

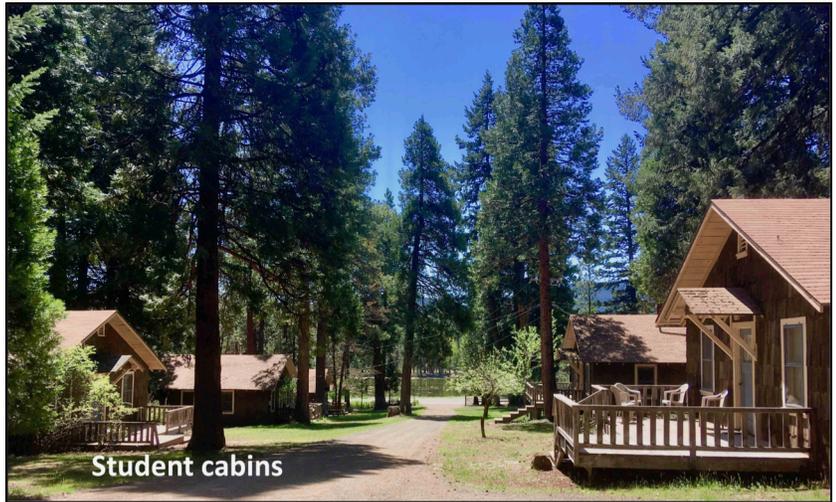
OREGON EXTENSION MAY 20 MEMO TO INCOMING STUDENTS ON CORONAVIRUS PREPAREDNESS

While the fall 2020 semester is still almost four months away, the Oregon Extension staff is making preparations we believe are necessary for a healthy and virus-free experience for all of you who will be studying with us beginning in late August.

Our surrounding region (Jackson County) is in good shape. There have been a total of 51 confirmed Covid-19 cases in the county since the outbreak began, and only three new cases since April 16 (a month ago). Population of Jackson County is 221,000.

The OE campus is in a remote, secluded forest location, 21 miles up a winding mountain road from the nearest town (Ashland—population

19,000), and 300 miles from significant urban centers (Portland, San Francisco). Our remote forest village is a place that invites people, even in normal times, to pull together and look after one another. Many study away semesters have been cancelled for the fall, and some colleges will deliver courses exclusively online. For both OE students and professors, it is a gift that we will be able to live on campus, share classrooms, and explore some wild places together.



With this in mind, here are precautions we are currently putting into place:

- **OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE:** All incoming students will be **REQUIRED** to observe a 14-day self-quarantine *immediately* before you travel to the OE to minimize your level of exposure at least before travelling. If you are flying to Oregon on Saturday, August 29, the period of your self-quarantine will be **August 15-29**. “Self-Quarantine” is defined as “isolating oneself and restricting one’s movement to avoid exposure to the virus.”
- **IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ARRANGE FOR SELF-QUARANTINE** immediately prior to your travel to the OE, you will be **REQUIRED** to come to the OE 14 days before the semester begins to do your self-quarantine here, one student per cabin. For this pre-semester self-quarantine, if there are more students than cabins, we will provide you with comfortable tents and access to clean facilities that are sanitized throughout the day. There is virtually no chance of rain in late August in the Cascades, so this will be a dry and relaxing mountain adventure. There will not be any additional fee for those who come early to self-quarantine on campus, with the exception of a fee for groceries or group meals (we’re still sorting the food scene out—much will depend on how many students choose to arrive early). All group dining for this period will be al fresco, and social distancing will be mandatory. The arrival date for pre-semester self-quarantine will be August 15.

Further, the following precautions will be put in place assuming that later in the summer the pandemic at the national level remains the threat it is now:

- Students who arrive early and have done their self-quarantine on campus will be assigned shared cabins the first day of the semester (August 29). Students who have done their isolation before travelling here will be assigned cabins upon their arrival. We will have an arrival sanitization station in place on campus for you to change out of travel clothes and wipe down luggage and any belongings before settling into cabins.
- We will mail “travel kits” to all students in July. Contents: face mask, latex gloves, hand sanitizer, and Clif Bars. These kits will include strict instructions for safe travel practices.
- Most OE students fly into Medford. We will pick you up at the airport in a shuttle that will allow for proper social distancing. The shuttle will be sanitized thoroughly between each trip.
- We will screen all students when you arrive, and twice daily for the first two weeks, by taking your temperature and asking you about the 9 CDC-determined Covid-19 symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, muscle pain, etc.). If lab testing is available at this point, we will arrange to have that administered upon arrival.

- Following the advice of the Jackson County Environmental Public Health Director, two weeks into the semester the students, staff and our families—if no one has manifest symptoms—become what he referred to as a “family unit,” no longer requiring social distancing. The director is impressed with our setting, commenting that it is ideal for insulating the students and staff from exposure once you’ve all settled in.
- For the duration of the semester, we will keep one cabin vacant, for the purpose of having a dwelling to accommodate any student who begins to show symptoms. If that student tests positive, we will consult with the student, his/her parents and home college, to determine if the student should remain on campus in quarantine, or return home.
- One of the assigned weekly “farm posts” that all students participate in will be a disinfectant crew to wipe down surfaces in the common buildings daily (tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, etc.). All students will be trained in this. All cabins will be supplied with disinfectants.
- During an ordinary semester, all students go to town (Ashland) once a week on the weekends for R&R and grocery shopping. If local conditions allow, we will continue this weekly trip. If, however, a state or local “stay at home order” is enacted, we will eliminate the weekly trip to town. Grocery shopping will then be done by staff and 3-4 students (that week’s disinfectant crew) who will be equipped with proper hygiene training and equipment, and will go to town intermittently and grocery shop for everyone. With our large vegetable garden, much of the fresh produce students eat will have passed only through their own hands.
- The OE semester is taught as a sequence of “block courses,” each course being 3 ½ weeks in duration. This allows students to accumulate completed courses at intervals in the semester. If one of our students becomes infected, we will isolate him/her in the vacant cabin. If his/her family or the home college desires a return home, there are these natural breaks during the semester when they could do so with one or more courses already finished. We will do this in consultation with the student’s home college study away office. If a student has to depart mid-course block, we will arrange for their current block course to be completed. If there is a major outbreak on campus and we find that we must send all of the students home, we will give them the opportunity to either complete the semester online, or receive (through an OE payment to their home colleges) pro-rated refunds that will be determined on a basis of when in the semester the student departs, and how many courses the student has attempted and/or completed.
- We expect that our normal excursions across the semester (camping, backpacking) will occur. The only typical excursion that we may have to avoid is the 4-day trip to San Francisco in November. A decision about that will be made in the fall. In which case an alternative and equally stunning excursion will take its place.



Some of these protocols seem extreme. But we believe with the relatively small number of students (we are now anticipating 28 students this fall), your willingness already to spend four months in a secluded mountain community, and our shared awareness that we are all living through an extraordinary historical moment, these precautions will not feel like too much of a burden. It could be the best four months of your lives.

In many ways the close community experience that is built into a normal semester at the OE will be enhanced by these provisions that direct all of us to think about our responsibilities to the well-being of one another. And students can expect what may be a rare experience for fall 2020—full on face to face experience with classmates and professors learning together in a beautiful setting, a forest refuge.