

# Higher Ed COVID-19 Tracker

Findings Update – Wednesday, June 3rd

## Latest Trends and Headlines

Trend Category	Trend Summary	Today's Headlines
<b>A) Re-opening Operations</b>	Universities continue to announce expectations for fall operating plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Six <a href="#">Harvard graduate schools</a> announced they will hold only online classes this fall.</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Duke University</a> announced its plans for reopening, featuring a social compact, adjusted academic calendar, required PPE, and daily health checks through an app. <a href="#">Duke</a> also cancelled all undergraduate study abroad programs for the fall.</li> <li>▪ The NC newspaper The News &amp; Observer created a compendium of <a href="#">North Carolina college and university reopening plans</a>.</li> <li>▪ Higher ed's greatest challenge to resuming business as normal this fall may be the <a href="#">age of faculty</a>.</li> <li>▪ Sports Illustrated explores the growing controversy over testing student athletes and <a href="#">how institutions are planning to bring back sports</a>.</li> <li>▪ A NYT op-ed from the president of Hamilton College and a professor at Cornell argues that <a href="#">changes in student conduct and programing</a> are essential in order for institutions to safely reopen this fall.</li> </ul>
<b>B) Student Impact, Admissions &amp; Enrollment</b>	Universities are responding to unprecedented enrollment challenges due to pandemic's impact on student decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">The College Board</a> issued a letter asking colleges and universities to be flexible in regard to student test scores for the fall.</li> <li>▪ Following a similar announcement from the Common Application last month, the <a href="#">Coalition of Colleges</a> announced it will add a Covid-19 question to its application.</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Rhodes College</a> in Memphis, TN announced plans for a three-week "premaster" program model for first year students, beginning July 27.</li> </ul>
<b>C) Financial Impact and Response Actions</b>	Universities have enacted spending freezes, furloughs/layoffs, and closures to address the financial impact of the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Chronicle argues that <a href="#">budget flexibility</a> will be essential for institutions to successfully navigate financial impacts this fall.</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Michigan State University</a> expects to furlough at least 600 employees before the end of summer as it works to cope with anticipated losses next year of up to \$300M.</li> <li>▪ 2,000 <a href="#">City University of New York (CUNY)</a> instructors are urging Gov. Andrew Cuomo to protect the country's largest urban university system from major budget cuts.</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Bowling Green State University</a> announced it would reinstate its recently cut baseball program, thanks to \$1.5M in donations.</li> </ul>



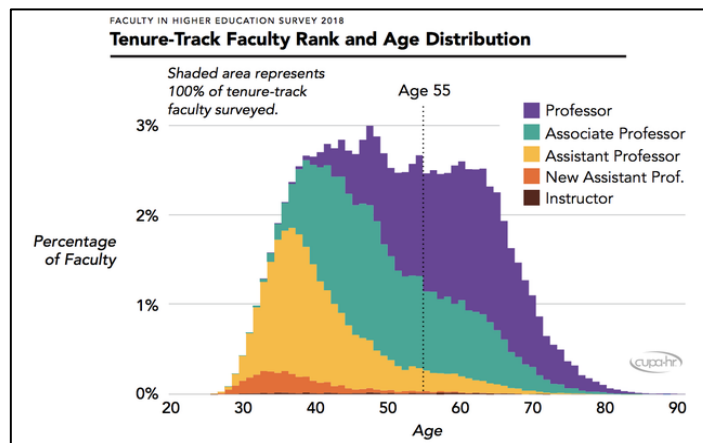
<b>D) Research Re-entry</b>	Universities have begun developing plans to re-engage in research activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <a href="#">University of Alabama at Birmingham</a> re-entry plans involve initiating phase 2 of their modified business operations plan this week, allowing student clinical experiences and research activities to resume with approved operational plans.</li> <li>▪ The <a href="#">University of Arkansas</a> anticipates transitioning to Phase 1 of their return to campus plan June 15. Human subjects research may continue with modifications to research procedures approved by the university IRB.</li> </ul>
<b>E) Potential Transformation to Higher Education</b>	The pandemic could accelerate transformational change in higher education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">A journalism professor at Arizona State University</a> gives perspective on how her classes thrived moving online.</li> </ul>
<b>F) Other Headlines and Emerging</b>	As universities continue to operate through the pandemic, all stakeholders – direct and indirect – will experience an impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lawyers lay out <a href="#">top legal challenges and best protections</a> for universities navigating high degrees of risk and uncertainty this fall.</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Northwestern University</a> researchers have developed a wearable device to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and monitor progression through treatment.</li> </ul>

## Today’s Headlines Summaries

### A. “Re-Opening” Operations

- [Six Harvard Graduate Schools Will Hold Only Online Classes This Fall](#)
  - Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, Graduate School of Design, School of Divinity, T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Law School, and Kennedy School all said they will be online for the fall semester; together they enroll more than 5,000 students.
  - No decision is expected on the undergraduate college until later in June.
  - While the Kennedy School announced that it would keep tuition levels the same despite the shift to online, it remains unclear whether the other schools will do the same.
- [Duke University Announces Fall Plan](#)
  - Duke’s President Vincent Price laid out the school’s strategy for reopening this fall, noting the school would roll out expectations for a social compact called the “Duke Compact”.
  - “Success will only be achieved if all members of the Duke community do their part,” the President writes, “which will call upon extraordinary mutual support, clearly articulated behavioral norms, and an unshakable personal commitment.”
  - The plan adjusts the academic calendar to begin classes on August 17, eliminate fall break, and conclude final exams before Thanksgiving.
  - All educational content will be delivered in one of three ways: In-person classroom experience, virtual setting, or a hybrid of the two.
  - The plan also lays out requirements for masks in public settings, robust testing, and daily health monitoring via an app, in addition to other facilities adjustments, cleaning protocols, and more.
  - Duke also announced that it will be [canceling all undergraduate study abroad programs](#) for fall 2020, citing continued concerns over the Coronavirus. Students who made fall study abroad deposits will have their funds credited to their bursar accounts. Students can also request deferrals to the Spring 2021 semester.
- [Fall Will Look Different on NC’s College Campuses. Here’s What Each is Planning](#)
  - The North Carolina news outlet The News & Observer has created a compendium of the state’s college and university plans for the fall.
  - Nearly all public institutions note an adjusted schedule with earlier start dates and the conclusion of on campus classes and in many cases finals before Thanksgiving.

- o Notable among private colleges' plans is Campbell University, which will adjust to house residential students in private rooms this fall.
- [CUPA-HR Data Suggests Older Professors Pose a Problem for Reopening Colleges and Universities](#)
  - o CUPA-HR data shows that the 37% of tenure-track faculty are 55 or older, compared with 23% of the general workforce
  - o See table below for age distribution of surveyed tenured-track faculty members, originally cited by Business Insider recent in a daily briefing:



- [To Test or Not to Test? The Question that Could Determine the College Football Season](#)
  - o As more institutions roll out plans for bringing back student athletes, the most widely varying guidelines relate to testing requirements. While some programs will require initial testing of all athletes, others will not, or be determined sport by sport. The article notes that requiring recurring testing is a particularly inconsistent policy decision across institutions.
- [Hamilton College: How Colleges Can Keep Coronavirus Off Campus](#)
  - o President of Hamilton College, Dr. David Wippman and professor at Cornell, Dr. Glenn Altschuler write a NYT op-ed describing the steep challenges faced in reopening residential colleges ("landlocked cruise ships" they note), as well as ideas for effective reopening that go beyond emerging guideline trends.
  - o Solutions offered include treating groups of students living in proximity as "family units," asking students to sign social contracts related to gathering and conduct, and challenging students to develop new types of social programming.

**B. Student Impact, Admissions & Enrollment**

- [College Board Asks Colleges for Flexibility](#)
  - o Inside Higher Ed reports that the College Board asked colleges for as much flexibility as possible in receiving test scores in order to reduce stress for students.
  - o The College Board asked specifically for colleges to:
    1. Accept "scores as late as possible in their process, especially by extending early action and early decision deadlines to take some pressure off on students and give them more time to test and send their scores."
    2. "Equally" consider "students for admission who are unable to take the exam due to COVID-19 as those who submitted scores."
    3. Recognize "that students who do submit scores may not have been able to take the test more than once (e.g., taking into account that students who tested as high school juniors but who could not as seniors would have likely achieved score gains)."
- [Coalition Application Adds Question on Covid-19](#)
  - o Following a similar move from the Common Application last month, The Coalition of Colleges announced a decision to add a Covid-19 related question to its application.
  - o The new question enables students and counselors to describe how the coronavirus pandemic has affected education at the students' schools by selecting from a number of options.
  - o Impact statements from which students can choose cover challenges such as poor/unreliable access to internet, or whether a parent or guardian has suffered a job loss. An optional text box is also included.
- [Rhodes College Announces Three-Week "Premester" Program](#)

- Rhodes College in Memphis, TN announced plans to launch a “premaster” this summer for first year students in a bid to incentivize enrollment and retention, as well as pilot new safety measures.
- About 50 students will live in the Memphis institution’s first-year residence hall and dine together during the three-week session.
- The “premaster,” which debuts on July 27, offers condensed courses—capped at 10 students each—in writing, literature, coding, humanities, psychology or chemistry.
- College administrators note the program gives Rhodes staff a chance to implement and review safety protocols before the fall semester begins at the end of August.

### C. Financial Impact and Response Actions

- [The Plan for College Budgets Next Year? Improve](#)
  - The Chronicle of Higher Education discusses how deep uncertainty around this fall (i.e. uncertain revenues, falling state appropriations, new costs of safety measures) is forcing universities to keep budgets flexible and nimble.
  - The article notes how some university leaders are taking a hard look at non-profitable programs, increasing student-to-faculty ratios, and adjusting auxiliary services and costs.
  - “Knowing the financial details of programs — what drives revenue and expenses, and how those factors might be tweaked to maximize net revenue, will be a key step toward a fall opening.”
  - An additional thought experiment noted: as a worst-case scenario, universities may consider simply *not* reopening in the fall, instead going into a kind of “deep freeze” or “hibernation” mode, not unlike what happened during the Great Depression.
- [More than 600 MSU Employees to be Furloughed by Summer’s End](#)
  - Michigan State University announced that they expect to furlough 600 employees by the end of summer. The most recent round of furlough notices was sent to employees in Residential and Hospitality Services, the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities and the Department of Physics and Astronomy.
  - MSU’s president Samuel Stanley Jr. estimated the institution will lose close to \$60M this year and up to \$300M in FY21.
- [2,000 Instructors Tell Cuomo CUNY Must Be Protected from Budget Cuts](#)
  - Instructors from the City University of New York union are calling on the governor to avoid substantial budget cuts to the nation’s largest urban university system, calling current plans “educationally damaging, economically misguided, and cruel.”
  - The April plan released by the NY budget office anticipates a \$13.3 billion state budget shortfall, which will significantly impact the state’s universities.
- [BGSU Reinstates Baseball Program](#)
  - Bowling Green State University announced that it would reinstate its baseball program, which the university decided to cut in mid-May due to financial constraints caused by Covid-19.
  - The university said it had received commitments of \$1.5M from alumni and donors over the next three years.

### D. Research Re-entry

- [University of Alabama at Birmingham: Re-entry to Campus Guidelines](#)
  - The university is in their modified business operations stage (code yellow), which has 5 distinct phases, targeted to fall between May 26 – August 2021.
  - UAB is currently in yellow phase 2 which allows for critical administrative and business operations to resume, including student clinical experiences and research activities with approved operational plans.
  - The university provided updated guidance to [resume human subjects research](#), requiring study personnel [to complete a health check](#) on a regular basis, and provided prescriptive guidance on how to conduct remote and in person human subjects research visits.
- [University of Arkansas: Returning to Campus](#)
  - The school plans to start [phase 1](#) on June 15.
  - During this phase on-site staff will be limited to essential staff performing tasks for preparing students return to campus and supporting critical research functions that are identified as those activities with the greatest time and research productivity constraints. This includes but is not limited to:
    - Seasonal data collection such as field and agricultural work
    - Experiments close to completion
    - Projects whose continued restriction or deferral would lead to catastrophic delay or loss of research results and subsequent success

- Limited core facility access may also be granted depending on the nature of the activity.
- [Human-subject research](#) may continue with modifications to research procedures approved by the university IRB.
- All research activity can only resume within a very clearly defined safety framework

**E. Potential Transformation to Higher Education**

- [The Coronavirus Thrust My ASU Classes Into Remote Instruction. We Thrived.](#)
  - In an op-ed for AZCentral.com, a professor at Arizona State University writes how her class thrived when it moved online.
  - The Journalism professor notes that instructors can take remote teaching as an opportunity to “more fully and authentically enter into their students’ individual worlds and encourage them to bring more ownership and creativity to their assignments.”

**F. Other Headlines and Emerging Trends**

- [Lawyers Lay Out Legal Issues Colleges Face This Fall](#)
  - As college leaders continue to lobby for legal protection as they make plans for reopening in the fall.
  - Top legal risks raised by experts include what authority colleges will have to mandate testing or use of PPE, accessibility issues with new teaching methods, whistleblower complaints from employees, and definitions of “appropriate” accommodations for high risk individuals.
  - The best defenses for institutions include close adherence to CDC guidelines, clear and transparent communications about risk to students and parents and use of waivers or affirmative consent forms.
  - The article also notes that these increased legal challenges from Covid-19 come on top of new Dept. of Education regulations related to sexual assault complaints pushing universities to update policies.
- [Northwestern University: Wearable COVID-19 sensor receives NSF RAPID grant](#)
  - The team was awarded \$200,000 from the National Science Foundation to continue developing a novel wearable device and set of algorithms specifically tailored to catch early signs and monitor progression of COVID-19
  - The project is being developed with the [Shirley Ryan AbilityLab](#).
  - The device will sit on a wearer’s throat and monitor for low blood level oxygen levels, a key indicator in COVID-19 patients.