

Higher Ed COVID-19 Tracker

Findings Update – Wednesday, July 1st

Latest Trends and Headlines

Trend Category	Trend Summary	Today's Headlines
A) Re-Opening Operations	Universities continue to announce and execute plans for reopening their physical campuses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yale University announced their re-opening plans in a letter to the Yale community. Notably, their plans differ for graduate and professional students versus undergraduate students. ▪ Duke University reiterated their plans to re-open for in-person instruction in the fall and launched a new website called Duke United that houses all information related to returning to campus for students and employees. ▪ The Daily Tar Heel of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill interviewed 10 student services (e.g. Campus Health, Career Services, etc.) about the modifications they are making to ensure they can support students upon re-opening. ▪ A Cornell University study finds that an online semester would result in higher infection rates than an in-person semester due to increased testing on campus and measures in place to minimize asymptomatic spread. ▪ Dozens of universities are reporting COVID-19 cases as athletes begin workouts for varsity sports including seven cases at New Mexico State University, four cases at the University of Memphis, two cases at the University of Washington, five cases at the University of Missouri, and five cases at the University of Iowa. ▪ College students from Tuscaloosa, most likely from the University of Alabama, attended parties in and around the city despite knowing they were COVID-19 positive. ▪ At least 38 students across 10 fraternity houses at the University of Washington have tested positive for COVID-19 highlighting how quickly the disease can spread within close knit communities, such as the Greek housing system.
B) Student Impact, Admissions & Enrollment	Universities are responding to unprecedented challenges due to pandemic's impact on student enrollment decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No updates for today's <i>Tracker</i>.
C) Financial Impact and Response Actions	Universities have enacted spending freezes, layoffs, and closures to address the financial impact of the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Seton Hall University associate professor of higher education explains why he thinks July will be "the month of reckoning" for colleges during the coronavirus pandemic.
D) Research Re-Entry	Universities have begun developing plans to re-engage in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rutgers University ramps up research operations this month with expanded on-site staff capacity and minimization of on-campus risks of contracting COVID-19.



	activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Florida State University pauses their on-site research expansion plans as the local area experiences a surge in COVID-19 cases. ▪ A team of scientists at the University of Utah explore a potential immune response to COVID-19 infection that may correlate with disease severity. ▪ The Innovative Genomics Institute at UC Berkeley designed a COVID-19 saliva test aimed at identifying cases early and efficiently.
E) Potential Transformation to Higher Education	The pandemic could accelerate transformational change in higher education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Atlantic argues that the ways in which college and university leaders are incentivized and evaluated is in direct conflict with the needs of their campuses and their constituents during the pandemic, as demonstrated by schools' willingness to re-open despite the clear risks.
F) Other Headlines and Emerging	Universities continue to address challenges while operating throughout the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No updates for today's <i>Tracker</i>.

Today's Headlines Summaries

A. Re-Opening Operations

- [COVID-19: Yale Actions and Response](#)
 - Yale University unveiled its re-opening plans in a message to members of the Yale community.
 - Notably, graduate and professional students will be allowed to return to campus, and their respective schools will have different combinations of remote and in-person teaching. However, only a portion of undergraduates will be allowed back to campus and the vast majority of their classes will be online.
 - Only about 60% of the undergraduate population will be on campus at any one time with freshman, juniors, and seniors in the fall and sophomores, juniors, and seniors in the spring.
 - In-person classes will cease by Thanksgiving break for all students.
 - All undergraduate students and all graduate students living on campus will be tested upon arrival to campus. Testing will continue on a weekly basis.
 - Onsite research and other university operations will be "reactivated" with strict health precautions in place including requiring face masks, frequent hand washing, and maintaining six feet of space from others.
- [Duke Still Plans for Fall Return Amid Rising COVID-19 Cases, Unveils Website with Information on Return](#)
 - Duke reiterated their plans to begin the Fall semester with students on campus, citing the many safety precautions the school has put into place that will allow for a responsible and safe re-opening.
 - A new website – [Duke United](#) – was included in the announcement. The website includes the "Welcome Back to Campus" plan for students and employees.
 - Included on the website is information about mask wearing and other required safety protocols.
 - The website also tracks the stages of Duke's 4-phased re-opening plan. Duke is currently in Phase 3 where business continuity operations can resume.
- [We Spoke to 10 Student Services on Campus About Their Plans for the Fall Semester](#)
 - Writers at The Daily Tar Heel – UNC's student newspaper – interviewed 10 different student service functions on campus to learn about the modifications they are making to support students during COVID-19.
 - The most notable updates are listed below:
 - Campus Health will follow CDC recommendations for COVID-19 testing. There is a 24- to 48-hour turnaround time for test results currently, but they are working towards rapid testing capability. They will also use contact tracing on students who test positive.
 - Campus Recreation expects all facilities to be open in time for the Fall semester, but not necessarily at full capacity.

- Counseling & Psychological Services is adding four additional therapists to their staff who have “expertise in communicating with underserved populations” to help students who are dealing with “the dual public health crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and experiences of racism and racial injustice.”
- Information Technology Services will ship all computers to first years who purchased them rather than having them pick up their device onsite.
- [More Infections from an Online Semester?](#)
 - Cornell University confirmed they will re-open campus with in-person instruction for the Fall semester and cited findings from Cornell researchers that holding the semester online could result in more infections and hospitalizations among staff and students than holding the semester in person.
 - The researchers found that an in-person semester would result in 3.6% of the campus population (1,254 people) becoming infected and 0.047% (16 people) requiring hospitalizations. An online semester, they concluded, would result in about 7,200 infections and more than 60 hospitalizations.
 - This conclusion was based on the logic that it is easier to test students when they are required to attend class, and that asymptomatic testing is the key to containing an outbreak.
 - The results relied on the assumption that all 9,000 Cornell students will return to Ithaca, N.Y. regardless of in-person or online instruction. This assumption is based on student surveys and conversations with area landlords about fall tenant levels.
 - Students will be required to sign a behavioral expectation form before returning to campus and will be required to submit to testing and daily symptom tracking once on campus.
- COVID-19 Cases Rise in Student-Athlete Populations
 - Student-athletes and those who work closely with them, such as strength and conditioning staff and coaches, are testing positive for COVID-19 across the country.
 - Six students-athletes and a member of the strength and conditioning staff at [New Mexico State University](#) tested positive for COVID-19. After one of the student-athletes exhibited symptoms, contact tracing was done and testing of those individuals led to the remaining positive results. Since voluntary workouts – which are now suspended – started on June 8, 13 student-athletes have tested positive.
 - Three [University of Memphis](#) student-athletes and one athletic department staff member tested positive for COVID-19 and are now in isolation.
 - The [University of Washington](#) has tested 119 student-athletes who returned to campus for voluntary workouts starting June 15. So far, two have tested positive for COVID-19 and are in quarantine.
 - Five student-athletes at the [University of Missouri](#) tested positive for COVID-19. 308 athletes have been tested since June 8, and all but one of the positive tests were asymptomatic.
 - In just a week’s time, the [University of Iowa](#) Athletics Department has discovered five new COVID-19 cases. The school has a total of 17 cases out of 408 total tests.
- [Tuscaloosa College Students Who Knew They Had COVID-19 Attended Parties](#)
 - Several college students, who were aware they had tested positive for the coronavirus, attended parties around Tuscaloosa over the past few weeks. Although not specifically named, it is believed these students are part of the University of Alabama.
 - The Tuscaloosa Fire Chief was able to confirm the students were aware of their positive status prior to attending any parties based on information from local doctors and the state health department.
- [COVID-19 Runs Through Greek System with 38 Confirmed Cases](#)
 - The Greek system at the University of Washington is reeling after 38 students across 10 fraternity houses have tested positive for COVID-19. Those who tested positive are self-isolating within their respective fraternity houses. None of the confirmed cases have reported severe symptoms or have required hospitalization.
 - UW Medicine created a popup testing site within walking distance of all Greek houses and is urging all Greek community residents – and anyone who has come into close contact with any Greek community resident for more than 15 minutes – to get tested immediately.
 - Dr. Gottlieb cautioned the UW community stating that “if everyone does their part to keep each other safe, we can continue to engage with one another...if we don’t, measures such as what are now required on Greek Row will be inevitable.”

B. Student Impact, Admissions & Enrollment

- No updates for today’s *Tracker*.

C. Financial Impact and Response Actions

- [July Could Be “Month of Reckoning” Says Robert Kelchen, Associate Professor of Higher Education at Seton Hall University](#)
 - In a comprehensive Twitter thread, Robert Kelchen explains that July will be the “month of reckoning” for many colleges and universities, who will have to address the cost of widespread testing and extreme measures to control virus spread within their communities, or will have to announce online instruction.
 - Kelchen says a major domino is the NCAA. If college football is cancelled, many universities clinging to “flexible” instruction models will likely abandon them for remote instruction.
 - Kelchen says universities that announce online instructions will have to “hope that their peers don’t try to profit off them announcing just a little earlier [than them].”
 - Kelchen links other articles he has written about the state of higher education during coronavirus throughout his thread, including *Colleges Aren’t Reopening in the Fall* for The Chronicle.

D. Research Re-Entry

- [Rutgers: Returning to Research at Rutgers University](#)
 - On March 25th, Rutgers restricted research activities to critical research, including COVID-19 research, clinical trials, and maintenance.
 - Starting in July, research operations will enter phase 3 of the 4-phase [Return to Rutgers](#) plan. Phase 3 permits up to 75% capacity of designated non-essential staff to return to campus; staff can resume basic science, social science, humanities, and new clinical research.
 - Phase 4 indicates a full return to on-site capacity, but the University requires sustained implementation of phase 3 safety measures before transitioning to the next phase.
 - Rutgers implemented a separate Human Subject Research Ramp-Up, which is currently in phase 1. New and existing research with a direct benefit to patients or for patients with a life threatening or serious conditions may operate.
 - The university recommends research staff screen study participants before any study-related activities.
- [Florida State University: Update on Campus Repopulation Guidance](#)
 - Due to recent increases in COVID-19 cases in the local community the University decided not to move forward with the next phase of campus repopulation, which was scheduled for July 6th.
 - The next phase of FSU’s [research repopulation plan](#) includes increased staffing to 50% of normal levels for lab research and resumption of face-to-face human subjects research activities that can be conducted within the parameters of social distancing but excludes those vulnerable to COVID-19.
 - The Vice President for Research recently issued a [Research Continuity Update](#) indicating that the status of FSU research operations is continually evaluated and may be altered in light of the recent uptick in local cases of COVID-19.
- [Clues to COVID-19 Complications Come From Net-Like Inflammatory Response](#)
 - Researchers led by the University of Utah Health, in collaboration with PEEL Therapeutics, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and Cornell Medicine, observed an overactive defense response of the immune system in patients infected with the COVID-19 virus, which may lead to increased blood clotting, disease severity, and death.
 - The body’s immune response, NETosis (NETs), typically releases neutrophil extracellular traps to capture and kill pathogens. In patients with COVID-19, overactive NETs make the illness worse and can lead to inflammatory tissue damage.
 - The study team hopes NETs could be a biomarker to indicate COVID-19 severity.
- [UC Berkeley launches trial of saliva test for COVID-19](#)
 - A team of scientists at UC Berkeley, [Innovative Genomics Institute](#), is testing a saliva COVID-19 test that utilizes CRISPR-CAs protein analysis.
 - The study, Free Asymptomatic Saliva Testing (FAST), will test graduate students, faculty, and staff authorized to work on campus.
 - The lab at the Innovative Genomics Institute can process samples within five days and have automated the process to analyze 1,000 tests per day.
 - Researchers initiated saliva sample collection on-campus in late June and plan to submit an Emergency Use Authorization application to the FDA pending results of this study.

E. Potential Transformation to Higher Education

- [College Leaders Have the Wrong Incentives](#)
 - Ian Bogost, Distinguished Chair at Georgia Tech, argues in an op-ed that campus leaders’ incentives do not align with those of their communities – and that this friction is especially clear during coronavirus re-openings.

- Bogost argues that campus leaders are incentivized to pursue activities that create more dollars rather than doing what is best for the community, especially in the face of a public health crisis.
 - Bogost takes the argument further, saying that college rankings should include measurements based on “the virtues they embody...and the justice they achieve within their communities” citing not only the coronavirus, but also recent events around “antiblack racism”, that contribute to the need for a new ranking system.

F. Other Headlines and Emerging Trends

- No updates for today's *Tracker*.