

IAO

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ACCREDITOR

FEATURED

EXPLORE MULTIPLE WAYS FOR COLLEGE PREP TESTS

- Keep your grades
- Meet with your counselor
- Begin building your college list
- Reassess your extracurricular involvement
- Start test prep
- Visit schools
- Plan for the summer and next fall

HOW TO TRAVEL AND WHERE TO GO?

EXCLUSIVE

IN CONVERSATION WITH

**DR. SALAH AL-KHIRBASH
DEPT BOARD MEMBER OF
SANAA' UNIVERSITY**

For Higher Ed Technology Leaders:

**What To Expect This
Spring 2021**



Editor's Note...

A spring break is a long-awaited holiday that everyone enthusiastically waits for the entire year. This holiday period is also referred to as the Easter Holiday which comes in early spring and brings lots of excitement with it.

Springtime where people plan for their vacation with their close ones, on the other hand, many students find this break to be their busiest. Perhaps it's because they prioritize their academic future over vacation to get enroll in their favorite college.

In our new issue of IAO's Accreditor, we shed light on how to find a balance between test prep and the fun of spring break after all it's a time of rejuvenation, not stress or an overbearing amount of studies. Accept social and family commitments with limits that won't disturb your test preparation schedule. Split up your half days for studies and the rest of them for having fun with family members to treat yourself better. Waking up an hour or two hours earlier can help you to use this time for study. Don't forget that spring break is meant to be a break and committing the entire time for test prep goes against the principle.



All progress takes place outside the comfort zone.

MICHAEL JOHN BOBAK

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WANT TO EXPLORE MULTIPLE WAYS FOR COLLEGE PREP TESTS OVER SPRING BREAK?

At the time of year, people wait for the entire year and start planning weeks before the event arrives to have a blast with their friends and family. Juniors, sophomores and seniors who have decided to study in this break. Kudos to you! In an effort to prepare you for a better future, we have searched some ways and tips to help you to be successful.

06.

FOR HIGHER ED TECHNOLOGY LEADERS: WHAT TO EXPECT THIS SPRING 2021

The year 2020 packed a punch unlike any other period in living memory. And while the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be felt for a long time to come, this year brings an opportunity for us to recharge our hope and energy. How will that play out for higher education, especially in the area of technology? We turned to a number of education and industry leaders to find out what they expect — or look forward to — in 2021.





11. Exclusive

IN CONVERSATION WITH MR. ANVESH REDDY CHAIRMAN OF VYBHAVA INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARTS & SCIENCE

An in-depth conversation with a member Dept Board of Sanaa' University (Yemen), Dr. Salah Al-Khribash over his personal and professional experiences and learnings during his career.



14.

WAYS TO HAVE A SAFER SPRING BREAK 2021 HOW TO TRAVEL AND WHERE TO GO?

As the vaccine rollout continues to ramp up, interest in travel is on the rise. While the situation may look different come summertime, social distancing will still be a thing in the spring. That means, spring break may look a little different this year, but is definitely a lot safer than the last.

Featured

WAYS FOR COLLEGE PREP TESTS OVER SPRING BREAK

TIPS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS STUDENTS FOR THEIR SUCCESSFUL SPRING SEMESTER

While it can be tempting to simply count down the days until summer break, the spring semester is a prime time for high school underclassmen to prepare for the college admissions process, and for college-bound seniors to close out the year on a high note. Believe it or not, seniors, you are not off the hook just yet!

Here are some tips for high school students to ensure a productive and successful spring semester.

KEEP YOUR

GRADES UP

ALL STUDENTS:

Admissions officers like to see an upward grade trend, so freshmen, sophomores, and juniors need to work hard to maintain good grades and improve upon not-so-stellar grades. Seniors, it is especially important to maintain spring semester grades because colleges will see your final transcript, and a dramatic dip in academic performance can result in a school rescinding an offer of admission. Just because you've been accepted doesn't mean the work stops. Work hard to finish out the year strong.



MEET WITH YOUR COUNSELOR

ALL STUDENTS:

One of the biggest mistakes students make is not meeting with their college counselor on a regular basis. Be proactive and set up meetings for the beginning, middle, and end of the semester, so you can check in regularly with your counselor and he or she can evaluate your progress and determine what you need to do to prepare for the admissions process. It's also important to build and maintain a relationship with your counselor, as he or she will write a recommendation for you come college application time.



BEGIN BUILDING YOUR COLLEGE LIST

JUNIORS:

If you haven't already, start heavily researching schools and determining where you want to apply next fall. Look into admissions requirements, academic offerings, courses, professors, campus life, student organizations, and anything else that will help you make an informed decision about where you want to go to college. A balanced college list should have a range of target, reach, and likely schools, so be sure to look into a wide variety of institutions.

REASSESS YOUR EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT

FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES:

Sustained involvement in just a handful of activities over an extended period of time is much more impressive than many one-off participations in several different clubs or activities. Take a look at your resume and all your activities and determine which ones mean the most to you and align with your core interests. Cut out any activities you're not completely invested in, stick with the ones you like best, and deepen your involvement by taking on a leadership position. Also, seek out new activities that you think better match your interests. If your school doesn't already offer a club or activity that really interests you, then start your own student club or extracurricular project.

START TEST PREP

SOPHOMORES:

Now is the time to start seriously thinking about the SAT and ACT and begin preparing for one or both. In one of the meetings with your college counselor, discuss both tests and come up with a timeline for when you should prepare and sit for these high-stakes exams. At Ivy Wise, we recommend taking multiple, timed practice tests in order to identify content weaknesses, evaluate test-taking strategies, and to accurately simulate actual test day. Practice makes perfect, or at least improves scores!



VISIT SCHOOLS

SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS:

Spring is the best time to visit college campuses. School is in session, the weather is usually favorable, and you can visit during your spring semester breaks. Begin making plans to visit a few college campuses by sitting down with your family and discussing a trip and dates. Then do your research and register for information sessions, sign up for guided tours, and see if you can stay overnight in one of the dorms.





PLAN FOR THE SUMMER AND NEXT FALL

ALL STUDENTS:

During your check-in meetings with your counselor, discuss options for summer activities or programs, and talk about what classes you need to take next fall in order to stay on track academically. Summer is a great time to deepen your interests with an internship or academic program, so do your research to determine what summer activity is the best-fit for your personal and academic goals.

If you need additional help mapping out a productive and successful spring semester, our team of expert counselors can help you set academic goals, choose appropriate summer programs, and advise on what you need to do now to be better prepared for the college admissions process. Contact us today for more information on our long-term and short-term college counseling programs.



FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY LEADERS

WHAT TO
EXPECT
THIS SPRING
2021



PAIGE FRANCIS

The Herculean pivot that occurred in higher education in the spring of 2020 required technology—at its very core—to facilitate all business. While the fear deep within technology leaders—not unlike the entire world—was tied to the unknown, for many it surely felt eerily familiar.

The pivot itself was very much like the old hat task of testing a disaster recovery and business continuity plan. However, in the case of last spring, there was zero room for any piece of that plan to not work. Success was a requirement. Immediately; and, in some instances, overnight.

That said, we now know pieces in fact didn't work. So, rather than toil, we remedied gaps, stood up new technologies, ramped up services and continuously improved for tomorrow's needs, and the day after that, and so on.

To date, we've survived spring 2020, improved over summer 2020 and, as a result, here's to hoping most IT shops rocked the fall of 2020.

Next up? For the spring 2021 semester, thankfully the technology promises to remain mostly the same: a strong core (infrastructure, systems and wifi), collaboration tools (email, telephony, messaging, video), learning management systems, accessible software, classroom technology (lecture capture, hybrid delivery), tracking (personal safety, emergency response, Covid-19 reporting), contactless services (mobile ordering, door entry, process automation) and robust business systems (automation, security, workflow management).

As IT leadership, however, we know the challenges are rarely about the technology itself. What should we be thinking about in anticipation of spring 2021 in higher education? The answer appears to be a nice *mélange* of old challenges, each with a daunting new twist.



ONSLAUGHT OF NEW DEVICES

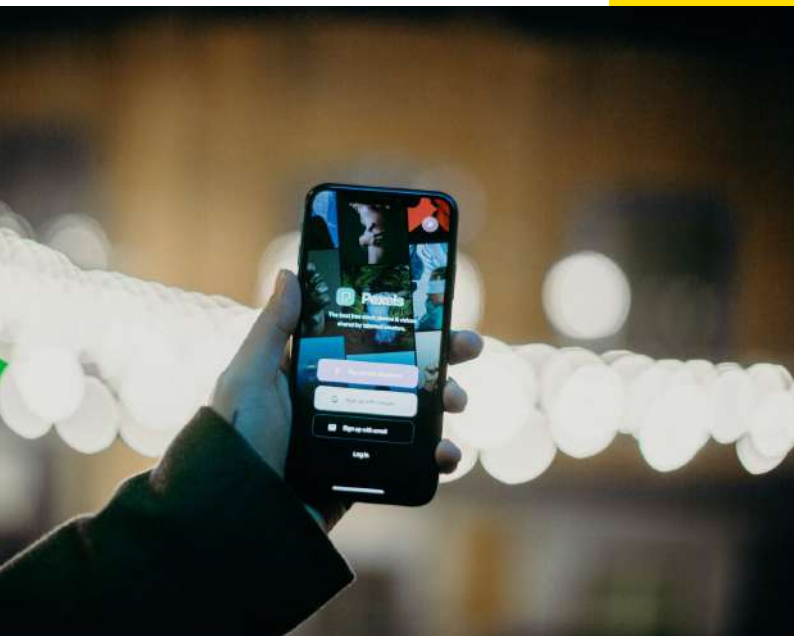
'Tis the season in IT to recognize that the new year will come laden with a barrage of new technology devices. The first couple of weeks managing new gadgets is always a bear. While connecting new devices is hardly a fresh challenge on any college campus, the immediacy dial has been turned all the way up given the virtual nature of life and instruction.

In addition, IT support used to be able to prioritize devices; focusing



first on computing tech, and then folding in the “fun” stuff later. Covid-19 has put an end to that. All devices are top priority now.

Our students living on campus, during this pandemic, already feel isolated and disconnected. If gaming systems, wifi-ready televisions and Echo Dots bring even one bit of joy and connectedness, we will prioritize them all as urgent.



A DRIVE FOR BUSINESS AS USUAL

In order to compete mid- and post-pandemic, universities are flexing differentiating muscle, while, at the same time, tightening financial belts. This translates into a variety of efforts focused on elevating academic efforts—research, marketing, reimagining interdisciplinary programs—that will all rely in some way on technology.

New secure network connections and environments, pop-up website shops and seamlessly connecting curriculum dots will all need to be created, accessible and learnable by faculty and students alike.

In addition to academic efforts, administrative work will be mid-flight in the spring based on endless lessons learned over the past year. Automation improvements, business system integrations and gap technologies are moving from acquisition-to-implementation phases as comprehensive campus process and procedure reviews wind down. We've learned so much.

Clear expectations will be set for technology leaders that feel very much like business as usual. The reactive times, though absolutely justified, are behind us. We've been the glue, now we need to switch that gear back to forward-thinking and long-term effectiveness.

While we should never pretend that we won't be here again, crisis-response simply needs to be folded into planning now. Build and develop for a standard world, a fully remote world and—like today's reality—everything in between.

We all know that if we haven't been designing for these realities all along, we certainly are now.





TECHNOLOGY EXHAUSTION AND PUSHBACK

Watch for frustration. And pushback. And high emotions. With a looming vaccine on the horizon, students, faculty and staff are feeling hope and impending normalcy for the first time in months. The spring semester will bring us a slew of exhausted human beings, annoyed by technology and eager to do the things the way they did them a year ago. We're not there yet. While maintaining virtual requirements, users will push back with "why?" Planning for future semesters will include "back to the way we've always done it" speech and, if we are dedicated to improvement, we need to recognize the positives that came from today's pandemic realities. In the face of Covid-19, students now have more options, staff have experienced better work/life balance, faculty played with new classroom technologies and raved about the experience. Of course, these examples don't encompass the experience for all, but the new options were received as positives by many. Imagine if we keep those options available during non-pandemic times. Be the headwind if needed to ensure we don't lose what we've gained.



THE TRANSITION IS COMING

While higher education technology teams ultimately flipped a giant switch to go remote in spring 2020, spring 2021 is the time to begin planning for the future state. This will require time, thought and input from the entire campus. In addition, there could be one-to-many forks in our future path and, as chief information officers and technology leaders, we are skilled at ideating and finalizing plans for a multi-level forecast.

Technology leaders need to start thinking about all the 'what's next' scenarios sooner rather than later. Mapping out possibilities is a first step.

EXCLUSIVE

IN CONVERSATION
WITH

DR. SALAH AL- KHIRBASH



DEPT BOARD MEMBER OF SANAA'
UNIVERSITY (YEMEN)

ACADEMIC LIFE

Q: Could you please walk us through your academic background and achievements? Your extensive and varied experience can be a source of inspiration for many; please share the highlights and milestones of your professional journey.

After I completed my Ph. D degrees from USA in 1987, I joined Sanaa' University (Yemen) as Asst Prof in Earth Science till 2002 when I promoted to full Prof of Earth Sciences. During my work at Sana'a University, I have been assigned several administrative responsibilities started with Head of the Geology Depot (several times), Deputy of Postgrad and Research Deanship, and

later Dean of Science (1993-2001). In 2001 I moved to Sultan Qaboos University (Oman), where in addition to my teaching duties, I been appointed to be the Head of the Department (2013-2019). Some of my responsibilities were a member of the CB and Executive Board (SQU). Currently, a member of Dept Board, Accreditation Committee, Post-grad committee, College Alumni committee.

EXPERIENCE

Q: Currently heading the institute, what are some of your long-term and short-term goals for the education system?

We can't look at the future of higher education without putting a clear vision and mission framework. Accelerating our progress as a regional and international leader in Earth sciences to establish an internationally competitive, research-intensive Department, committed the provision of high-quality research and consultancy and to the transfer of this knowledge to the community. Providing the Sultanate with quality Earth Science graduates, offering post-graduate courses relevant to the needs of the Sultanate and the region, and creating geoscience solutions to the local community and industry through research and consultancy are among the Department's mission



Q: What do you think your biggest challenge is working in the education industry at such a key position?

First to keep and maintain a healthy and safe education environment.

Also, you will need to know and recognize that the people around you are critical to your success students need to know they are here to get knowledge and not to pass exams and know in advance how university education servicing their needs

A key challenge is to help students appreciate the importance and applicability of employability skills they are developing along the way e.g communication, group-working, and collaboration skills.

Q: During your entire career, which milestone felt most accomplished and why?

My greatest professional achievement was completing my Ph. D degree in Earth Sciences and secure a good job in the academic field, where I enjoy it for more than 30 years

Q: Educationists are advised usually to share their experience and learning. What method of information dissemination would you say is most effective for this purpose?

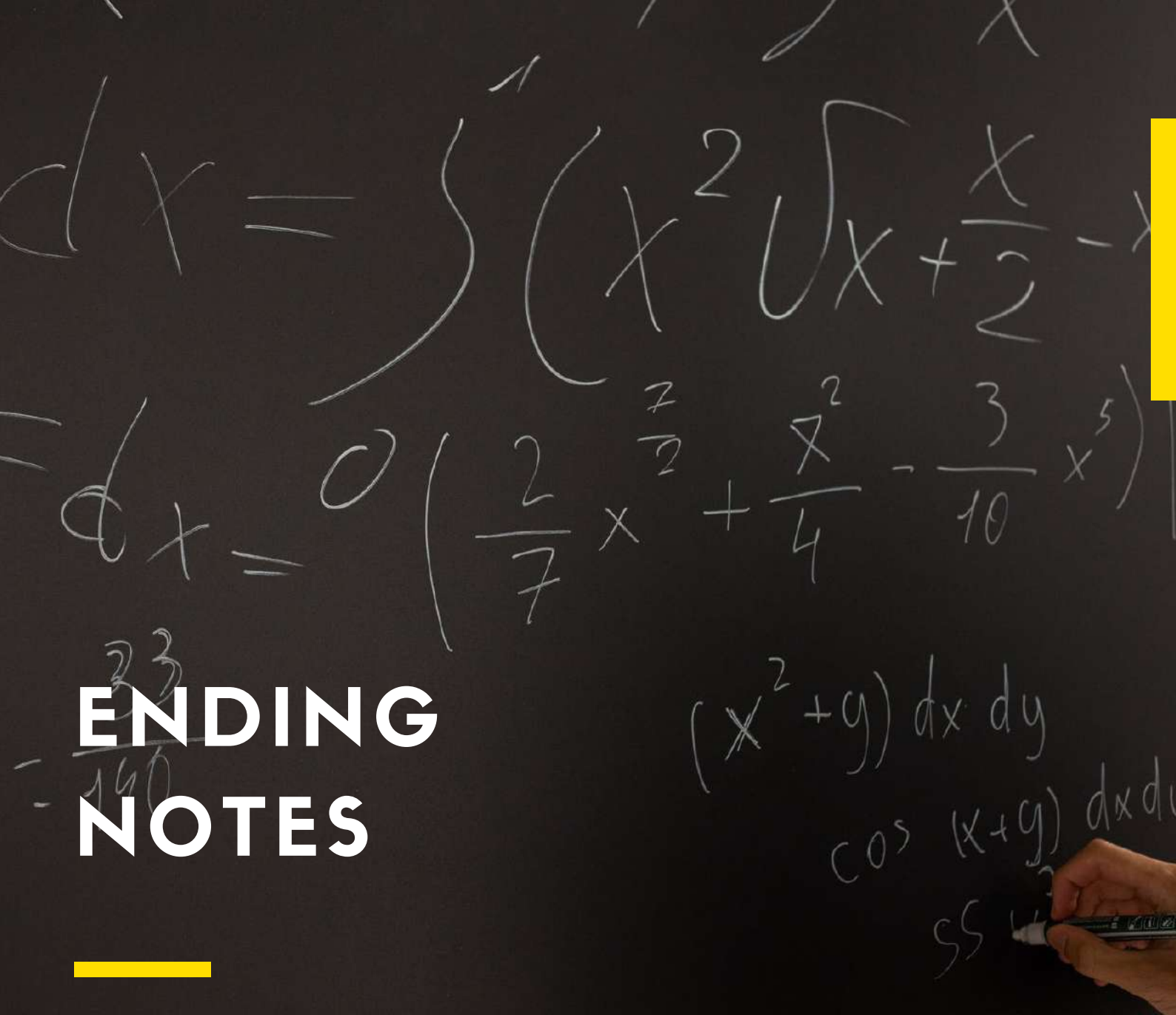
Regarding education, face to face teaching is the best method for teaching. Also for practical purposes hands-on teaching is ideal. We say in applied sciences that if a picture is 1000 words worth, physical touch is 100 times words worth.

Moreover, although time-consuming, asking questions the students while lecturing is great. If students know that they may be asked questions, they will most likely stay alert and follow the lecturer well. Frequent quizzes and tests will also make students prepared for exams.

INTEREST & OPINIONS

Q: Recently, there have been many reports and trends of students opting for alternate methods of education such as distance learning, diplomas, short-courses, etc. instead of traditional degrees. What's your view on this?

Though, integration of technology in learning has to move ahead, but I am not fully in support of this particularly in the applied sciences



ENDING NOTES

Q: As an educator, what's your perspective on the current education system in your region and how do you think it can be improved or revolutionized, if required.

Though most of the Universities in the region pay much attention to improve the education system in the region, but still a lot to do on the system itself. Complete changes and revision on the curriculum to include more practice-based and to maintain a proper workplace and pedagogical approaches (implementation of creative and innovative teaching strategies). In some universities in the region, they are concerned on mass production rather than the quality of teaching. The absence of a clear link between industry and government bodies and the universities to establish the market needs has to be reconsidered.

Q: Please share your philosophy of the ideal education a person can achieve regardless of its methods and processes. E.g. it could simply be a moment of enlightenment or a life-long struggle to gain perspective, how would you like to describe 'the best education or lesson' one can get.

Education is endless processes, so regardless to the way of teaching, morality in transferring knowledge and skills to people is the beginning of success in education.

Q: Thank you for taking the time to answer a few questions for IAO Accreditor. Do you have any parting words of wisdom for educationists and students?

"The Best way to predict your Future is to create it"
(Abraham Lincoln, 1809 -1865)



WAYS TO HAVE A SAFER SPRING BREAK 2021

HOW TO TRAVEL AND WHERE TO GO?

Spring break is a welcome respite from work and school routines for families, but COVID-19 concerns still mean precautions are necessary when choosing how and where to travel as a family this year.

If you've been longing for a break from the endless winter weather and the work-from-home, hybrid, and virtual school, hamster wheel of the past 12 months, we feel you. It's been a long year and all parents and kids alike could use some sort of mental health break. But the question is: What kind of travel is reasonable for Spring Break 2021?

Unfortunately, we can't tell you quite yet that now is the time to hop on a plane and take off

for far-flung vacation. William Li, M.D., physician and scientist, sums up what we heard from experts across the country: "According to the CDC, it is wise not to travel this spring break—the world is still in the middle of the pandemic, vaccination is still in the early stages, deadly variants are emerging, and we have proof that holiday gatherings and celebrations lead us directly to increased hospitalizations and more deaths."

We know, we're bummed, too. But all is not lost. We've put our heads together with travel pros and medical experts and found safe alternatives and off-the-beaten-path family friendly destinations so kids and parents can get a much needed break.



THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SPRING BREAK TRAVEL 2021

First, however, before we share where you can go, it's best to talk about how to go. Dr. Seema Sarin, director of lifestyle medicine at EHE Health, offers some easy to follow "do's" and "don'ts" for safe and responsible travel:

- Don't travel to attend a party, festival, or large event.
- Don't travel to a crowded destination where it's difficult to maintain social distancing.
- Don't eat at restaurants with indoor seating.
- Don't take a bus, the train, or fly if at all possible.

On the other hand:

- Do drive. In short, our experts all say to stick to road trips, since your car is the safest way to travel.
- Do plan to bring groceries so that you can cook and eat at your rental house.
- Do book private accommodations at a ski resort for a ski or snowboard trip.
- Do plan a road trip and drive with only your household.
- Do go camping, hiking, and spend time outdoors in areas where it is easy to maintain social distancing.
- Do continue to follow all social distancing, masking, hand washing, and CDC outlined precautions.
- Do get the COVID 19 vaccine when it is available, and continue to follow all guidelines, even after being vaccinated.



"If you decide to travel, there are ways to lower your risk," says Dr. Li. "First, get a COVID test before you go so you know your health status before setting out. Test the whole family if everyone is going. Bring documentation of your test results with you. If there is any health incident while you are traveling, you'll have a record you were negative."

Bring extra masks, and wear them, adds Dr. Li. Recent guidelines suggest that wearing double masks can be much safer than wearing only one. While traveling, you'll want to have extras in case you lose or misplace your masks. Finally, try to plan to be outdoors as much as possible. With these guidelines in mind, here are a few safe ideas for spending spring break with your family.



BOTTOM LINE

Spring 2021 in higher education will be a tough semester. The months will involve change, anticipation and, likely, the straddling of mid- and post-pandemic worlds. However, the oft second definition of education is, “an enlightening experience.” And what better industry to swirl around in than higher education where we continue to battle issues with grace, resilience, hope and utter determination.

So much to expect in spring 2021; all of which higher ed technology teams should lean into and tackle with gusto.

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