

## **REOPENING PLANS FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN PHASE 3—FALL 2020**

Name of Institution: Western Connecticut State University

COVID-19 Coordinator (Name and Title): Pano Koukopoulos, Director of Emergency Management

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Intended date of arrival of the first students (on or after August 10): TBD

Intended date of classes starting: August 24, 2020

Intended duration of the fall semester or quarter: Last day of finals: 12-18-20. Last day of in-person classes: 11-25-2020

Date submitted: 7-27-2020

### **PART 1 - PLAN FOR REPOPULATING THE CAMPUS (the reentry of students)**

**Classrooms:** *Declaration that 6 feet of physical spacing has been achieved*

The Facilities Planning and Engineering Department has assessed all teaching spaces, computer labs, academic teaching labs and performance spaces. Subsequently, the Department has created floor plans identifying furniture layouts and maximum occupancies in order to meet current spacing requirements while adhering to the 6 feet of physical spacing mandate.

The laboratories of the Science Building are the only exception. The mechanical and HVAC infrastructure of the building is designed for a continuous intake and exhaust of 100% of air, therefore allowing for use of these spaces as per usual (face coverings are still required.)

**Dining Halls:** *Declaration that 6 feet of physical spacing has been achieved and that the State's restaurant guidelines and capacity limits have been achieved (e.g., single use condiments, cleaning of surfaces after every diner). See Update #7 for additional guidance.*

Seating has been reduced by half with tables at least 6 feet apart in accordance with the Re-Open CT restaurant guidelines; no more than six customers will be permitted at the same table. Additional outdoor seating space is being added where appropriate. Tables and chairs will be cleaned after each customer to prepare for the next diner. Self-serve food (shared condiments, buffet, salad bars etc.) will not be available and will be replaced by individual portions or single use items. Additionally, dishes, drinkware and utensils will all be single use.

Customers will order items on their own devices through an app. If a customer does not have a device, the order may be placed with a food service cashier. Customers must wear masks at all times while in the dining area except when seated and eating and/or drinking.

Staff will wear masks while in the kitchen, serving and dining areas. All staff will be separated from customers with shields. This and other strategic partners and vendors have agreed to abide by all University and CDC guidelines.

**Athletics:** *Declaration that guidance is being followed on athletic training, practices and competitions per conference guidelines.*

Student-athletes are first and foremost students. Athletics leadership and the athletic training staff will ensure department policies, procedures, and communications regarding COVID-19 align with institutional, both LEC and MASCAC conferences, NCAA, CDC, federal, state, and local public health guidelines, testing and requirements. In preparation for a partial or full resumption of intercollegiate athletics activities, including practice and competition (if permitted), athletics and athletic trainers will adhere to all policies, which are located in the “opening plan of WestConn athletics.” Coaches, athletics staff and student athletes will be tested weekly. The full plan for the department and NCAA resocialization of each athletic program is available upon request.

**Spaces “where other groups congregate”:** *Declaration that 6 feet of physical spacing has been achieved where students congregate, such as in libraries and common spaces/student unions and with extracurricular activities. In addition, where campuses operate shuttles or other transportation, see Update #5 for additional guidance on campus transportation.*

Common spaces:

The Facilities Planning and Engineering Department has assessed all assembly areas, retail operations, student lounges, dining facilities and libraries.

Working with the Directors from each of the referenced areas, maximum occupancies have been established and all excess furnishings have been removed to ensure occupancies are not exceeded.

Occupancy statements and floor plans are being created identifying furniture layouts. Signage will be posted, requesting that furniture not be moved.

Shuttle operations:

Drivers will wear masks while in the shuttle. As permitted by road safety concerns, drivers will be separated from riders with shields.

Riders must wear masks at all times while on the shuttle. Social distancing will be practiced on the shuttle. All surfaces will be wiped down after each run. After riders disembark, new riders will not be permitted on the shuttle until all surfaces are wiped down. If the shuttle is full, it will notify students that the next shuttle will arrive within 15 minutes. At the conclusion of the day’s service, and before the next day’s service, each shuttle will receive a deep cleaning, including wiping down all seats and touchable surfaces.

**Residence Halls:**

*Declaration:*

*1. That the guidelines for residence hall/dormitory density are being followed, which allow, but do not require, that roommates and suitemates can be treated as a family unit; (See Appendix II of the ReOpening Report)*

Residents will be required to wear a mask in all areas of the residence halls except in their private spaces or apartments.

*2. That 6-foot physical spacing is being preserved with other residence hall building occupants (beyond the room/suite)*

The hallways will be marked with arrows to show directions of travel. Lounges and other gathering spaces will be offline, or the occupancy will be reduced. Signage will be posted indicating occupant responsibilities and facilities measures.

*3. That the institution is allocating bedrooms (in the residential halls or elsewhere) to accommodate students who must be isolated*

This is addressed in Part 3 of this document.

*4. That the institution is accommodating those students who are at greater risk for complications from COVID-19.*

In addition to Fairfield Hall, a few rooms/suites and apartments have been set aside to use for emergencies, which will include residents in this population

*Declaration that the guidelines for residence hall/dormitory bathrooms are being followed. See Updates #3, #5 and #7 for additional guidance.*

Residential restrooms in communal living environments (traditional dormitory style residence halls) will be cleaned and sanitized on at least a daily basis by facilities staff. Self-serve sanitizing supplies have been provided in all restrooms to allow users to self-sanitize before and after each use.

All restrooms are equipped with partitions, creating a physical separation between users.

Hand washing stations in restrooms are a critical element in controlling and limiting the potential spread of viruses through contact. With that said, WCSU will be installing physical barriers between hand washing areas where a minimum of 6 feet between users is not possible.

All users will be required to wear face coverings when not in their residence hall rooms/apartments.

Restroom door hardware is being installed which reduces contact points where allowed by building codes, and hand sanitizer is being installed outside all restrooms.

Restroom access is restricted to students and assigned by Housing Zone (floor/section of building).

Restrooms in apartment or suite-style living environments will be handled somewhat differently. WCSU is treating these areas as family unit restrooms per the appropriate updates mentioned above. Access to these facilities is limited to room occupants only. Residents will be provided sanitizing supplies to allow for self-service cleaning and sanitizing. Instructions and guidance will be posted in all apartment restrooms (instructing the occupants on appropriate protocols and control measures). Additional sanitizing solution will be available upon request.

**Orientation/Arrival:** *Declaration that the institution is organizing orientation and the return of students to maintain 6-foot physical distancing.*

The majority of the events traditionally planned for orientation and student welcome week will be either virtual, outdoors or take place in small groups. In the case of the latter, social distancing guidelines will be observed, and face coverings will be required.

All residential students will be assigned a specific day and time to move into their residence hall between August 23 to 25. Additionally, between August 3 to 14, students who live within three hours of the University

are being allowed to come to campus to drop off their belongings. In order to maintain social distancing, we are limiting the number of residents on campus per drop-off period and requiring face masks.

**Personal protective equipment: Masks:** *Declaration that all faculty, staff and students have been informed to wear masks.*

WCSU has been and will continue to provide faculty and staff with one washable/re-usable fabric masks upon their return to campus. All those staff members who have been working on campus prior to the phased re-opening have been provided with both fabric as well as disposable face masks as needed, up to five per person. If at any time individuals need any additional masks, one will be provided to them. Contractors have been notified that face coverings/masks are required in all campus buildings. Signage will be posted at all campus building entry points indicating that face coverings/masks are required in all campus buildings. Both resident and commuter students will be provided with fabric masks upon their return to campus. Residence Life will distribute masks to resident students upon their arrival. In addition, the Environmental Health and Safety Office maintains a supply of disposable masks for anyone (visitor, student, staff/faculty member or contractor), who arrives on campus without an appropriate face covering.

In conjunction with the mask requirement, notices via signage, social media, the WCSU App, and the website are being utilized. Masks are required in all communal spaces of every building. Staff/faculty members with private offices may remove their mask within the confines of their office but MUST have their mask with them at all times. Upon leaving one's office, the mask must be worn in all public areas and/or when proper social distancing cannot be guaranteed. Contractors and visitors refusing to comply will not be allowed on campus or will be informed that they must leave campus property immediately. Staff or faculty refusal to wear a mask will be referred to Human Resources for resolution. In such case that a student refuses to comply, the matter will be referred to Student Affairs for resolution. The university will work to find solutions for faculty, staff and students who should not wear a mask for medical reasons.

**Other PPE requirements:** *Declaration that special populations on campus (e.g., health care workers, kitchen or custodial staff) will follow any special PPE requirements mandated more generally for those populations.*

Additional PPE has been secured and is being provided to those staff members whose job functions require additional protection, such as:

Health Services Staff: N95 masks, disposable masks, cleanable face shields, gloves and disposable gowns/body coverings have been secured and will be available to our Health Services staff at all times.

Custodial Staff: In addition to masks, gloves are supplied to custodial staff and must be worn at all times for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting.

HVAC Staff: HEPA-equipped negative pressure air purifying respirators as well as N95 masks have been provided for use when servicing/replacing HVAC filters.

Food Service Staff: These services are contracted out and equivalent PPE will be provided by the vendor.

Individual requests for PPE not detailed above will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

**Disinfection:** *Declaration that (i) hand sanitizers are available at entrances to all buildings, classrooms and dining halls, (ii) disposable wipes or cleaning solutions are available in all bathrooms, classrooms and other shared facilities (e.g., copy machines, coffee stations) for wiping down surfaces, (iii) students, faculty and staff*

*are reminded to wash hands frequently, and (iv) public, corridor and office spaces and their bathrooms will be cleaned in accordance with the State's general guidelines for businesses. See Update #5 for additional guidance.*

Hand sanitizing stations have been installed in all campus buildings at entry/exit points, residence halls, high traffic areas (elevators, stairwells, dining halls, outside of classrooms, break rooms, lounges, etc.). In addition, the Environmental Health and Safety office will refill any individual personal hand sanitizer container upon request. WCSU has secured several hundred gallons of hand sanitizing solution to allow for the continuous refilling of sanitizer stations throughout both campuses.

Classrooms will be cleaned by facilities staff once a day.

By August 7 the following items will have been completely installed in all scheduled classrooms, common areas, entryways, assembly areas, residence halls and restrooms:

- 150 disposable glove dispensers
- 350 hand sanitizing stations
- 250 self-service surface sanitizer spray bottles
- 250 Touchless paper towel dispensers
- 125 Physical Barriers (sneeze guards)
- 4,000 preprinted self-adhesive instructional posters and signs

The Facilities teams at the 4 Universities have agreed to provide the following consistent improvements where air handling systems allow:

1. Air Filter efficiency improvements. Air filters will have a rating of MERV 13-18 as a minimum
2. Air filters will be replaced at least quarterly
3. Fresh air intakes will be opened to their maximum settings
4. Restroom exhaust fans will be set to their maximum operating ranges
5. Where possible, building air systems will be programmed to run a building purge cycle overnight.

**Travel:** *Declaration that students, faculty and staff have been advised to avoid unnecessary travel domestically, particularly to states deemed "hot spots" and internationally. This counsel will be altered as conditions warrant.*

On July 23, the Human Resources department sent out a university-wide communication making everyone aware of the new Executive Order (No. 7III) that Governor Lamont issued on July 21 regarding Mandatory Self-Quarantine for Travelers from States with High COVID-19 Levels. The communication details the following areas:

- Timeframes of Travel that Require a 14-Day Self-Quarantine
- Testing Alternatives
- Travel Health Forms Required

This notification links directly to the CT.Gov website and an up-to-date listing of the "hot spot" states. The communication also appears on the university's reopening website.

**Staffing:** Declaration that faculty, students and staff have been explicitly instructed not to come to work or leave their residence hall rooms if they are experiencing COVID-like symptoms. Also, a Declaration about what advice, if any, the institution is giving to those who have higher likelihood of serious illness from COVID-19.

On its reopening webpage, WCSU is asking all students, faculty and staff to monitor their health daily for symptoms of COVID-19. The webpage lists all potential symptoms along with the following recommendation:

"If you suspect that you might have COVID-19, you should stay home, isolate from others and contact your healthcare provider. If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, please inform us via the COVID-19 reporting link <https://wcsu.edu/covid-report/>. You should continue to isolate at home until you are cleared by your healthcare provider, which is usually after 10 days, if your symptoms are improving."

In addition, members of our community are encouraged to seek medical attention if they experience advanced COVID-19 symptoms, which are also listed on the webpage.

**Access to campus:** Declaration of the institution's plans for visitors to the campus. The ReOpen report suggests restricting the time, place and manner of admitting visitors onto campus to limit the transmission of the virus.

WCSU has made plans to continue limiting campus access to outside visitors. We have reduced the number of outside speakers scheduled to make presentations and moved most performances online for the fall semester.

Interior offices have been given the option to keep their main doors locked and accept visitors on a strict appointment-only schedule (with reduced capacity guidelines for conference room spaces) or conduct meetings with outside individuals virtually.

All building access is electronically monitored, and records can be used to assist contact tracing efforts should they become necessary.

1. During the fall semester, guest visitation in the residence halls will be prohibited. Individuals will not be permitted to visit in another person's room, suite, or apartment other than students who are currently assigned residents of that building.
2. Guest visitation within the building is limited to one guest per occupant of the room. For example, an apartment that has 4 residents cannot have more than eight people within the apartment at any given time. (**Please be aware:** if you live in a four-person room, for example, but two of your roommates are not present, you cannot invite "more" guests – your visitation limit would give you a maximum occupancy of four in this case.)

Contracted staff are required to abide by the same requirements/expectations as employees. All strategic partners, such as those who operate the bookstore, food service, and vending machines, as well as contractors, have agreed to follow University rules as a minimum.

## PART 2 – PLAN FOR MONITORING THE HEALTH OF STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF

**Testing of students in residential institutions for the COVID-19 virus:** *Declaration that the institution will conduct testing per the state's public health guidelines. See Update #6 and Update #9 for specific guidance.*

Students must provide a negative COVID-19 test verification to Health Services prior to arrival on campus. The test must be conducted within a period of 72 hours and 14 days prior to arrival on campus.

**Ongoing testing of students for the COVID-19 virus:** *Declaration of the institution's plan to conduct ongoing testing, in compliance with state public health guidance.*

Starting the week residential students arrive on campus, Griffin Health, a third party contracted vendor, will provide weekly testing on campus. The testing partner will test 100% of the student-athlete population and support staff along with a random sampling of 5% to 10 % of resident students and Resident Directors on a weekly basis.

Symptomatic students will be referred for testing by a provider of their preference.

**Appointment of a COVID-19 Coordinator:** *Declaration of who the Coordinator is and that he or she will*

*(i) Be the liaison with the coordinators at the other colleges and universities who will convene periodically during the fall (and beyond if needed) and*

*(ii) Providing reporting to external stakeholders when requested.*

The Director of Emergency Management has been assigned the role of COVID-19 Coordinator and is serving as the Incident Commander during this pandemic. Through the use of the National Incident Management System, the Director has been and will continue to manage incident objectives as necessary.

**Protocol for collecting information about COVID-19 cases:** *Declaration that the institution has developed a protocol indicating that faculty, students and staff have been asked to inform immediately the campus health service (or a designated administrator) that they are experiencing possible COVID-19 symptoms, as well as a protocol for testing symptomatic students. (For students, faculty, or staff using an external health care provider, the institution should request that they inform a designated administrator if they test positive.)*

All residential students will be asked to complete a daily symptom screening questionnaire through a secure online portal for the first seven days on campus. Students will also be advised to complete the questionnaire any time they develop symptoms throughout the semester. Any report of COVID-19 symptoms or a COVID-19 diagnosis should be sent directly to Health Services, through a secure online portal. Health Services staff will follow-up and provide guidance about next steps. Symptomatic students will be tested by our community partners, as needed, or by their primary care provider, if preferred. The campus will initiate our contact tracing procedures for any students testing positive.

All WCSU faculty and staff resuming on-campus work will be required to monitor their health daily to confirm that they have not experienced any of the COVID-19, CDC defined symptoms. If, at any time, they suspect that they have contracted COVID-19, they will be asked to see their doctor and to be tested. If they do receive a positive test, they are asked to inform the university via the COVID-19 reporting link on our home page ([www.wcsu.edu/covid-report](http://www.wcsu.edu/covid-report)). Following the completion of the on-line reporting form, an email with the responses is sent to the Chief Human Resources Officer, who will then contact the employee directly in order to begin the contact tracing process for other employees who were in contact with the employee within the

48 hour period prior to them becoming symptomatic. As a result of the contact tracing, employees will be placed under the appropriate self-quarantine protocols. Employees and commuter students will be sent home immediately upon being identified as demonstrating symptoms. Any individuals with severe symptoms will be sent to the hospital via ambulance.

### **PART 3- PLAN FOR CONTAINMENT**

**Isolation space:** *Declaration that the institution has designated rooms and feeding arrangements for students who test positive and must be isolated. See Update #5 for additional guidance.*

WCSU has kept one of its residence halls (Fairfield Hall) intentionally unoccupied to accommodate residents who need to be isolated or quarantined. The layout of the building allows for the safe, physical separation of the two groups. The Division of Facilities Operations and Services (“FOS”) will be in charge of providing access and will work in conjunction with the Division of Student Affairs and Sodexo to provide food and other needs.

**Isolation protocol:** *Declaration that when a case of infection is detected, the institution will isolate the infected students for 14 days, trace contacts, quarantine all roommates and suitemates and consider quarantining others with close contact.*

Residents who test positive for COVID-19 will be encouraged to isolate at home, where they may be more comfortable. Those with demonstrated and/or documented hardship will be isolated in Fairfield Hall. Contact tracing for all positive individuals and quarantining protocols for those remaining on campus will be implemented as described below. Per CDC guidelines, students will be cleared to return to campus when fever-free for 24 hours, have improved symptoms, and at least 10 days have passed since positive test result. This could be extended for students with severe symptoms or for students with risk factors.

**Medical care for those isolated:** *Declaration of how the institution intends to provide medical care for infected students.*

Residents isolated in Fairfield Hall will be monitored daily through telemedicine visits by WCSU Health Services Department. WCSU is in the process of identifying a partner who will be able to conduct these observation visits during weekends.

**Quarantine protocol:** *Declaration that the institution intends to quarantine students who are judged to require it and has designated rooms and feeding arrangements for students.*

Students who may have come in contact with a case or have arrived from a “hot-spot” state will be asked to quarantine for 14 days. Connecticut residents may choose to quarantine at home. Out-of-state residents along with Connecticut residents who chose not to go home will be asked to quarantine on campus.

Midtown residents in need of quarantine will be moved temporarily to the designated section of Fairfield Hall.

Westside residents will quarantine WITH THEIR ROOMMATES in their own apartments/suites.

Residents quarantining in Fairfield Hall will have food distributed to the front door of their apartment by a member of the FOS team.

Westside residents in quarantine will have food delivered to the door of their suite.

**Contact tracing.** *Declaration of how the institution intends to conduct contact tracing. See Update #1 for additional information.*

WCSU will utilize ContaCT as the platform to conduct contact tracing. The Director of Emergency Management will serve as the University administrator of the contact tracing efforts. The Director of Health Services will serve as the backup administrator. Both Directors will be in close contact with the Danbury Director of Health and Human Services. The Chair of the Nursing Department will serve as the Liaison between the contact tracers and the program administrators.

The process of contact tracing will be supported by Nursing and/or Health Promotion & Exercise Science students. These students will be asked to complete the Johns Hopkins University Contact Tracing training course and the two subsequent courses offered by the Connecticut Department of Public Health. They will be enrolled in the list of volunteers and will only be responsible for contact tracing WCSU residents.

**Liaison with regional hospitals and health care facilities.** *Declaration that the institution has been in contact with the key health care facilities in its area and has a liaison at each to assist if a surge occurs on campus and/or in the region.*

WCSU has established community partnerships with CIFC, Greater Danbury Community Health Center (Dr. Shinu) and AFC Urgent Care (Dr. Ali). They are both prepared to provide testing of all symptomatic students, as needed, including adequate staffing and testing capacity should we have a surge of cases.

Danbury Hospital/Nuvance Health Emergency Department, a Level II Trauma Center, is less than a mile from our midtown campus and easily reached by foot, car or ambulance. The capacity of the hospital is adequate for our residential student population. It is understood that our many commuter students will seek care with their primary care provider or their local healthcare facility as necessary.

#### **PART 4 – PLAN FOR SHUTDOWN**

**Shutdown initiated by the institution if a serious outbreak occurs on campus:** *Declaration of the protocol for an orderly shutdown if a serious outbreak occurs on campus that the institution and/or relevant state or local authorities conclude requires shutdown. This may warrant different treatment of local students and those who need to travel to other states or countries.*

WCSU has established a protocol for shutting down all on-campus operations as a direct result of COVID-19. The decision will be based on the triggers outlined on the “WCSU Decisions for Moving to Online Delivery Only” document. The decision will be based on the spread of the virus in the state in consultation with the CSCU Administration, the city of Danbury and the surrounding towns, the institution’s ability to isolate cases and quarantine contacts, the availability of PPE, test kits and relevant resources and WCSU’s ability to sustain critical operations (environmental, health and food services.)

All students will be asked to continue learning from a remote environment and all resident students will be asked to vacate their on-campus apartment/room.

Students who may already be isolating on campus will be advised to stay in their designated apartment/room until they are cleared by a licensed health care provider.

Students who are being quarantined will also be advised to remain on campus until their quarantine period expires or their health status changes.

**Shutdown of the State:** *Declaration that the institution will follow the instructions of the Governor if he determines that a statewide shutdown is again required.*

WCSU will comply with the instructions of the Governor and/or the President of the Board or Regents of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System and will shift all operations to an online or remote environment upon such request/order/directive/instruction.

**Plan for continuation of instruction if a shutdown occurs:** *Declaration about the institution's intention to continue instruction online if a shutdown occurs.*

At the time of submission, WCSU intends to start the Fall 2020 semester as planned on August 24, 2020. In the event of a shutdown due to COVID-19, WCSU has made preparations to maintain continuity of instructional activities and operations. All teaching faculty have been advised to prepare for a seamless transition to an online teaching environment. The Information Technology and Innovation Department has provided numerous training sessions on the technology available, has equipped faculty with the requested tools and has upgraded classroom infrastructure to meet the appropriate needs. In addition, the institution is currently providing a multitude of deliveries which are likely to lessen the impact of a physical space shutdown.