SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
NEW GRAD/PROF STUDENT INFO SESSION

Virtual Info Session for Incoming PhD students
1 pm, July 8, 2020
AGENDA

• Welcome
• COVID-19 status
• General Fall Info
• COVID specific Fall Info
• Answers to Questions
• Discussion / Q and A

Disclaimer: the information provided today describe our plans/intentions as of today. However, this continues to be a rapidly evolving and changing situation and things may (and are likely to) change over the coming weeks.
WELCOME TO VANDERBILT!

A great engineering school in a liberal arts environment with a world-class medical center (VUMC) in one of the hottest cities in the US...
As Dean of the Vanderbilt School of Engineering, I am proud to say that our graduate programs allow you to examine various engineering disciplines from multiple perspectives and to explore responsible use of technology in the state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories with world-class faculty who are committed to serve and to advance your academic prowess and professional development.

Best,
Philippe Fauchet, Ph.D.
Bruce and Bridgitt Evans Dean
## GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL DEGREES OFFERED

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SO.....WHAT IS THE FALL SEMESTER GOING TO LOOK LIKE IN THE COVID ERA??

As of July 8:

• 3,009,611* total cases and 131,594 total deaths in the U.S.
• 53,514 total cases and 665 total deaths in Tennessee
• 11,599 total cases and 127 deaths in Davidson County

• No truly effective treatment yet
• No vaccine yet

*Recent CDC estimates indicate the number of cases could be 10X larger
TIMELINE OF EVENTS (1)

- Early March: 1st case in TN, 1st case in Nashville
- March 10-13: classes cancelled, then moved online only.
- March 13: remote work order, travel ban
- March 18: research lab ramp down
- March 25: 2020 Commencement rescheduled for Spring 2021

- May 18: Phase 1 of research ramp up starts
- June 8: Phase 2 of research ramp up starts
- Late July (?): Phase 3 of research ramp up starts
TIMELINE OF EVENTS [2]

• August 16: official start of F2020 semester
• August 17-21: F20 orientation activities
• August 24: Instruction starts (1st day of classes)
• Nov 20: on campus instruction ends (continue online)
• Nov 21-29: Thanksgiving break
• Nov 30: classes continue remote / research continues on campus
• Dec 4: last day of classes
• Dec 5-13: final exams (remote)
Vanderbilt University and the School of Engineering are committed to providing students continued excellence in our educational programs.

The goal is to have meaningful interaction between students and faculty even with physical distancing, so most of our classes will have some level of in-person instruction (in person, lectures, labs, hybrid, and recitation style).

G/P students are expected to be in Nashville/on campus (i.e. in residence) during the fall.
EXAMPLES OF WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT

• Masks must be worn everywhere (on campus, inside buildings, inside classrooms)

• When walking through a building, arrows on the floor will indicate the flow of traffic.

• Stairwells are one-way.

• Entrance and exit doors are clearly marked.

• Everyone will be required to complete a COVID safety module and sign the acknowledgment form (online) before being allowed on campus.

• Elevator and restrooms......
EXAMPLES OF WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT
FALL COURSES – GRAD/PROFESSIONAL

• Our G/P students will follow UG calendar
  • Orientation/introductions: Aug 17-21 (details TBD)
  • First day of classes: Aug 24
  • On-campus courses will end Nov 20 – courses will continue remote/online after Thanksgiving break
  • Grad students doing research can come back/stay to continue their research after Thanksgiving break

• G/P students are expected to be in Nashville/on campus during the fall
  • accommodations due to personal health reasons/risk factors can be made using Student Access Services (SAS) - http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student-access/
  • VUSE is not planning have ‘remote only’ option
  • Monday’s ICE/SEVP announcement!

• Courses will be using regular grading scheme (no P/F option)
FALL COURSES – GRAD/PROFESSIONAL

• Many considerations will go into fall schedule (faculty, class room space, everyone’s safety, etc.) – work in progress!!

• Increased time between classes (10 min → 20 min).

• Classrooms will be cleaned twice daily by housekeeping staff.

• Instruction will be a hybrid (in-person / online) in most courses
FALL COURSES – GRAD/PROFESSIONAL

• Public Health Ambassa’Dores will be assigned to specific buildings and outdoor locations to help and educate people.

• If you see someone not following guidelines, politely ask them to do so (we’re in this together!!). If a student shows up for class without a mask, they will not be allowed in the class room.

• Instructors must cover their face when lecturing too; use of face shields and implementation of plexiglass screens is also under discussion.
TEACHING ASSISTANTS

• Most of you are supported with a Graduate Assistantship (you will serve as Teaching Assistant (TA) this F/S*).
  • Your DGS will coordinate your TA assignment with you.
  • You are expected to carry out your TA duties in person.
  • Some TA duties can be done remotely (i.e. grading, office hour sessions, etc.) – coordinate with the Instructor.
  • If you need accommodation and have personal health reasons that prevent you from being on campus/interacting with our UG students – contact Student Access Service.
  • We will do our best to accommodate (possibly switching TA assignments, etc.) within the overall constraints of a program.
  • If the overall teaching assistantship needs within a program cannot be met with a reasonable accommodation or modification, the student will be given the option of taking a personal leave of absence.
RESEARCH

• Phase 0 – 3/18
  • Nearly all research operations on campus were shut down

• Phase I ramp up 5/18 to 6/5
  • ≤33% occupancy of labs, no external human subjects, returnees sign COVID-19 acknowledgement through Oracle Learning
  • Faculty/PI’s submitted research ramp-up plans for their labs

• Phase II ramp up 6/8 to present
  • ≤50% occupancy of labs
  • External human subjects who come to VU permitted

• Phase III ramp up – possibly late-July?
  • ≤70% occupancy of labs; details under discussion
  • Hoping to bring UG students back to research labs
  • Possibility of travel for research (ONLY) – i.e VU personnel going to collaborator’s labs, collaborators coming to VU labs. No conference/mtg travel.
RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

• Some of you are supported as Research Assistants (RA’s) or you will be in the future.

• Unless your research can be carried out remotely (modeling, simulation, computational, theoretical, etc.), the expectation is that you will be on campus to perform your research.

• Experimental research that requires labs and/or specific research equipment can be done on campus (expect shifts, limited occupancy, use of PPE, SD, etc.)

• If you need accommodation and have personal health reasons that prevent you from being on campus/interacting with our UG students – contact Student Access Service.

• If the research or scholarship cannot be done remotely, and a reasonable accommodation or modification is not feasible, the student will be given the option of taking a personal leave of absence.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• Will students be tested for COVID-19 before coming to campus?
  • All undergrads will be tested, current the plan is to not test all G/P students
  • Everyone is expected to self-monitor (install the VandySafe app!!!)

• Do I need to be in quarantine / self-isolate when coming to Nashville?
  • VU will require people to be quarantined for 14 days only after international travel
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• What do I do if I develop COVID-19 symptoms or may be exposed to someone who has COVID-19?
  • If you have symptoms related to COVID-19 or determine that you need to be tested based on potential exposure, contact the Student Health Center stop activities immediately and leave campus; notify your advisor, the DGS and AD/Dean that you have been exposed and/or developed symptoms.

• What if I get sick during the semester and need to stay home?
  • Our faculty will be prepared to offer courses in-person and online (hybrid) – key is communication (i.e. let faculty know).
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• When do incoming students apply for health insurance and when will it start?
  • Health insurance is required for all G/P students
  • VU offers student health insurance (SHIP) through Gallagher ($3,655/yr)
  • You will automatically be enrolled (and billed)
  • Insured period: Aug 12, 2020 – Aug 11, 2021
  • If you have comparable insurance you can petition for a waiver
    • US citizens / PR only (international students are required to enroll in SHIP)
    • Deadline to submit waiver: August 1, 2020
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• How does the money work for grad students?
  • Base stipend (AY 20/21) = $ 31,000/yr (i.e. $ 2,583.33/month).
  • Some people may receive additional, merit-based fellowships (described in your admission offer letter).
  • If you receive an assistantship (RA or TA), in the first month you will also receive a $ 500 relocation allowance.
  • In order to receive your $$, you must complete a federal I-9 form (https://forms.vanderbilt.edu/view.php?id=851410)
  • You will need to set up automatic deposit to your bank account

• If you need help with this, contact the graduate program coordinator in your program.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• I am an international student but don’t know that I can get my visa and/or travel to the US in time for the start of the Fall 2020. What do I do?
  • International students who are currently outside the US and who need a visa are unlikely to get that in time.
    • Delayed processing times
    • Travel restrictions
    • Additional scrutiny on visas for students in STEM
  • If you will be a TA or RA in the fall and won’t be in the US → defer (to S21 or F21)
  • If you are only taking courses, we are unable to offer ‘remote only’ courses (in particular internationally) → defer (to S21 or F21)
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• What will be the impact of the announcement by the US Immigration & Customs Enforcement (7/6/20)?
  • ICE/SEVP revoked the exceptions that were put in place in the spring
  • International students (F-1) may not take a full course load entirely online (max is 1 course or 3 cr hrs).
  • VU is moving to hybrid teaching model. As long as we’re not entirely online, international students will be allowed to take their courses in this hybrid model.
  • If a school starts with in-person classes but needs to move to online (dictated by the COVID developments), international students are not permitted to take a full course of study through online courses (we’re trying to get more clarity on the exact implications of this).
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• Who do I need to reach out if......
  • Within School of Engineering:
    • Graduate Program Coordinator
    • Your advisor/mentor
    • Director of Graduate Studies
    • Department Chair
    • Associate Dean for Graduate Education

• Graduate School:
  • Graduate Life Coach
  • Dean of the GS
USEFUL WEBSITES

- https://www.vanderbilt.edu/coronavirus/
- https://www.vanderbilt.edu/coronavirus/faq/
- https://research.vanderbilt.edu/resources-for-4-phase-research-ramp-up/
- https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/2020return/Gradinfo.php
- https://www.vanderbilt.edu/coronavirus/fall-2020/fall-2020-graduate-and-professional-students/
- https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html