







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

Trend Category	Trend Summary	Today's Headlines
 <p>Re-Opening Operations</p>	<p>Universities continue to announce, revise, and execute plans for fall instruction, residence life, and athletics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gettysburg College issues immediate all-student quarantine shortly after the commencement of fall classes. ▪ Colorado College asks students to leave campus by September 20 after quarantining all three of its residence halls. ▪ Hagerstown Community College (MD) disables VPN access for faculty and staff pushing employees back on campus. ▪ Alabama State University installs thermal scanners and social distancing monitors in high-traffic areas as an added layer of community protection.
 <p>Student Impact & Enrollments</p>	<p>The pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for students, and in turn, enrollment risks for many institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ College enrollments declined sharply this summer at community colleges and for-profit institutions and among black undergraduates and men, raising worries about fall enrollments and worsening equity gaps. ▪ Demand for health services is increasing as the pandemic continues to negatively impact the mental health of students.
 <p>Financial Impact</p>	<p>Universities continue to use spending freezes, layoffs, and other means to address funding gaps created by the pandemic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The University of Texas athletic department turns to personnel and salary reductions to ensure a balanced budget for the fall. ▪ UNC-Chapel Hill expects to lose \$55 million in housing and dining revenue for the fall semester after sending students back home. ▪ Smith College plans additional furloughs of staff to cover expected revenue losses of approximately \$10 million after its transition to virtual learning.
 <p>Research Operations</p>	<p>Universities continue to ramp-up research activities, including activities directly related to COVID-19 research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Duke University transitioned to phase 4 of the university's return to campus plan; however, it will remain in a modified phase 3 for its research group. Phase 3 will only allow on-campus research and designated human subject research. ▪ Rutgers University is one of several universities chosen as a study site to conduct phase 3 of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial.
 <p>Potential Transformation to Higher Ed</p>	<p>The pandemic's economic and social impact could accelerate transformational change in higher education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Online M.B.A. programs continue to grow as several other institutions begin online programs of their own including Howard and Wake Forest.
 <p>Other Emerging Trends</p>	<p>Universities continue to address emerging trends while operating through the pandemic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No updates for today's newsletter.

Today's Article Summaries

A. Re-Opening Operations

- [Gettysburg College Issues Immediate All-Student Quarantine](#)
 - Due to an uptrend in positive cases linked to affinity groups and social gatherings, Gettysburg increased its internal COVID-tracking alert status to “high” shortly after students returned to campus.
 - Julie Ramsey, Gettysburg’s dean of students, sent a letter to the campus community stating an all-student quarantine would go into effect immediately and continue through the remainder of the week.
 - Since August 30th, 24 students have tested positive along with three employees.
 - Gettysburg will reassess the situation after analyzing the effects of the quarantine on transmission rates.
 - Students are only to leave their rooms to pick up food from campus dining locations, use the restroom, or complete a scheduled COVID-19 test. In-person student work will not be permitted.

- [Colorado College Quarantines Three Full Dormitories and Shifts to Remote Classes](#)
 - Colorado College, whose classes began with just freshmen on campus, will now hold the vast majority of its classes online for the remainder of the semester due to the spread of COVID-19. Only a small, limited number of hybrid or in-person courses will be offered for essential degree progression.
 - Students that have already moved on campus are requested to depart by September 20th.
 - As cases of COVID-19 and students exposed to the virus increased, the college made the decision to quarantine all three of its traditional residence halls due to a strong recommendation from El Paso County Public Health and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.
 - The acting co-presidents issued the decision to move classes online and send students home as leadership realized that the college “cannot offer a quality residential experience to students under these circumstances.”

- [Hagerstown Community College \(MD\) Shuts Down Remote Work by Disabling Employee VPN Access](#)
 - Hagerstown Community College faculty and staff were sent a message from President Jim Klauber stating that access to the college’s virtual private network had been disabled making work from home not possible.
 - Klauber stated that the campus would “resume a normal five-day work week” and that it was time for employees to return to campus to educate and support students.
 - The college also set the expectation that faculty and staff keep office doors unlocked, return loaned laptops, and move away from a “by appointment only” service model.
 - In addition to getting faculty and staff back to campus, Klauber claimed his decision to disable VPN access was to ensure IT security and reduce the number of VPN holders to more manageable levels.
 - Scott Oswald, managing principal of Employment Law Group, P.C., states that “if an employee believes, in good faith, that the college isn't following proper health guidelines, they can protest,” meaning “the college would either have to change its policies or allow the employee to work remotely.”
 - Moreover, if the college breaks health codes and fires a protesting employee, it could face a wrongful discharge lawsuit.

- [Alabama State University Introduces New High-Tech Thermal Scanners to Detect COVID-19 Symptoms](#)
 - As new cases have recently begun to rise in Alabama and the University of Alabama manages over 1,200 cases, Alabama State University has added an extra preventative measure, thermal scanners and social distancing monitors.
 - The university installed five thermal scanners, each costing \$20,000, in high traffic areas that can read a person’s temperature, heart rate, and respiratory rate from three to four feet away to detect symptoms of COVID-19.
 - The social distancing monitors, each costing \$10,000, are live screens that mark those not social distancing with red circles.
 - Quinton Ross Jr., Alabama State’s president, states that the university currently has no known cases of COVID-19 on campus.

- Although Dr. Amesh Adalja, senior scholar at Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, feels high-tech screening stations are more a “show of force” than something that can single-handedly make a significant difference in preventing spread of infection, he also says that people with mild symptoms may be less likely to go about their daily activities if they know they will be screened.

B. Student Impact & Enrollments

- [College Enrollment Declines This Summer Raise Worries about a Widening Equity Gap](#)
 - Overall enrollment totals showed undergraduate enrollment fell 0.9% and graduate enrollment increased 3.8% this summer; however, enrollment declines among vulnerable student populations, students who attend community colleges and for-profits, and men raise worries about the fall and expanding equity gaps.
 - Some of the largest enrollment declines were among black undergraduates, down 8.3 percent overall and 10.5 percent within community colleges.
 - Community colleges and for-profit institutions were also dramatically impacted this summer with enrollment declines of 5.6 percent and 7.0 percent, respectively.
 - Associate degree and certificate programs were heavily impacted with enrollment declines of 5% and 11%, respectively.
- [COVID-19 Continues to Have Negative Effects on Students' Mental Health](#)
 - In a recent survey of 18,000 students on 14 college campuses across the U.S., 60% of students responded that the pandemic has made it more difficult to access mental health care.
 - A University of Wisconsin System report from 2019 showed demand for mental health support has increased by 55% since 2010, suggesting that mental health support services have been challenged even before the start of the pandemic.
 - Nicholas Jenkins, a mental health advocacy coordinator at Marquette University in Milwaukee, noted the pandemic’s particular negative impact on those with obsessive-compulsive disorder as about 25% of people with OCD have contamination OCD, which causes fear of germs and illness.
 - Many campuses have set up virtual platforms for students seeking therapy which has brought about challenges of its own such as finding platforms that can ensure confidentiality and regulations prohibiting doctors from practicing across state lines with out-of-state students.

C. Financial Impact

- [The University of Texas Athletic Department Announces COVID-19 Layoffs and Salary Reductions](#)
 - After the remainder of 2020 winter sports and spring sports seasons were canceled, the University of Texas athletic department implemented cost savings measures totaling \$19.9 million.
 - To prepare for the new fiscal year, the university continued to find savings by reducing team and department operating expenses, regionalizing team travel, reducing capital projects, and deferring debt payments to the future.
 - Despite such actions, the university announced that new measures must be taken involving personnel including temporary salary reductions of 273 staff, furloughs of 11 employees, elimination of 35 vacant positions, and 35 layoffs.
 - In total, the personnel actions will result in estimated cost savings of \$13.1 million.
 - The University of Texas, part of the Big 12 Conference, expects to hold football games this season; however, revenues are expected to severely decline due to limited attendance necessitating the budget cuts.
- [UNC-Chapel Hill Expects to Lose \\$55 million in Housing and Dining Revenue This Fall](#)
 - Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz stated that the economic impact of COVID-19 on the campus has already exceeded \$100 million, and due to the campus’ shift to remote learning this fall, Guskiewicz expects UNC to lose another \$55 million in housing and dining revenue.
 - Paul Friga, a professor at UNC’s Kenan-Flagler School of Business, states that these losses are just the “tip of the iceberg” as the pandemic’s effect on other revenue streams, especially athletics, is still unknown.

- Although the university is facing severe challenges, some are offset by growth in enrollment as the fall entering class was UNC's largest in history.
- [Smith College Plans Additional Furloughs to Cover Expected Revenue Losses of \\$10 Million](#)
 - Smith College expects their decision to hold all classes online this fall to equate to a revenue loss of between \$8 and \$14 million.
 - In response to these revenue shortfalls, Smith intends to cut department operating budgets, extend its hiring freeze, and issue new or extending previous employee furloughs.
 - In addition to using strategic reserves, Smith sees taking out debt as a “prudent alternative” to drawing funds from its endowment as interest rates remain low.
 - The number of employees expected to be furloughed is yet to be determined; however, Smith has promised that furloughed employees will keep health insurance with the college covering the full employee contribution.

D. Research Re-Entry

- [Duke University: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Research-Related Updates](#)
 - Duke University moves to Phase 4 of its [Return to Campus](#) plan this month. However, after monitoring COVID case numbers, the school will remain in a [modified phase 3](#) for clinical research activities.
 - Phase 3A started August 3rd and will allow research performed on Duke's premises. Phase 3B will continue to postpone off-campus research except for Tier 1 and 2 studies.
 - Tier 1 research entails studies with a direct benefit to research such as COVID-19 studies or a high potential benefit for an individual's survival.
 - Tier 2 studies are defined as research evaluating treatments for chronic conditions or assessments that would adversely affect data if paused.
- [New Jersey Medical School and University Hospital to conduct trial over the next 25 months](#)
 - Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and University Hospital have been selected as study sites for a phase 3 COVID-19 vaccine study developed by [Moderna](#).
 - The COVID-19 vaccine trial will evaluate if Moderna's vaccine can boost the immune system to produce antibodies to protect the body against infection.
 - The vaccine will be offered to the university's healthcare workers, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community.

E. Potential Transformation to Higher Education

- [Online M.B.A. Programs Are Growing in Popularity](#)
 - According to data from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the number of online M.B.A. programs has more than doubled since 2009.
 - Several universities have announced decisions to launch online business school programs this year including Howard University, Wake Forest University, and John Carroll University.
 - Howard's business school dean, Anthony Wilbon, feels online programs “offer more expansive exposure across the globe with other countries, and the stigma of online is declining.”
 - The shift to online learning is a transformative strategy to combat years of declining revenues that business schools across the globe are currently facing and may help to attract more students during the pandemic, especially those living internationally.
 - Some new online M.B.A. programs are already seeing measurable success such as Boston University's Questrom School of Business which enrolled 400 students into its inaugural business school class after only predicting an enrollment of 200.
 - Similarly, there is increased interest in more mature programs as Indiana's Kelley School of Business and Illinois' Gies College of Business have seen applications rise 41 percent and 35 percent over the prior year, respectively.

F. Other Emerging Trends

- No updates for today's newsletter.

Recent Huron Articles

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