HAND SANITIZER

Plus 150 disinfecting spray bottles and 789 buckets of wipes distributed to every classroom/residence hall by the Facilities Department

**19,550**

## SURGICAL FACE MASKS

1,627 face shields and 59,100 disposable gloves distributed by Akil Williams, work control manager, Physical Plant

**3,000**

## DECALS

"This is your spot" and "Protect Your Spot" decals placed campus wide by Ryan Neal, project assistant, Planning & Construction

**4,567**

## WORK ORDERS

Completed this semester by the Physical Plant team

**137**

## INSTRUCTION SPACES DE- DENSIFIED

By Physical Plant and Planning and Construction

**2,608**

## CLASSROOM & LAB SEATS

Removed to de-densify instructional spaces by Physical Plant. Additionally, 7 truckloads of furniture were shipped to off-site storage and took up 75 storage bays.

**30**

## PROTECTIVE SHIELDS

Designed, ordered and installed for the Schumann Library and common areas on campus by Planning and Construction

**37**

## DESK SHIELDS

Built in-house by Wentworth's Physical Plant carpenters

# CO-OPS + CAREERS PIVOTS IN A NEW WORLD



The CO-OPS + CAREERS team transitioned their Career Fair events to a virtual format, finding great success with the campus job board WITworks, where students could text chat with employer representatives. They also started a new industry advice series on Zoom.

They acted quickly to expand the opportunities for students to earn co-op credit, gain valuable work experience, and expand their skills to position themselves for their next co-op or post-graduate career. Many discussions were held with academic departments and staff to think creatively, identify options, understand regulations and determine next steps during a time of constant change.

They also partnered with Academic Affairs for "creative co-ops."

## Creative co-ops included:

- The Architecture and Accelerate partnership, **FutureLab**, creating strategies to help Boston's ecosystem
- **Engineering COVID Out**, which looked at how to effectively manage engineering projects related to addressing the impact of COVID19
- Taught by adjunct professor Leila Mitchell out of her own studio, **LLM Design Workshop** investigates self-directed design opportunities within the realm of experience design

## Other opportunities:

- In addition to traditional faculty and staff co-ops, **Wentworth faculty** stepped up and developed many opportunities for remote projects and co-ops
- COOPS + CAREERS established a robust **alternative co-op** that keeps students remotely engaged in part-time status
- A new **COVID Industrial Professional Credit (IPC)** allows for 390 hours of cumulative work and for work that has occurred while enrolled in an academic institution
- An optional co-op substitution option that allows for review and possible approval of a successfully completed COOP3000, which could be substituted for a currently scheduled mandatory co-op. This is an option for student who have conducted an unsuccessful co-op search and are scheduled to go out on co-op for the current semester

[Find more details at wit.edu/news/new-world-co-ops](https://wit.edu/news/new-world-co-ops)

# MORE THAN 8,000 WORKOUTS AND ZERO COVID CASES

More than 8,000 participations took place this fall within Fitness and Recreation (FitRec) programs and facilities. And, according to FitRec Director Michael Williams, zero cases of COVID-19 were connected to the spaces during the Fall 2020 semester.

During that time, the Schumann Fitness Center and Tansey Gymnasium were open, and FitRec held various group fitness classes and other special events.

Williams and his staff implemented new software, which included a reservation system. Those using the spaces were also required to wear masks at all times and, among other safety measures, maintain a distance of one barbell apart (an average length of 7'2"). The FitRec staff worked more than 7,700 combined hours this semester, taking temperatures, checking-in users, maintaining their spacing, running programs, wearing safety glasses and endlessly cleaning to ensure that every piece of equipment was sanitized and ready for use.

"If it was touched, it was cleaned by a staff member," said Williams.

He especially commends the student workers for everything they did to allow for a successful semester.

"We could not be more thankful and grateful to our 65 student staff members who were on the front line every single day in order to provide a necessary and needed mental health break for our users," said Williams.

