Huron produces regular *Findings Updates* summarizing relevant trends and headlines related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on higher education.

**Latest Trends and Headlines**

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| Re-Opening Operations | Universities continue to announce – and revise – expectations for fall instruction, residence life, and athletics operations. | ▪ As institutions scramble to solidify re-entry plans for the fall semester, many are also weighing criteria that would trigger re-closing campus.  
▪ The Governor of Pennsylvania announced $28 million of funding to support higher education institutions across the state as schools struggle cope with the rising costs of addressing the COVID-19 crisis.  
▪ [The University of Michigan](https://www.michigan.edu) will require students to spend 14 days in ‘enhanced social distance’ before returning to campus at the end of August.  
▪ [Duke University](https://www.duke.edu) outlined details of the Duke Compact, community standards for students, faculty, and staff which were first announced two months ago by President Vincent Price. |
| Student Impact, Admissions & Enrollment | The pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for students, and in turn enrollment risks for many institutions. | ▪ College students are booking hotel rooms for the fall semester as major uncertainty about institutions’ re-entry plans remain.  
▪ [Oakland University](https://www.oakland.edu) in Michigan announced that it will require students to wear a “BioButton” to monitor student health this fall, leading to privacy concerns from more than 2,000 students who have signed a petition against the measure. |
| Financial Impact & Response Actions | Universities continue to use spending freezes, layoffs, and other means to address funding gaps created by the pandemic. | ▪ A financial stress test of more than 2,600 institutions underscores how COVID-19 has exacerbated worrying trends that existed well before the pandemic.  
▪ [Unity College](https://www.unitycollege.edu) in Maine announced a permanent move to hybrid learning model going forward, opening the door to selling its existing campus in the face of falling enrollment. |
| Research Re-Entry & Contributions | Universities continue to ramp-up research activities, including activities directly related to researching COVID-19. | ▪ UPDATE: [University of Virginia](https://www.umanitoba.ca) resumes all human research activities restricted in previous tiers.  
▪ [Kansas State University](https://www.ksu.edu) explores the mechanism of protease inhibitors and have observed the molecule’s ability to block replication of COVID-19 in mice models.  
▪ Scientists at [Harvard Medical School](https://medicine.harvard.edu) have found a potential process to explain how COVID-19 infected patients experience a loss of smell. |
| Potential Transformation to Higher Ed | The pandemic’s economic and social impact could accelerate transformational change in higher education. | ▪ With small private colleges facing unprecedented financial pressures, will higher education go through a concentration similar to big tech? |
Today’s Headlines Summaries

A. Re-Opening Operations

- **College Reopening Plans Include How Many Coronavirus Cases Would Close Them Again**
  - Some universities are setting in place specific criteria for re-closing campus as the fall semester approaches and uncertainty looms.
  - Triggers that could make schools reverse course mid-semester include increasing coronavirus infection rates, full ICU facilities, or even a student or staff death.
  - The University of Texas at Austin is one school that laid out a comprehensive list of variables to be weighed to change course, including a student death, high rates of employee absenteeism, limited isolation facilities, and a two-week upward swing in the percentage of tests coming back positive.

- **PA Universities Get $28M for Fall COVID Reopening Plans**
  - Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced the relief funds to “help keep students, faculty, and staff safe and assist institutions in meeting the unique challenges of providing instruction during COVID-19.”
  - The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act authorizes governors to determine the educational use of Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds.
  - Funding can be utilized for online classrooms, barriers and other protective equipment, health apps and other devices to assist in contact tracing, cleaning supplies, and more.
  - Institutions can receive GEER funds regardless of whether they plan for in-person, remote, or hybrid approaches to the fall semester.
  - Individual institutions will receive funding based on the number of socio-economically disadvantaged students enrolled, as well as their total number of students.

- **U-M Students Must Have 14 Days of ‘Enhanced Social Distance’ Before Returning to Campus**
  - University of Michigan students must spend 14 days in a semi-quarantine before they come back to campus, which includes not going to work or social gatherings.
  - In a letter to students, school officials said any student coming back to campus “must observe a 14-day period of enhanced social distance at home before arriving in Ann Arbor or on campus.”
  - The university is planning for a hybrid model of remote and in-person instruction for the fall.
  - Move-in begins August 24 and the first day of classes is slated for August 31.

- **Duke Compact, Featuring Facemasks, Contact Tracing, and Other Community Measures**
  - Duke University finally unveiled the details of its Duke Compact, first announced two months ago by President Vincent Price.
  - The community standards agreement will require students, faculty, and staff to wear masks in public and participate in COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and symptom reporting, among other stipulations.
  - Duke community members will also agree to get a flu shot and follow travel restrictions.
  - Duke leadership noted that the Compact is not meant as an enforcement tool and left the door open for possible consequences for violations.

B. Student Impact, Admissions & Enrollment

- **College Students Book Hotel Rooms for the Fall as Uncertainty Lingers**
  - Hotels near college campuses are looking to students to fill vacant rooms as the coronavirus pandemic casts uncertainty over the fall semester and demand from travelers remains depressed.
  - Although the option is likely to be pricier than typical on-campus housing, it may alleviate some concerns by offering a less crowded and cleaner environment.
Hotel operators say the option is also appealing to students and families because of the flexibility and because there is no contract or commitment.

- **Oakland University to Require Residents to Wear ‘BioButton’ to Track Health; Students Launch Petition**
  - The “BioButton” is wearable technology that monitors your vitals, including temperature and heart rate, in real time.
  - The device is meant to be worn on the chest, can last for up to 90 days, and connects to a mobile device.
  - “The button will be used in conjunction with the daily health assessment to determine if you are able to participate in campus activities,” the university states on its website. “The individual data will remain private to the wearer and is not shared with others.”
  - A group of Oakland University students have launched a petition against the policy, citing an intrusion of privacy and data. As of Monday morning, the petition had more than 2,000 e-signatures.

C. Financial Impact and Response Actions

- **A Crisis is Looming for U.S. Colleges – and Not Just Because of the Pandemic**
  - A financial “stress test” analysis of more than 2,600 colleges and universities conducted by NBC News and the Hechinger Report revealed over 500 institutions showing financial warning signs in at least 2 areas examined, such as tuition revenue, endowment funding, public funding, etc.
  - The report found that more than 10% of all institutions facing trouble were located in Illinois or Ohio.
  - The analysis also revealed that 30% of all four-year schools brought in less tuition revenue per student in 2017-18 than in 2009-10, as well as that over 1,300 colleges and universities have seen declines in first year fall enrollment since 2009.
  - The report underscores how the financial stresses of COVID-19 are likely to create an existential crisis across higher ed, which was already grappling with a downturn.

- **Unity College Looks to Sell Main Campus Amid Coronavirus Pandemic**
  - Unity College in Maine announced it would permanently eliminate its two-semester model of education, moving to an ongoing hybrid model in response to challenges brought by the coronavirus.
  - According the announcement, the Unity College Hybrid Learning model “grants students control over their education through a nonstandard calendar, shorter terms, differentiated tuition, and a multi-modality curriculum that does not rely on maintaining a physical campus.”
  - The move means the institution will explore potentially selling its campus. The college’s president issued a clarification statement emphasizing that the institution would not sell its current campus if enrollment declines were reversed.

D. Research Re-Entry and Contributions

- **UPDATE: University of Virginia: Research Continuity Guidance**
  - UVA is currently in phase 1 of its Research Continuity guidance.
  - During phase 1, researchers are allowed to return to campus provided they adhere to the safety guidelines to reduce the risk of virus transmission on campus.
  - Human subject research has a separate tier designation to indicate the school’s approach to clinical research. The current Tier 3 allows human subject research including previous approved research and studies without a potential direct benefit to study participants.

- **Virologists identify potential COVID-19 treatment**
  - A team of scientists at Kansas State University explore a potential treatment for COVID-19.
  - The team investigated a protease inhibitor mechanism to target virus replication.
  - Study results indicated the protease inhibitor was able to successfully block replication of human SARS-CoV-2.

- **How COVID-19 causes smell loss identify potential COVID-19 treatment**
  - Harvard Medical School researchers exploring loss of smell, anosmia, in COVID-19 infected patients, have determined olfactory support cells are vulnerable to the COVID-19.
The study team showed olfactory cells do not have the ACE2 receptor protein required for COVID-19 to enter the cell. The ACE2 receptor was observed in nonneural cells that may be responsible for an infected person's loss of smell. Study author Sandeep Datta notes, “SARS-CoV-2 infection is unlikely to permanently damage olfactory neural circuits and lead to persistent anosmia.”

E. Potential Transformation to Higher Education

- ‘Monopolized,’ Covid-19 and Worrying Over a Concentrated Higher Ed
  - Inside Higher Ed asks whether the unprecedented financial pressures faced by small private institutions could create a concentration of power similar to what has been seen in big tech or wireless providers.
  - Prior to COVID-19, at least 25% of all private colleges were running budget deficits and facing sustainability challenges.
  - Due to lost revenue and added expenses, the viability of a significant number of institutions is in question.
  - With a number of closures and mergers of private institutions already taking place, COVID-19 is likely to accelerate this trend in months or years to come.

F. Other Headlines and Emerging Trends

- Covid-19 is Exposing Inequalities in College Sports. Now Athletes are Demanding Change
  - Hundreds of PAC-12 players announced they would not participate in training camps or games this fall unless their conference negotiates with them on certain demands, including the implementation of health and safety procedures, creating protections for other conference sports, and addressing racial injustice.
  - The health demands would primarily require the conference to make changes to limit the effects of the coronavirus, like allowing players to opt out of the season for the duration of the pandemic without losing their eligibility and enacting minimal safety standards that cover “COVID-19 as well as serious injury, abuse and death.”
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