

Today, King's College is one of the most successful campuses serving as an example of what the power of collaborative efforts can achieve.

The Campus Comes Together: It Takes a Village

In the decade Kosik has worked as the Student Health Center's director, she never saw the level of vast uncertainty that a disease could catalyze. As a physician assistant and King's College alumna herself, she hit the ground running for her community. She turned her office up the hill on North Street into a triage facility with a system based on necessity and know-how. By August 2020, the school reopened with an additional two ventilation systems in the health facilities. Kosik's team went to work, diligently siphoning those with flu-like symptoms from others with more seemingly innocuous conditions.

"So many members of our campus community came together during the pandemic," Kosik said. The saying 'It takes a village' really comes to mind and knowing we had the Emergency Management Team, senior leadership, and so many caring staff working together made a tremendous difference in our ability to

stay on campus and support each other emotionally, spiritually, and physically."

King's College's reputation as an academic institution is simultaneously dedicated to the success of its students and to serving its community. That commitment was highlighted when Campus Ministry, along with the Shoval Center—King's College's hub for developing teaching, research, and volunteer opportunities that advance the needs of the community—decided they needed to help by sharing what resources they could. They collected masks and medical supplies and allocated them to two local hospitals: Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center and Commonwealth Health Wilkes-Barre General Hospital.

"Testing, tracking, restocking supplies, caring for the quarantined—it all needed to be done right," Kosik recalled. "Being able to obtain things like masks, hand sanitizer, and eventually testing equipment was a huge obstacle and eventual success. We moved quickly but every step of the way we were constantly thinking about how we can help the most people in the safest way possible."

SCREENING EVENTS

378 HOURS OF SCREENING

1,074 VOLUNTARY POSITIONS FILLED TO WORK EVENTS

13,281 TOTAL TESTS GIVEN

ADDITIONAL TESTING

3,000

ADDITIONAL TESTS ADMINISTERED BY STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

MEALS PREPARED

8,250

MEALS PREPARED AND DELIVERED BY VOLUNTEERS TO THOSE IN QUARANTINE

Campus Reopens Through Tremendous Collaboration and Commitment

The College was already set with an Emergency Management Team in place before the pandemic, which was composed of 14 leaders, including Kosik, who represented different functions across the institution—from student affairs to dining facilities. Kosik, along with the rest of the team, were quickly called to task to assess the situation, meeting more frequently on video conference calls to painstakingly evaluate and build a response.

"Everything was constantly changing. We approached every situation with deal, cope, adapt, change," Kosik recalled. "We knew how important it was to provide our students with in-classroom learning, which is why it became our number one priority, along with their safety constantly in mind. Every question was met with: how we can make it all work for these students and our faculty."

The team went to work. They hired a full-time testing coordinator, assessed staffing issues, managed personal equipment for faculty and students on campus, implemented on-campus testing sites, an exposure protocol, quarantine in-dorm and isolation system, and vaccination and testing tracking. They also conducted random surveillance on the entire campus community by choosing occupants of residence halls, off campus residences, commuters, and employees for testing. King's College was mobilized to take on the pandemic with extraordinary force, and at the helm was the Emergency Management Team.

"We worked diligently to care for the students who were placed in isolation or quarantine, even to go as far as our president hand delivering meals to the students' doors," Kosik said. "Various departments made small care packages for the students and would reach out by phone or email to assure the students felt cared for and not forgotten. Our testing coordinator, student health staff, human resources, athletics, athletic trainers, residence life, dining

services, faculty, security, student affairs—the list goes on and on—really stepped up to the plate. Many of us were on campus working for months while others continued remote work."

Its rapid response to the ever-changing protocols and guidelines reflected the College's ability to become a cohesive and flexible team. Through the decisions that came out of these meetings, the team's steady hand and collaborative approach to the crisis quickly earned the trust of the community and set uncertainty at ease. Their unyielding work, and efforts of the entire campus, is the reason why King's College was able to re-open campus in the fall of 2020 and offer in-person classes, while other institutions remained hybrid or shuttered.

"At a time of crisis, our shared priority had always been to ensure the health and safety of every member of the King's College community," said Dean of Students Robert McGonigle, who was tasked to lead the Emergency Management Team as chair. "Looking back over what we were able to accomplish together, I am incredibly proud of the facilities and dining services who pivoted alongside our team, and the amount of people we had volunteer—from delivering food to students in isolation to checking in people on campus for testing. From faculty to staff, it really shows the commitment of the people at this college to one another."

Today, King's College is one of the most successful campuses serving as an example of what the power of collaborative efforts can achieve. By May 2022, they celebrated a four-week streak of no positive COVID-19 cases and have updated its policies for optional masking and testing. Yet, the pandemic continues to evolve, and the tried-and-true task force will continue meeting to assess next steps.

"Our goal from the beginning was to hold in-person classes because we know our students do better when they're in the classroom," said McGonigle. "I am proud to say that because of the great work we've done, we are now able to do that and continue moving forward together, stronger."



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