

Reopening Higher Education in CT

A Presentation for the Higher Education and the
Employment Advancement Committee

REOPEN
Connecticut

CSCU

REOPEN CT OVERVIEW

Higher Education Advisory Committee

Created to understand the unique challenges to reopening the state's public and private colleges and universities in the fall.

Led by Dr. Rick Levin, former President of Yale and Linda Lorimer, former Vice President for Global and Strategic Initiatives at Yale University.

UCONN, CCIC and CSCU representatives served on the Advisory Committee and helped to shape the committee's report.

The Advisory Committee's report was released on May 8th and was one of the first reports of its kind in the country.

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Advisory Committee Report

Each school must develop plans for reopening that cover 4 areas



Repopulation
of the campus



Monitoring Health
conditions to detect
infection



Containment
to prevent spread of
disease



Shutdown
in the event it becomes
necessary

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Report Recommendations

The report recommends that the Governor and public health experts provide a set of “gating conditions” which allow colleges and universities to reopen their campuses. Those include:



Low Prevalence

The prevalence of the disease must be low enough to safely resume campus operations.



Contact Tracing

The state ensures the institutions have adequate capacity for contact tracing.



Adequate Surge Capacity

Adequate surge capacity must be available in nearby healthcare facilities and hospitals.



Adequate Supplies

The state must ensure that institutions have adequate supplies of viral diagnostic tests and adequate financial support to obtain, administer, and process them.



Public Health Guidelines

The state should provide specific public health guidelines for wearing of facemasks, physical distancing, and the density of residential halls, dining halls and classrooms.



Safe Harbor from Liability

The state should provide a safe harbor from liability for those institutions that undertake the planning efforts outlined in the report.

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Ensuring the State Supports Schools

President Mark Ojakian asked by the Governor to serve as the state lead on the implementation of the higher education ReOpen planning to work with administration to ensure that the state supports the schools in their efforts to repopulate their campuses this fall.

Determining Answers

The guiding framework for reopening in the fall was issued on May 29th with submission in early August. To date, seven updates have been issued to clarify questions and provide ongoing planning guidance to the schools.

Regular Updating Required

As the public health conditions change, the guidance to the schools changes as well. For instance, testing guidance originally included in the report has been changed to focus on residential students. Commuter students and faculty and staff are not required for testing at either the colleges or the universities. However, given the Governor's recent travel advisory, testing guidance is being updated to include more requirements for out-of-state and international students.

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Challenges

The state's colleges and universities must grapple with everything from retrofitting offices and classrooms and determining teaching modalities to determining how and whether athletes will compete this fall, how to operate food pantries and mental health services for students, and whether childcare centers can be opened to the public.

Thank You

Given the uncertainty of the virus, these are not easy plans to make and I want to thank the public and private campus leaders for their hard work and dedication to their students, faculty and staff. The virus is having a profound impact on higher education budgets, particularly at the universities. These will be challenging fiscal times ahead and I trust everyone will be understanding as schools make difficult decisions to address their budget shortfalls while providing a safe and engaging educational experience.