

Northwest Technical College Graduation COVID-19 Event Plan

Date(s) of Event:	May 7 th , 2021	Team/Group/ Event Name:	NTC Graduation
Start & End Time(s):	7:00 p.m.	Contact Name:	Kim Gourneau Travis Greene
# of Participants:	662	Contact Phone Number:	218-755-3948 218-755-2075
Location:	Sanford Center- Arena and Convention Center	Contact Email Address:	Kim.Gourneau@bemidjistate.edu Travis.Greene@bemidjistate.edu

Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for our students, faculty, staff, and members of our campus community. To ensure that, we have developed this COVID-19 Event plan to be completed for all events, camps or other activities planned to be hosted on-campus and in-person. All events, activities, camps, etc. must follow the current Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines found in the links below. In addition, all events, activities, camps, etc. must follow the BSU or NTC Return to Campus Plan found in the links below.

- [MDH Guidance for Indoor and Outdoor Venues, Safe Celebrations and Events, Music Activities, and Performances During COVID-19](#)
- [MDH Best Practices for Higher Education Commencement Ceremonies](#)
- [MDH Guidance for Institutes of Higher Education.](#)
- [MDH Campus Dining Services Guidance for Higher Education Institutions.](#)
- [MDH Guidance for Intercollegiate Sports.](#)
- [MDH Guidance for Sports Practice and Games for Youth and Adults.](#)
- MDH Guidance for Mitigating COVID-19 for Summer Camps & Events
- [BSU Return to Campus Plan](#)
- [NTC Return to Campus Plan](#)

Note: the completion of this form does not automatically approve the event. Guidance may change according to the current BSU or NTC COVID-19 Safety Level and MDH guidance. The event coordinator is responsible for ensuring the most recent guidance is followed. Plans must be submitted for review to Erin Morrill at erin.morrill@bemidjistate.edu. For information on the approval process please see the COVID website or the BSU/NTC Return to Campus Plan. Please contact Erin Morrill with questions about this plan, guidance above, etc.

1. Please Provide an overview of your event, camp, or on-campus activity:

Northwest Technical College will be holding an in-person graduation ceremony at the Sanford Center on May 7th, 2021. The ceremony will also be live streamed to allow for students and

family members to watch virtually. The Sanford Center has informed us that the overall capacity for the Sanford Center with COVID-19 capacity restrictions and social distancing is 925 people. In consultation with the Sanford Center the Minnesota Department of Health's Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues was consulted, along with their Best Practices for Higher Education Commencement Ceremonies, to determine graduation capacity.

In order to stay under the 925-capacity limit, one ceremony will be held, but students were only allotted 4 tickets for family and friends to attend. Each ticket has an assigned seat and guests will be directed by various Sanford Center staff and BSU workers to their assigned seats.

The occupancy for the ceremony is listed below:

- NTC Ceremony:
 - o Graduating Students: 126
 - o Platform Party: 4
 - o Faculty: 16
 - o Musical Performers: Band: 5
 - o Bowl Seating (family and friend attendees): 488
 - o Workers/Volunteers: 23

2. Screening and plan for those exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Employees and students have been informed and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following procedures will be implemented to assess employee, student, and attendee health status prior to entering the graduation ceremony:

Everyone attending and participating in the commencement ceremonies will be required to complete the COVID-19 Health Screening and present their green screen before entering the Sanford Center. Volunteers will check the green screens for graduates, performers, faculty, and workers prior to entry. Additionally, volunteers will be stationed outside the entrance designated for family and friends to check for green screens. Paper copies will be available for anyone who does not have the ability to fill out the screening tool on a smartphone or device. To fill out the screening tool ahead of arrival, please see Appendix 3.

It will be communicated to everyone participating in the graduation ceremonies not to attend if they feel unwell or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone who develops or experiences COVID-19 symptoms during the ceremonies or during their time working the events will be asked leave.

Anyone working or volunteering at the event should report symptoms to the Graduation Planning Team as soon as possible. Students participating in the ceremony should report their symptoms to a volunteer or worker as soon as possible.

The policy of Northwest Technical College is to follow Minnesota Department of Health and local public health department guidance and direction on informing employees, students, or

attendees if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 on campus and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time.

3. Handwashing

Basic infection protection measures are implemented at the Sanford Center. Hand sanitizer and bathrooms are available to all students, performers, workers, volunteers, and attendees. Hand sanitizer will be placed throughout the building for people to use as needed.

4. Face Coverings

Following Minnesota Executive Order 20-81, face coverings are required indoors and whenever 6ft of social distancing cannot be maintained outdoors. Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College require all employees, students, and visitors to wear a face covering as outlined in Executive Order 20-81.

Masks or cloth face coverings must be worn to help control infection from people who may be infected by are asymptomatic. They provide some limited protection from being infected if exposed.

Here are a few important things to keep in mind:

- Masks or cloth face coverings can help with preventing **your** germs from infecting others- especially in situations where you may spread the virus without symptoms.
- Wearing a mask or cloth face covering **does not** protect you from others who may spread the virus. So, even when wearing a mask or cloth face covering, you still need to wash your hands frequently, cover your cough and practice social distancing by keeping at least 6ft of space between people.
- People who are sick should still stay home. Wearing a mask or cloth face covering does not mean people who are sick should go out into the community. If you are sick and need to go to the doctor, call your health care provider before going in and wear a mask or cloth face covering to the clinic.
- A mask or cloth face covering should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask or cloth face coverings without assistance.
- Additional exceptions to wearing a mask or cloth face covering can be found in Executive Order 20-81.
- Masks or cloth face coverings will be required at all times during the graduation ceremony and events. The only exception will be the removal of masks for speaking on stage and a graduation picture for students.
 - The stage is located 12 feet from the front row of graduates to allow for masks to be removed while a speaker is performing. This is allowed under the State's [Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations](#) guidance.
 - Graduates will be allowed to remove their face covering for the photo opportunity off-stage after receiving their diploma cover. Graduates will be allowed to remove their mask for the picture only. This is allowed in the

[Requirements for All Businesses and Other Entities](#) guidance from MDH (starting on page 10).

- The Sanford Center requires masks be worn on their premises. No one will be allowed into the building unless a face covering or other acceptable accommodation is in place. Face coverings must remain in place for the entire ceremony and should not be removed for any reason other than stated above.

5. Social Distancing

Social distancing will be implemented during this event through the following engineering and administrative controls:

- Face coverings, hand sanitizers and other disinfectants will be available as needed for each ceremony.
- Workers for each ceremony will arrive at the Sanford Center and park in the back lot behind the Sanford Center, and will enter Gate 5 or 10. They will be asked to show a green screen before admittance.
- Performers (Band) will park in the back lot behind the Sanford Center and will enter through Gate 10. They will be asked to show a green screen before admittance.
- Graduates will park in the main parking lot of the Sanford Center and enter Gate 4, where they will be asked to show a green screen before admittance. They will then proceed to the convention center area for further instruction.
- Graduates will be staged in the ballroom, socially distanced ahead of the graduation ceremony.
 - Graduates will be directed to a chair in the ballroom and must remain seated. All chairs are spaced 6ft apart.
- Graduates will line up socially distanced for the processional in the hallway area of the convention center and will be separated by graduate and undergraduate degrees. 6ft of social distance will be maintained during the lineup process and throughout the processional into the arena.
- Details on the processional, and recession can be found in Appendix 2.
- Graduates will not be allowed to re-enter the ballroom area after the ceremony and must immediately exit out Gate 3. They will be asked to go immediately to their vehicles and not congregate on Sanford Center property.
- Social distance will be maintained through the entire graduation ceremony with the exception of handing graduates their diploma covers. This break in social distance will be brief and no handshakes will be exchanged. Face coverings will be worn the entire time. The break in social distancing is allowed under the Minnesota Department of Health [Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues](#).
- Each graduating student who RSVP'd by the deadline was allotted 2 tickets for the event. The Sanford Center has grouped those tickets into pods of 2 with 6 feet of distance between each pod. Ushers have been assigned to each of the 17 sections of the arena to ensure social distance for the seating process, during the ceremony, and after attendees are instructed to leave.

- Ushers will receive training and instruction prior to graduation day.
- Guests will park in the main parking lot and enter Gate #2 (main entrance). Guests will need to present a green screen from the Health Screening Tool and pass-through Sanford's Security Checkpoint. Additional information can be found in Appendix 1.
- A specific section of seating has been designated for anyone needing accommodation. Accommodation can be arranged prior to the ceremony by contacting the Sanford Center or by letting Sanford Staff know upon entry into the Sanford Center.
- Additional information on social distancing, floor seating layout and guest seating can be found in Appendix 1.

6. Housekeeping

The Sanford Center has created a cleaning and disinfecting plan that will allow NTC to safely a graduation ceremony.

- The Sanford Center will ensure the spaces used by Northwest Technical College are cleaned and ready for use prior to graduation day.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of the spaces used in the convention center will be cleaned prior to and after the graduation ceremony. Students will not be allowed to leave personal items in the ballroom or other used spaces in the convention center as they will not be allowed back in after disinfection.
 - Explanation of the cleaning process: Prior to the NTC ceremony, the Sanford Center will clean and disinfect the convention center and the Sanford Center arena. During the graduation ceremony, the Sanford Center will clean and disinfect the spaces used in the convention center by graduates.
- Details of the cleaning process done by Sanford Center Staff can be found below:
 - Electrostatic sprayers will be used to sanitize all high touch point areas (bathrooms, staircase rungs, main entrance, door handles, etc.) after the event begins and in between events.
 - The electrostatic sprayer will be used to sanitize the seating the bowl (arena) and the floor seating after each event ends.
 - The electrostatic sprayer will be used to sanitize the convention center after the students process to the arena floor.
 - The chemical used in the electrostatic sprayer does have a strong smell and it is a heavy disinfectant. Students and attendees should be fully out of the spaces before cleaning begins but if staff or volunteers are in the area and are allergic to chemicals like Clorox, they will need to step out while the electrostatic sprayer is in use. The disinfectant takes about 3 minutes to fully dry.

7. Lodging

This event does not require employees, students, or visitors to lodge on campus.

8. Dining/Meals

This event will not be serving meals or food of any kind.

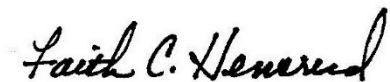
9. Communication

This plan will be communicated to all attendees, graduates, performers, and workers ahead of the graduation ceremonies. The plan will be posted on the BSU/NTC Graduation webpage. Student will receive an email with instructions prior to the graduation ceremony. Communication about the rules above and below went out via ticket master when guests signed up for tickets. Same day reminders will also be shared multiple times with students and guests. Additional communication will be ongoing, as necessary.

10. Certification

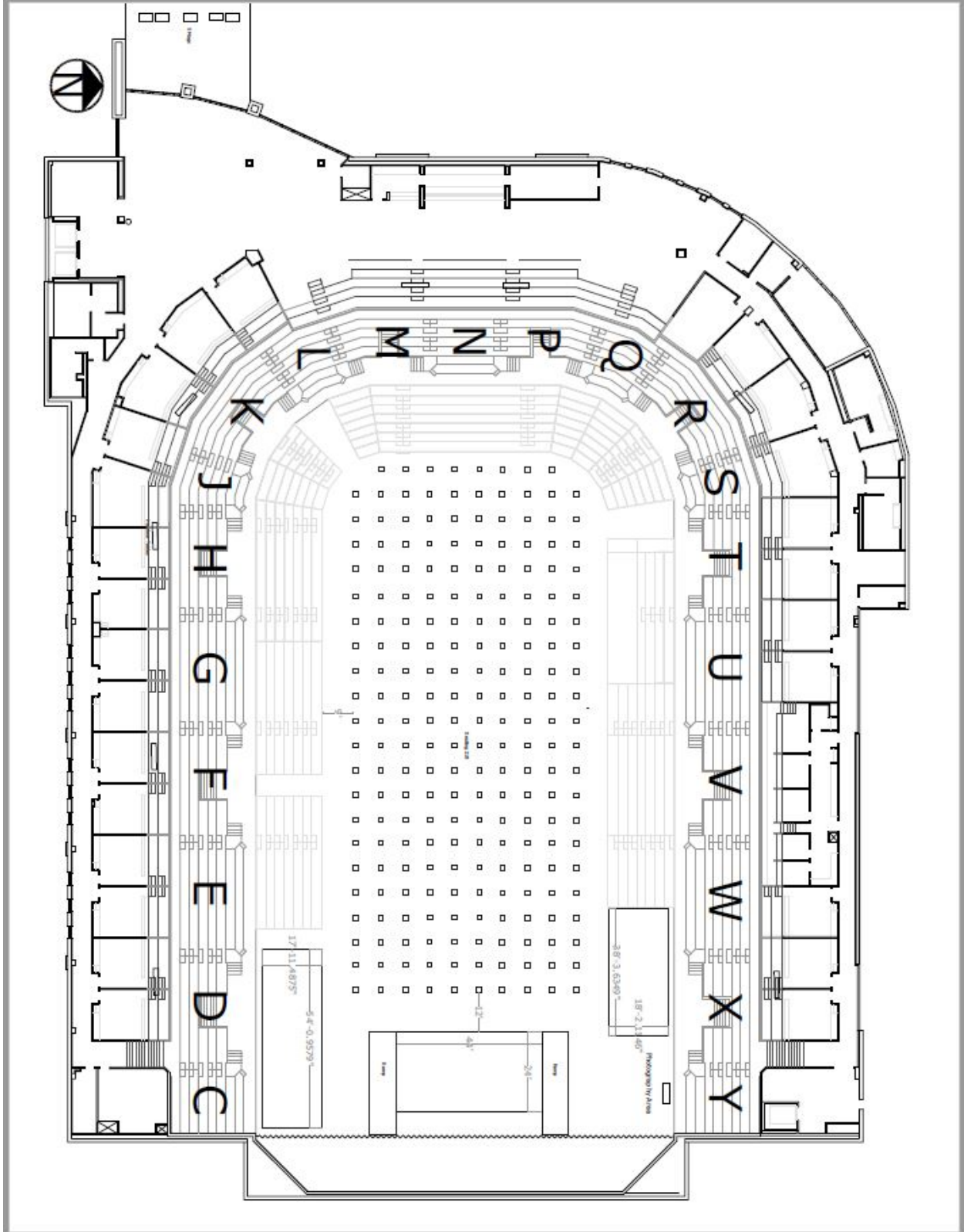
This plan has been certified by Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College leadership on May 6, 2021. It will be updated, as necessary.

Certified by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Faith C. Hensrud". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'F' and a long, sweeping underline.

Faith C. Hensrud, President

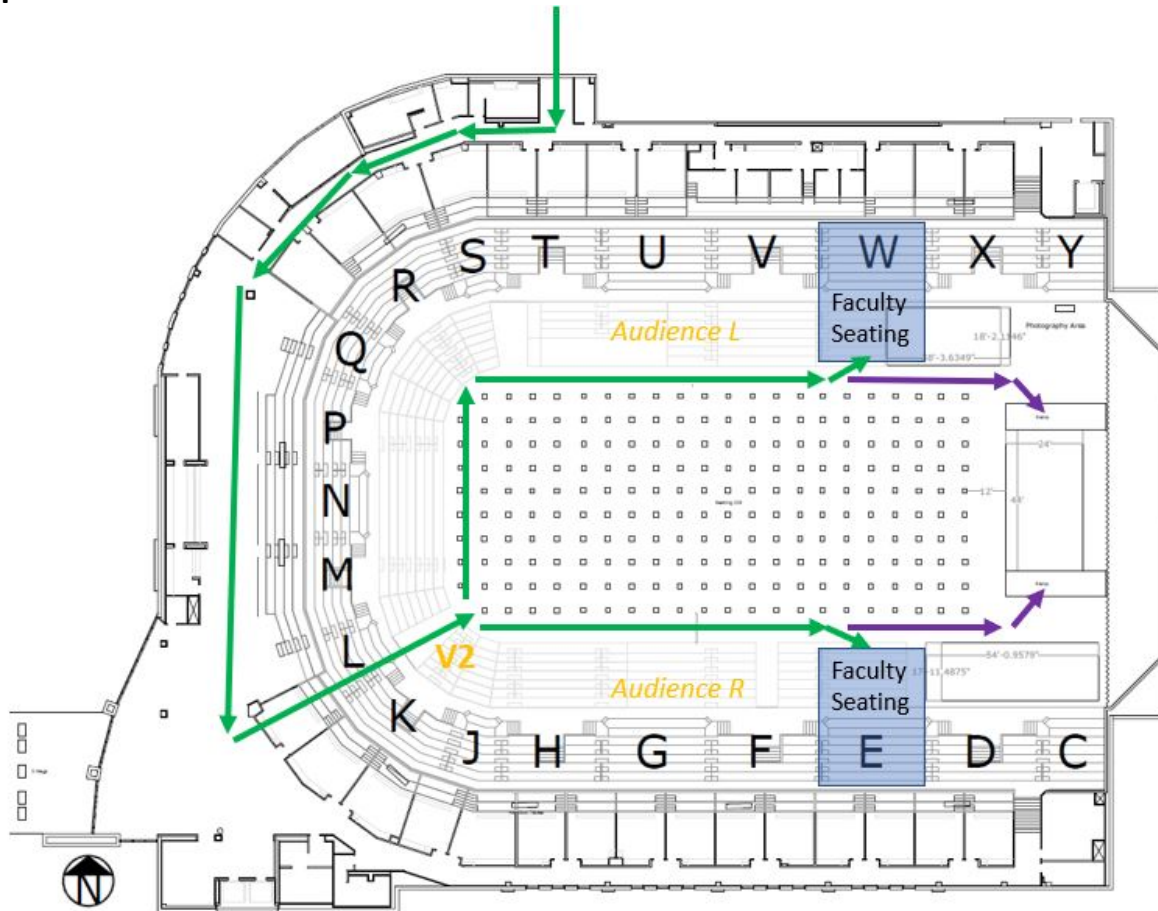
Appendix 1: Sanford Center Floor Plan



Seating and Floor Layout for Graduation:

- For the NTC graduation all graduating students will process onto the floor of the arena along with faculty, staff, and the platform party.
 - Students will sit in chairs spaced 6ft apart on the floor of the arena.
 - Faculty and participating staff will process with sections W and E for seating and will remain in those sections for the duration of the ceremony. Faculty and staff will be spaced 6ft apart in the arena seating.
 - The platform party consisting of the President of Northwest Technical College, the Vice President, the Deans of both Colleges, the guest speaker, and the student speaker, will process to the stage sit 6ft apart in pre-placed chairs.
- The BSU quintet will be physically distanced on the floor of the arena below sections C & D. No attendees will be sitting in those sections and they have been pushed back to allow floor space for the band. The band will also be 12 ft. away from the nearest graduates and the platform party.
- After receiving their diploma cover on-stage, graduates will proceed off the stage to the floor under section Y for a picture opportunity. Once graduates are posed for the picture, they will be allowed to remove their mask for the photograph and then must immediately put their mask back on. After their photograph is taken, students will return to their seats on the floor.
- Seating for guests:
 - Guests will be allowed into the Sanford Center approximately 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.
 - Guests will need to present a green screen from the COVID-19 Screening Tool prior to entrance into the ceremony. The Screening Tool can be found [here](#).
 - Guests who do not have access to a smart device can fill out a paper copy of the form- see Appendix 3 or fill one out onsite on the day of graduation.
 - Guests will also need to pass through the Sanford Center's Security Checkpoint.
 - After passing through the security checkpoint, guests will proceed to their assigned seat found on the ticket issued to them.
 - Guests of the graduating students will be seated in sections F-V in pods of 4 people. Each pod will be spaced 6ft apart.
 - Additional pods of 1 person have been set aside for those who are not considered family groups.

Appendix 2: Processional and Recessional



- Entry March Details:
 - The Platform party and faculty/staff will lead the march through the hallway from the Convention Center and enter the arena via section V2.
 - The line will split into Left and Right lines, the platform party (purple) and faculty/staff will be directed to their seats by ushers. Students will be held in line at V2 until platform party and faculty have been directed to their seats and the ushers have returned to V2.
 - Students will process onto the arena floor as follows:
 - Graduates will split into two lines alternately, one-line following the arena floor by Audience R, and one-line following usher going to Audience L.
 - Each usher seats 5 students on their side before shifting to the next row, until all students are seated. An additional usher will be in the middle to keep students from crossing to the other side.
- Students coming up to stage:
 - This process will follow the usual staging.

- Each row will be dismissed by an usher. Rows will come out to Audience R, go up to the stage, receive their diploma cover, exit the stage by Audience L, get their picture taken and then will proceed back to their seats.
- Recessional:
 - The recessional will start with the platform party exiting the stage and processing out V2. Faculty/staff at Audience R will proceed after the platform party, followed by faculty/staff at Audience L. All will proceed directly out of the arena and through Gate #3 out of the building. No one will be allowed to congregate after the ceremony.
 - Students will exit their rows at Audience R, one row at a time, from front to back. Students will also proceed directly out of the arena, through Gate #3 out of the building. No one will be allowed to congregate on Sanford Center property after the ceremony.

Appendix 3: BSU/NTC COVID-19 Health Screening Tool

Self-Assessment Screening Tool-COVID-19

Employees, students, and visitors must complete self-assessment health screening tool prior to entry.

Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms?

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. COUGH (New or Worsening): | YES / NO |
| 2. SHORTNESS of BREATH (New or Worsening): | YES / NO |
| 3. TEMPERATURE/FEVER of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above | YES / NO |
| 4. OR TWO (2) or more of the following symptoms: | YES / NO |
| a. Chills | |
| b. Fatigue | |
| c. Muscle or body aches | |
| d. Headache | |
| e. New loss of taste or smell | |
| f. Sore throat | |
| g. Congestion or runny nose | |
| h. Nausea or vomiting | |
| i. Diarrhea | |

If you answered "YES" to any of the above questions:

- **DO NOT ENTER CAMPUS. PLEASE LEAVE CAMPUS GROUNDS IMMEDIATELY.**
- For health and safety reasons, you are not allowed to be on campus (inside/outside).
- Employees should contact their supervisor and Human Resources for additional instructions.
- Students should contact their instructor/coach and Student Center for Health & Counseling for additional instructions.

If you answered "NO" to ALL of the above questions:

- You are allowed to be on campus (inside/outside) **if you have a mask readily available.**
 - If you do not have a mask readily available
 - **DO NOT ENTER CAMPUS.**
 - Employees: Please contact the BSU Mailroom to obtain a mask to remain on campus (inside/outside). **CALL 218-755-3921**
 - You **MUST** proceed to wash or sanitize your hands immediately upon entry.

HUMAN RESOURCES: Carol.Hess@bemidjistate.edu or 218-755-2445

STUDENT CENTER FOR HEALTH & COUNSELING: HealthServices@bemidjistate.edu or 218-755-2053

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____