



REOPENING RI

RHODE
ISLAND

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the early days of March 2020, the number of cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) began to increase dramatically. Institutions of higher education (IHEs) throughout the State of Rhode Island, heeding the call by Governor Gina Raimondo, suspended campus operations and transitioned from in-person classroom instruction to distance learning. By March 30, 2020, all 11 IHEs were functioning primarily online and completing courses in progress. As the coronavirus cases continued to threaten the public health, representatives of the IHEs prepared remotely for the reopening of campuses with a community presence that would differ greatly from the one that predated the March exodus. This report details the actions that Governor Gina Raimondo and her executive team deployed to communicate the best available guidance for avoiding coronavirus outbreaks, to offer access to public health experts who could advise on easing the transition to the next term, and to provide uniform advice to the public and private IHEs so all could plan for their unique needs.

II. The COVID PANDEMIC and its effect on Rhode Island Institutions of Higher Education

The first documented cases of novel coronavirus COVID-19 were confirmed in RI on March 1, 2020. By August 3, the number of cases of the international pandemic exceeded 17.5 million, and the number of deaths worldwide numbered more than 680,000. Despite extraordinary efforts to contain the spread in RI, the disease's presence in the first six months yielded 19,246 positive cases; and more than 1,000 coronavirus-related deaths.

In addition to the direct toll on public health, the virus has negatively affected all aspects of the state's economy. When little information was known about transmission and resources were scarce, states were directed by the Trump administration to address the crisis as each saw fit. To stymie the rate of transmission and pre-empt the overburdening of healthcare facilities, RI Governor Gina Raimondo put in place measures to protect human health. This included — among other measures — declaring a State of Emergency on March 9, 2020, a stay-at-home order and the closure of all non-essential businesses and schools. These extremely tough choices helped to turn the epidemic tide in the Ocean State to a point where a slow and deliberate reopening, informed by scientific best practices and active civic participation, became a reality.

By March 16, all of the IHEs had suspended in-person instruction and asked students living on campuses to vacate student housing, with exceptions made for international students, those without stable home situations, and those requiring a flight.

Dining facilities stopped serving meals, operations ceased, and eligible staff and faculty worked from home. The affected population included 11 IHEs, which collectively educate approximately 70,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The institutions vary from community college, four-year universities, a law school, a medical school, a land-grant public university, a technical university, private Catholic colleges, an art and design university and a culinary university. All shared similar needs to address the safe resumption of instruction, reopening of campuses, and coping with the ongoing pandemic. Many of the students who attend university in RI live in other states or international locations; some in areas where the virus outbreaks are widespread, increasing the risk of elevating RI's positive cases.

To assist the IHEs in their shared goals, Governor Raimondo appointed Kevin Gallagher, Esq., senior deputy chief of staff, Office of the Governor; Catherine McConnell, education policy advisor, Office of the Governor; and Amy Grzybowski, executive director of RI Higher Education and Industry Centers, RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, to lead the Higher Education Workstream within the Education and Childcare Readiness Team. The multi-agency response was coordinated to prepare RI IHEs for reopening with particular attention among all functions to evolving issues, impending deadlines, emerging events, and the unique needs of the higher education community.

Some of the myriad unique needs of the IHEs and their communities include the following:

- housing (on campus and in nearby neighborhoods)
- dining
- travel restrictions, as well as travelling about campus
- virus screening
- testing (before/upon arrival; during terms)
- quarantining and isolation
- contact tracing
- cleaning/disinfection
- social gathering/distancing
- class and lecture sizes
- prevention measures
- in-person, hybrid and online classes
- faculty and staff shortages
- athletic programs and recreational facilities/events
- orientation/move-in
- prospective student tours
- security and enforcement

III. PARTICIPANTS

In April, each IHE was contacted and asked to appoint representation to the Higher Education Workstream. Additionally, invitations were extended to the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Rhode Island, and St. George's School, a private grade 9-12 school in Middletown where 88 percent of students board.

The following is a list of the participants:

- **Community College of Rhode Island, Warwick**
Alix Ogden, AVP for Administration
Dorian Boardman, Emergency Management Coordinator
- **Brown University, Providence**
Russell Carey, Executive Vice President for Planning and Policy
John Fulton, Clinical Associate Professor of Behavioral and Social Sciences
- **Bryant University, Smithfield**
Glenn Sulmasy, Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Inge-Lise Ameer, Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Students
- **Johnson & Wales University, Providence**
Billye Auclair, Provost
Christopher Harwood, Director of Emergency Management
- **New England Institute of Technology, East Greenwich**
Scott Freund, Executive Vice President
Alan Resnick, Vice President for Strategic Planning
- **Providence College, Providence**
Michael Botelho, Associate Vice President for Financial and Strategic Planning
Christopher Neronha, General Counsel
- **Rhode Island College, Providence**
Kimberly Conway Dumpson, Vice President, College Advancement & External Affairs
Ducha Hang, Associate Vice President, Student Success

- Rhode Island School of Design, Providence
Kent Kleinman, Provost
Barbara LoMonaco, Interim Assistant VP for Student Affairs
- Roger Williams University, Bristol
John King, Vice President for Student Affairs
Brian Williams, Chief of Staff, VP of Enrollment Management & Marketing
- Salve Regina University, Newport
J. Malcolm Smith, Vice President for Student Affairs, Acting Dean of Students
Jim Ludes, Vice President for Public Research and Initiatives
- University of Rhode Island, Kingston
Donald DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Katherine Collins, Vice President for Student Affairs
- St. Georges School, Middletown
Alixé Callan, Head of School
- Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Rhode Island, Providence
Dan Egan, President
Luke Thompson, Communications, Policy, and Member Relations Assistant
Eric Ethier, Communications & Policy Assistant

Representing State Government Agencies:

- Office of the Rhode Island Governor: Kevin Gallagher, Catherine McConnell
- Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner: Amy Grzybowski, Tammy Warner, Beth Bailey, Faith Hanson
- Rhode Island Department of Health: Dr. Philip Chan, Dr. Ailis Clyne, Patricia Raymond, Laurie Leonard, Neil Hytinen, Chris Goulette, Diane Kowal, Linda Mendonca, Sounivone Phanthavong

IV. MANDATE

The workstream convened to discuss the process for writing reopening plans. Each IHE was required to submit a reopening plan that also contained contingency plans for the provision of learning should the number of coronavirus cases spike after reopening.

A draft template was provided to the IHE as guidance and a deadline set of June 15, 2020, for submission. Although the submission was mandatory, the State of Rhode Island would not reject any reopening plan. Rather, the state's intent was to review the plans with medical experts for consistency with public health guidance. Discussions with IHE leaders regarding suggestions for alternate actions, based on prevailing data and practices, concluded in July. Final versions were due to the workstream prior to the commencement of the next term and arrival of students.

V. PROCESS

The workstream met weekly for approximately one hour online via the Zoom platform. All participants were admitted to a Webex workgroup and were able to share and access information via the platform. Staff compiled a question-and-answer document that was updated regularly and posted so that all workstream participants would have access to consistent guidance from the RI Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Office of the RI Governor, and other pertinent authorities. Additionally, news and trade magazine articles about IHEs in other states were shared to the portal.

Slide presentations were created to guide each of the seven weekly meetings. Below is a list of the dates of each meeting and the focus of discussion topics:

4/28/20	Introductions, overarching state plan, concerns, timelines
5/5/20	FAQs, dining, residence halls
5/12/20	Cleaning, testing, move-in/move-out, prospective student tours
5/19/20	Testing
5/26/20	Contact tracing
6/2/20	Community mitigation
6/9/20	Review of plans

Guest speakers were subject-matter experts and presented information about what other jurisdictions have experienced, complex health details, contact tracing processes, and more. For niche topics related to local practices, presenters from University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College shared their insights. Approximately half of the time spent in the weekly meetings was devoted to questions and discussion.

Due to the complexity of some of the topics, subgroups were formed for more in-depth discovery and discussion. IHEs that wished to participate in the subgroups appointed staff representation. The subgroups were:

- Contact tracing
- Testing
- Residence halls
- Dining
- Classroom and logistics
- Procurement and supply chains
- Health centers

The subgroups met biweekly and assisted with the compilation of these plan topics that required in-depth exploration, planning and coordination. Many of these subgroups continued to meet for enhanced collaboration and sharing of best practices among the IHEs. Notably, a subgroup of health directors convened frequently to cross-collaborate with health department medical directors on topics such as quarantine, isolation, flu clinics, best practices, research testing and trends, adjustments, and more. It is expected that this collaboration will continue as long as coronavirus presents a public health threat.

VI: REVIEWING & EDITING

During early July, workstream leaders and the RI Department of Health met (online) with each IHE to review the plans and subsequent recommendations. Invitations were extended beyond the workstream regulars to members within their IHE community who needed to participate in the plan discussion. Frequently, this included administrative executives, board members, health professionals, operational, legal, purchasing, security/public safety/emergency management, faculty and union representation, student life, and admissions. Twelve individual meetings were held and state leaders praised the IHE community for the robustness of the plans, particularly given the challenges of preparing in-depth, complex plans addressing the uncertain track of a virus on the community at large.

All IHEs prepared to reopen campus for the fall term. Some adjusted the lengths of the terms and removed holiday weekends, and/or fall breaks. Nearly all of the IHEs drafted plans that included a mix of in-person, hybrid (i.e., both in-person and online), and online instruction. The IHEs also de-densified their residential campus communities, reducing the number of students who would live on -campus and staggering move-in dates for those returning to campus. The IHEs focused efforts on creating appropriate quarantine and

isolation spaces for when they are notified of a positive COVID-19 and/or exposed students. Online portals and outreach communications campaigns to each IHE's community were prepared and launched, and student codes of conduct were amended to include COVID-19 prevention expectations.

VII: SUMMARIES OF REOPENING PLANS



In July 2020, Brown University published its “Plan for a Healthy and Safe 2020-21,” providing a roadmap for steps to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as on-campus activity resumes. Based on expert guidance and the downward trend of COVID-19 in RI as of early summer, Brown is pursuing a three-term 2020-21 academic calendar that provides for a “de-densified” approach for the transition of students to campus starting in fall 2020. The university will reduce the number of students studying in Providence, offer remote learning and instruction options, and implement extensive health and safety protocols and policies.

The plan is based on the recommendations of multiple working groups at Brown, which explored a range of options for safely providing teaching and learning during the pandemic. The focus at all times has been on how to best protect the health of students, staff, faculty and Providence residents while delivering Brown's world-class education, critical research, and remaining a valued neighbor in the city, state and region. Key elements are summarized here and the full plan can be viewed [here](#).

Founded in 1764, Brown is a leading research university home to world-renowned faculty, and also an innovative educational institution where the curiosity, creativity, and intellectual joy of students drives academic excellence. Nearly 10,000 students are enrolled — approximately 6,800 undergraduates, 2,500 graduate students and 600 medical students. Brown employs more than 4,500 faculty and staff members.

Among the wide range of factors distinctive to Brown that were considered in creating its plan are: 1) the university's large population of international students, who comprise nearly 18% of students; 2) Brown's city campus centered in College Hill with a growing presence in the Jewelry District; 3) the residential nature of the undergraduate experience, with the majority of undergrads housed in residence halls; 4) Brown's deep connections to the greater community through both academic and extra-curricular partnerships; and 5) the university's commitment to equity and inclusion, which guided specific measures outlined in the plan that acknowledge COVID-19's disparate impact on

different communities.

Brown's plan details changes in modes of instruction, housing, dining, and extracurricular activities, as well as the implementation of strict protocols for personal health, distancing, mask-wearing, cleaning and regular testing that will be essential for safeguarding well-being. All students will be given the option to take courses remotely, whether they are on campus or not, while faculty with health or other concerns have the option to teach, mentor, and advise students online in the fall, and employees of Brown who are able to work remotely will continue to do so at least through early fall. Even with these public health steps, Brown's plan is based upon the acknowledgement that any college, university or community will likely see diagnosed cases of COVID-19 until the point that a vaccine is widely available. At the heart of the plan are three primary elements:

1) Reduced Density of Students on Campus: Brown will follow a three-term academic calendar (fall, spring and summer) in which undergraduates are on campus for two of the three terms. Shortened terms with fewer breaks will reduce density on campus and give all students the opportunity to spend two semesters in Providence. All undergraduates living in residence halls in the fall will have single rooms, and classrooms, libraries and other campus spaces will be de-densified. Classes with more than 20 students will be taught remotely; limiting in-person class sizes to 20 will enable safe distancing of students and instructors within classrooms. To provide options for students and faculty unable to come to campus (for travel, health or other reasons) and for the possibility of students in isolation or quarantine during the semester, all courses will have a remote learning option. All graduate students will have the option to study in person or remotely.

2) Testing and Contact Tracing: Testing and contact tracing for all students and employees is an essential element of Brown's plan. All students will be tested for COVID-19 when they return to Brown, and students will be required to participate in random testing to monitor for community spread. Students and employees will use a digital tool to schedule tests and record daily symptoms. In the event that someone at Brown tests positive, trained contact tracers at the university will work with the RI Department of Health to locate people who may have been exposed to COVID-19. Specific residential spaces have been reserved for isolation (for students who contract the virus) and quarantine (for students who have been exposed).

3) Campus Public Health Practices: Life on campus will be different. Everyone will be required to wear masks and practice social distancing in public places. Dining will be "grab and go" only. Gatherings will be

limited, and activities that require travel to other locations will be restricted. Single residency in dorms will greatly reduce the number of students who live in proximity to each other, and students will be clustered into small, identifiable “pods” to reduce the number of students who need to be quarantined if an infection is positively identified. Cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces will become part of daily routines. A public health campaign will address the need for personal reasonability in protecting individual and community health, and students will be required to sign an attestation that they will follow required public health practices.

All plans are based on the prospect that the state of the pandemic and the virus’s spread will enable a return to in-person operations. If needed, Brown will approach changes based on community principles that place a premium on the health and well-being of students and employees and the university’s commitment to providing an excellent educational experience. Should conditions in RI worsen during the fall, Brown is prepared to make mid-course adjustments to how instruction is offered, housing is configured and public health protocols are implemented on campus.

**BRYANT
UNIVERSITY**

Founded in 1863, Bryant University has earned a national reputation for innovative academic programs that are highly attuned to the emerging needs of industry and society. Bryant's close-knit, student-centered community of scholars delivers challenging academic programs in business and the arts and sciences, with an emphasis on real-world application and a global perspective. Abundant co-curricular opportunities, service learning programs, internships, and practica allow students to put theory into practice while building character and leadership skills.

The health and safety of all members of the Bryant University community are the primary focus of the university’s plan to reopen the campus with staggered and gradual student return starting in mid-August 2020 and a compressed academic calendar ending the fall semester prior to Thanksgiving. Planning began in March 2020 under the leadership of President Ronald K. Machtley and continued throughout the summer with current Bryant President Ross Gittell, Ph.D., who took office July 1. More than 50 members of the Bryant community met regularly to review the latest medical guidance, as well as state and federal policies and best practices, in order to assess a wide range of options related to every facet of campus life. Bryant’s reopening plan is aligning with RIDOH guidelines and covers health & safety, academic programs, residence life/student life, staff, communications, facilities & food services, and athletics & recreation.

Located on a large 450-acre campus in Smithfield, R.I., Bryant University is fortunate to have a self-contained community in a rural setting. Current enrollment for fall 2020 is approximately 3,250 undergraduates and 400 graduate students. Bryant is primarily a residential institution with 89% of its undergraduate students living and dining on campus. Approximately 90% of the student body is from neighboring states where COVID-19 is in decline. The campus is accessible only through a single point of entry/exit that's continuously staffed 24/7 to facilitate health screening and monitoring of all students, faculty, staff and visitors. The campus is secured each evening at 10:00 p.m. and no overnight guests are permitted.

To mitigate risk of COVID-19 on campus, Bryant has adopted a layered approach. Every person on campus conducts daily symptom screening through the Bryant Health Checker app and there is aggressive weekly surveillance testing conducted on site, with 25% of the population in higher risk groups (i.e., commuters and student athletes) tested twice each week. Starting in August, all students, faculty, and staff returning to campus received an RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2. The test is a self-administered nasal swab overseen by a health professional. According to the CDC, this type of test is the recommended method for diagnosing infection. Samples are processed at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, with rapid results in 24 hours.

Initial testing was conducted as students moved in August 17-23 and was carefully coordinated to allow for drive-through testing on a staggered schedule. As of September 2, 2020, more than 12,000 tests have been administered and the average for positivity has been below one-tenth of one percent (below .1 %).

Student-centered classes are a Bryant hallmark and the university has no large lecture halls. To maintain the integrity of Bryant's nationally recognized academic programs while adhering to public health guidelines, the university transitioned to a hy-flex hybrid online format. More than half of fall classes are held synchronously, in person and online, to maintain social distance. Classes for the 2020-21 academic year began on site August 25. Through a compressed academic calendar the fall term concludes November 16. All students and faculty will receive a final surveillance test for COVID-19 on site and leave campus before Thanksgiving. Bryant's winter session will be delivered remotely and students and faculty will not return before the end of January 2021.

Bryant University Student Affairs personnel have developed a comprehensive plan to engage students in creative outdoor activities on campus, maintaining small group sizes and social distance. The added programming serves to discourage unnecessary trips off

campus. All on-campus activities comply with public health guidelines including masking, and Bryant has an anonymous tip hotline so that any member of the community can send a text to our Department of Public Safety 24/7 to report a situation to be addressed. Residential students will be allowed very limited travel from the start of classes August 25 through the end of our fall term. The university has taken proactive steps to reduce travel, such as postponing fall athletics and requiring heightened testing for students who leave campus overnight. Bryant requires strict adherence to campus policies and guidelines designed to protect the public health, including rules against unprotected social gatherings. Bryant's administrative team will enforce all policies and swift disciplinary action includes suspension to off-campus for any individual with more than one offense.

Extensive ongoing communication activities mitigate the risk of COVID-19 on campus and include: a dedicated website and information hub, www.bryant.edu/reopening; "Be Bryant Strong," (<https://news.bryant.edu/be-bryant-strong-campaign-unites-community-shared-responsibility-campus-safety>) an integrated public health campaign to promote adherence to necessary health and safety guidelines; regular virtual panel discussions; and a weekly e-newsletter reporting test data, useful information and PSAs regarding policies and best practices.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND

Community College of Rhode Island is the largest community college in New England. We serve approximately 20,000 students annually and train an additional 22,000 people in our Division of Workforce Partnerships. We have four campuses located in Warwick, Providence, Lincoln, and Newport. Warwick is our largest campus at over 300,000 square feet and typically welcomes 6,000-7,000 people each day.

Since March 23, 2020, CCRI has been operating in a remote teaching, learning, and working model. We made the decision to continue that teaching and working model in our Summer 1 session and our Summer 2 session. After gathering data, analyzing classroom capacity, and planning for protective measures, CCRI will continue its remote teaching and learning model for most of its classes in fall 2020.

As we developed this plan, we considered the characteristics that make our college unique among RI's higher education institutions:

1. While we do not have residence halls, we serve Rhode Islanders from all over the state. In fact, we estimate that approximately 35% of our students come from the ZIP codes hardest hit by COVID-19.
2. Many of our students work in critical infrastructure roles including health care, food service, grocery, and other retail stores.

3. We have neither sufficient medical personnel staff nor an on-site health center so our ability to respond clinically to health issues on our campuses is extremely limited.

To develop our 2020 facilities master plan, CCRI worked with the facilities planning firm, Goody Clancy. When the pandemic hit, we asked Goody Clancy to use the extensive data they collected about our buildings to complete an analysis of the capacity of our classrooms, labs, and common areas assuming 6-foot social distancing. Based on their analysis it was evident that the vast majority of our classrooms on our four campuses do not have sufficient capacity to hold a class of typical size for CCRI with the required social distancing measures. This fall, we will use the new, adjusted capacity to guide how many people we allow to use a classroom at any one time.

We wanted to bring back students, faculty, and staff to our campuses in a limited, safe, and thoughtful manner because we know our students benefit from face-to-face interaction with their professors and that many of our students need better wi-fi and physical space in order to complete coursework. With these considerations in mind, we are planning for how we use our classrooms and common areas with social distancing limits. While most classes will continue to be delivered remotely this fall, there will be some exceptions including certain lab sciences, healthcare courses, and a number of courses in advanced manufacturing, the arts, and hands-on disciplines. These classes will maintain protective measures, such as wearing a mask and practicing social distancing.

For classrooms that hold fewer than 10 people with social distancing in place, we are offering those rooms to faculty on a reservation basis to hold group office hours for students. All classrooms would be disinfected between uses. We have also placed tablet desks throughout our largest common areas on each campus for teaching and tutoring, and for students who do not have access to sufficient wi-fi or study space at home.

CCRI requires all individuals entering our buildings to be screened for COVID-19 symptoms, including a no-contact temperature scan. Face coverings are required at all times and in all locations unless the person is the single occupant of an office or is teaching. As the college does not have the capacity or resources to establish an on-campus testing protocol, we will encourage faculty, staff, and students to seek regular testing at community-based testing centers found here: <https://health.ri.gov/covid/testing/asymptomatic/#where>. In addition, we will encourage asymptomatic individuals between the ages of 18

and 39 to self-schedule a free asymptomatic test through portal.ri.gov.

With the limited re-opening of our campuses this fall, Student Services staff will return to campus with modified operations. Supervisors are being asked to plan for a return to campus based on their number of staff, specific work area conditions, and maintaining student supports with a high level of effectiveness. We will continue to maximize our use of Starfish, Webex, and Signalvine to support students remotely.



Johnson & Wales University (JWU), a private not-for-profit institution of higher education, is unique among RI institutions with locations in four states (RI, NC, FL, CO). Our RI campus consists of a Downcity Campus located in Providence, and a Harborside Campus that is located off Narragansett Boulevard, approximately 3 miles south of the Downcity location. The total student population is just over 12,000, with approximately half of those students enrolled at the Providence campus. In fall of 2019 approximately two-thirds of enrolled students were considered out-of-state students (51 states and territories), and approximately 500 were international students (from 50 different countries). Traditionally, about half of JWU's students reside on campus; however, to reduce density on campus, the number of residential students will be reduced for the fall 2020 semester. The exact number that will be allowed to live on campus has yet been determined.

In Providence, the university employs approximately 950 full-time and 250 part-time faculty and staff. Of the 950, approximately 250 are full-time faculty members. Many faculty and staff commute from neighboring states and the vast majority of faculty and staff have been working remotely over the summer. In many cases remote work will continue this fall, except for those services that must be offered in person.

The majority of graduate programs will be offered in remote or online format. Those graduate programs that will meet on campus include Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (PA), Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (OTD), and Doctorate in Educational Leadership (Ed.D.). The OTD and PA programs began their on-campus instruction in July and have successfully implemented the COVID-19 requirements the university developed.

In the fall of 2020, the university will be converting to a semester-based system (previously UG programs were on a term schedule). The university plans to welcome a subset of undergraduate students back to campus and offer a combination of remote and face-to-face (F2F) classes. This subset will include all first-year students and those

programs that require F2F instruction. For those classes that meet F2F, the number of students in the classroom during any class session will be reduced to no more than 20.

The university's challenges for planning the fall return to campus include the fact that JWU has over 1,500 students enrolled in our highly acclaimed culinary arts programs. These programs require in-person culinary and baking & pastry labs, which cannot be replicated in a remote format. Other programs that require in-person instruction include science, health & wellness, engineering, as well as some courses in specific disciplines within the College of Hospitality Management. All courses that require in-person instruction will be completed by November 20 or pivot to remote instruction after that date. All final exams will be offered remotely.

Additional challenges for fall planning included determining the testing scenario that made the most sense for the university. Ultimately, JWU decided to conduct aggressive symptomatic testing and not conduct sentinel testing. The university has yet to sign a contract with a testing provider, and is still researching options. The university is also committed to testing all students who arrive on campus from states that have over a 5% rate of positive tests and do not come with a negative test within 72 hours of leaving home. Protocols for quarantining students from "hot-spot" states, and students waiting for test results have been developed, as have plans for isolating students who have tested positive for the coronavirus.



New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) is recognized for excellence and its leadership in the hands-on, experiential learning model that provides students with the opportunity to pursue their education in a diverse set of study areas. NEIT is a private, non-profit technical university with approximately 2,000 students, offering associate, bachelors, master's, doctorate and online degrees in over 50 programs. NEIT serves a student population that ranges from traditional age students attending directly from high school to adult learners who can range from 2 years after high school to mid-life adults. Approximately 20%-25% of the institution's students live on-campus with the 75-80% balance commuting mostly from RI, Massachusetts and Connecticut. NEIT conducts academic programs in a four-quarter format – fall, winter, spring, summer. The university has three campuses located in East Greenwich and Warwick, RI. The campuses comprise a total of seven academic buildings and 1 student residence. NEIT does not have any athletic buildings. There is a recreation field and outdoor basketball courts on the East Greenwich campus.

Critical challenges facing NEIT were much the same as those other

universities confronted when the need for COVID-19 planning surfaced earlier this year. Key considerations included: transitioning the university's hands-on academic experiences to a completely remote format for the spring quarter; developing physical space configurations and operational procedures to assure appropriate distancing; developing strategies to reopen the residence hall; enhancing cleaning protocols; formulating screening, testing, contact tracing processes; developing a strategy to assure rapid responses to potential outbreaks strategy and organizational structure; formulating and communicating COVID-19 related policies and procedures.

The success of any plan, regardless of how detailed and elegant it may be, rests on the campus community assuming a shared responsibility for assuring everybody's safety by exhibiting appropriate behavior; especially with regard to the basic needs to socially distance, wear face coverings, maintain enhanced personal hygiene and other practices that have been well publicized over the past several months. The most critical and unique strategies to reopen the NEIT campuses include a phased approach to reopening, the pivot from hands-on to remote learning and testing strategies that are appropriate to the unique needs of the university.

Phased Approach to Reopening

The university formulated a phased approach to reopening with strategies to limit the density of people in the campuses' buildings at any one time; students, faculty and staff. The basic strategy was to be completely remote for the spring quarter and to begin on-ground operations in a very limited configuration for the summer quarter with increasingly on-campus operations in the fall. Summer quarter classes are on-campus in a "hybrid" format - consisting of both on-campus and on-line learning. On-campus courses were prioritized to accommodate high need requirements for hands-on learning for both summer and fall quarters. The opening of campus life facilities and programs are very limited for the summer quarter. The residence hall will remain closed as will the fitness center, library and organized student activities. Summer quarter dining services will be limited to grab-and-go items and bottled beverages. Student services will continue with some on-campus with others being provided remotely, where possible.

Fall quarter will continue in a hybrid format and will see an increase in on-ground classes. The student residence hall is scheduled to open with single occupancy bedrooms and approximately 50% capacity. Residential students will complete a personalized COVID-19 care plan that will outline a way to self-quarantine or isolate off-campus at their parents' home or with a responsible adult. For students who don't have such an opportunity, approximately 10% of the capacity will be reserved to accommodate quarantined and isolated students. Dining

services will resume with a limited menu and will be prepared to deliver meals to self-quarantined and isolated residential students.

Pivoting from Hands-on to Remote Learning

Converting the NEIT hands-on learning format to a remote configuration was, arguably, the university's biggest challenge. Assuring the highest possible quality of academic experience for the university's broad range of study areas was paramount. To allow faculty enough time to create rewarding on-line experiences, NEIT extended the break between winter and spring quarters from 1 week to seven weeks.

Most of NEIT's students are commuters and are considered as part of the general population for testing purposes. With respect to residential students returning in the fall, based on residency history, NEIT anticipates relatively few students arriving from states having a 5% or greater positivity rate. After evaluation of numerous testing programs, NEIT's plan, since all students are currently commuters, and since the university's population will not support the minimum testing requirements of certain testing facilities, is to refer symptomatic students, faculty and staff to their primary care professional or to off-campus testing facilities. The university will continue to evaluate asymptomatic testing programs to address specific populations, including residential students for the fall quarter, students coming from "hot spots" and people engaged in high-contact situations. Dining service personnel will be tested by the RI DOH facilities

Planning for and implementation of the NEIT Reopening Plan will continue to evolve in response to the changing COVID-19 circumstances. The full [Reopening Plan](#) is posted on the university's website and will be updated from time to time with modifications as may become necessary.



Providence College is a primarily undergraduate institution on a 105-acre campus located in Providence's Elmhurst neighborhood. It has approximately 4,800 total enrolled students during the fall 2020 semester, along with 1,100 faculty and staff. It has a student/faculty ratio of 12:1.

In response to exploding concerns about the coronavirus, Providence College suspended in-person classes for the balance of the spring semester on March 16, 2020. In addition, most of the college's professional staff workforce transitioned at that time to remote work. The faculty and academic support personnel (from academic affairs, the library, information technology, and other operational units)

quickly transitioned to remote instruction and the semester was completed according to its original schedule. Degrees were formally awarded to members of the Class of 2020 during a virtual ceremony on May 17, 2020.

Planning for the fall semester began in earnest during May. Despite the uncertainty, which continues into the fall semester, the college created a system to foster creation of a plan responsive to the COVID-19 Rhode Island Guidelines for Colleges and Universities. Rev. Brian J. Shanley, O.P., the institution's president at that time, appointed a Continuity Task Force responsible for "coordinat(ing) the research and discussions around continuity planning and develop(ing) recommendations related to conducting Academic Year 2020-2021 with an emphasis on re-opening with in-person instruction in fall 2020." The task force comprises some 150 people, representing the faculty, student population, administration, and staff, each of whom is assigned to one or more of its 16 subgroups. A steering committee of 28 assists the four co-chairs in providing high-level guidance and developing strategy. The Continuity Task Force provides recommendations to the President's Senior Cabinet, which makes final decisions. A second group, the COVID-19 Financial Task Force, is responsible for monitoring the financial impact of the pandemic on the college and making recommendations to the cabinet.

The fall semester began on Aug. 31, with most of the student population living on campus or in the nearby neighborhoods. Some 400 students elected to study remotely for the entire semester, and a handful of others took leaves of absence. Instruction is provided through a mix of in-person, hybrid, and fully remote teaching techniques. Structures are in place to allow for flexibility, and faculty members are taking responsibility for devising the best ways in which to provide instruction. Students and faculty members alike have been provided the option to study or teach, as the case may be, remotely for the entire semester without penalty or judgment. The college expects the situation to remain fluid during the entire semester, with the possibility of individual faculty members or students needing to adjust course as circumstances change.

The fall reopening plan features extensive planning relative to COVID-19 screening, testing, contact tracing, and quarantine/isolation procedures. For example, processes were created to make possible the quarantining of some 170 students from other countries or "hot spot" states for 14 days, in advance of the start of the semester. The college's Student Health Center has made a series of structural adjustments to allow for the management of symptomatic student cases and is helping provide mental health counseling services to students. PC requires everyone on campus to follow strict guidelines

regarding face masks, physical distancing, and other safety measures, and it has developed an extensive set of cleaning and disinfection protocols. Extensive adjustments have been made to classrooms, residence hall spaces, dining facilities, and common areas for safety purposes and to create room to quarantine and isolate students who become ill or exposed to someone who is.

The fall semester calendar has been modified by eliminating standard holidays, e.g., Labor Day, and by formalizing a switch to remote instruction for the balance of the semester after Thanksgiving break. Visitors to campus will be sharply discouraged, and the college is coordinating with the Big East Conference and Hockey East Association to determine whether and when intercollegiate sports will continue. Virtually all events will be remote, and any that are held in person will be limited in accordance with state guidelines.

Providence College enters the fall semester with its plans in place, ready and able to adapt as needed in light of ongoing public health announcements and evolving circumstances. PC's coronavirus website provides resources and information for students, faculty and staff, families, and other interested constituencies.



Rhode Island College is a regional comprehensive public college that serves approximately 7,500 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students through its five schools: The Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development, the School of Business, the School of Nursing and the School of Social Work. Established in 1854, it is RI's first public institution of higher education.

The college is located on a beautiful 180-acre suburban campus in the vibrant city of Providence and has two satellite locations: the RI Nursing Education Center in Providence's Innovation District, as well as our Workforce Development Hub located in the heart of Central Falls, a predominately Latinx community that has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Our student body is primarily non-residential commuters, with 98% drawn from RI, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The college offers degrees supported with high-touch, hands-on, practical learning programs, including laboratories, performing and visual arts, and nursing, education and social work programs with clinical experiences in underserved populations, such as older adults and communities of color. Approximately 90% of our total campus community — encompassing students, faculty and staff — commute every day, often from the most vulnerable communities that have been hardest hit by the pandemic. Approximately 15% of students live in congregate settings in the college's residential village, which

consists of six residence halls. Nearly 350 participate in intercollegiate sports, including 21 different NCAA Division III varsity programs.

In light of the pandemic, RIC's Strategic Planning Committee, originally charged with developing the college's 3-5 year plan, was given a new focus: immediate planning for the upcoming academic year. The committee, comprised of some 60 faculty and staff members, focused on our three overarching strategic directions: 1) Academic and teaching excellence; 2) Quality of the student experience; and 3) Strengthening resource generation and financial stewardship. To aid in the development of the plan, two more committees were formed: the RIC Online Committee was charged with identifying strategies to support remote teaching and learning. This committee examined all facets of remote instruction, including technology needs, faculty training and support for students. Anticipating decreases in its state allocation and decreases in tuition and fee revenue based on the devastating economic impact of COVID-19, the college's Strategic Budget and Resources Planning Committee conducted an analysis of the college's structural deficit. This committee made recommendations for balancing the college's budget by addressing realistic revenue opportunities and achieving expense savings.

Each of these committees, with guidance from the President's Executive Council (PEC), the Academic Leadership Council and the COVID-19 Planning Team, was tasked to work on specific areas for fall planning. For each of those areas, the committees addressed specific questions identified as critical for campus operations for the academic year. The college followed the MOCHA decision-making process to keep track of the work to be completed by each member of the team. Additionally, the committees were required to align their recommendations with the guidelines from Phase II in the Governor's phased reopening plan for the state. Draft plans were shared with identified stakeholders and the assigned manager of the plan for review and feedback. The committee chairs and plan owners submitted final draft plans to the President's Executive Council and the president for review and decision-making.

Rhode Island College made the decision to teach, learn and work in a predominately remote environment to start the fall 2020 academic year. In addition, the college will offer a modified housing and dining program, while providing limited opportunities for student-athletes to practice and compete in the fall season in accordance with NCAA health and safety protocols. While most classes will be offered online in either synchronous, asynchronous or hybrid format, select studio and laboratory classes, along with some first-year courses, may be

offered in-person.

Ultimately, the decision to work in a remote environment was made with the understanding that access to and delivery of high-quality academic programs and robust student experiences is not possible unless the RIC campus community is healthy and well. Simply put, the college prioritized maintaining the health and safety of members of its campus community in the fulfillment of our mission during these unprecedented times.



On May 18, 2020, Rhode Island School of Design issued a report titled **Reopening the Campus AY20–21**. The report summarizes recommendations by five working groups regarding reopening the RISD campus for the 2020–21 academic year. The recommendations are shaped by three priorities — public health safety, academic integrity, and financial viability — and framed by two alternative scenarios for the coming academic year: 1) A radically “de-densified campus,” with students on campus subject to a multi-layered regime of health safety protocols, in which core studio and shop-based courses are offered in person, and other courses are offered via remote means or in a hybrid remote/in-person model and 2) A “remote fall” scenario, in which all courses are offered remotely in the fall 2020, and core studios and shop-based courses are offered in person during the 2021 winter session and spring semesters under health safety protocols. On June 15, 2020, President Somerson announced that RISD would proceed with the report’s “de-densified campus” scenario for the 2020–21 academic year.

Eight task forces were assembled to refine and implement the de-densified campus plan, covering the following key areas: public health, academics, student affairs, physical plant, technology and training, workplace policies and practices, education and communication, and external relations. RISD engaged the service of Dr. Richard P. Keeling, MD and Dr. Jennifer Dickson, MPH DrPH of Keeling Associates Consulting, to advise on all health-related aspects of RISD’s reopening plans, and coordinated our efforts with the following individuals and organizations: Associate Professor of Epidemiology at Brown University Dr. Brandon Marshall, PhD; Infectious disease physician and Associate Professor of Medicine at Brown University Dr. Philip Chan; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy; RI Department of Health; American College Health Association

RISD typically enrolls 2,000 undergraduate and 500 graduate students for study on the Providence campus. RISD has not previously offered remote credit-bearing coursework. The 2020–21 academic year will mark a significant change in RISD’s enrollment figures and

pedagogical profile. We project a total enrollment for fall 2020 of 2,156, with approximately 20% of our students studying remotely. 1,725 students (~80%) will study at the Providence campus. Of these 1,725 students, 959 (~55%) will reside in RISD dormitories. RISD has established a modified academic calendar, that begins with a mandatory 14-day quarantine for all in-resident students, starting September 3. The second week of quarantine, starting September 10, coincides with the first week of formal coursework, which will be delivered entirely online. Starting September 17, RISD faculty will deliver courses in one of three modes: in person, on-line, or a hybrid of the two modes. Fully 42% of all fall courses will be delivered fully online, significantly reducing the density of students in RISD's studios, shops and classrooms.

All RISD community members living, working, or studying on campus during the fall semester will be tested at the beginning of the term. All costs for baseline arrival testing will be covered by RISD. The test procedure involves a self-collected swab of the "anterior nares" (the inside of the nostril tip), with a medical provider present. All tests will be processed by the Broad Institute. In addition to comprehensive baseline arrival testing, RISD is proposing a surveillance testing regime of ~20% of the non-remote population weekly.

RISD has established a respiratory clinic for students to be examined and tested. If a test result is positive, or if a student exhibits symptoms and is awaiting a test result, RISD has protocols to move the student to a designated set of rooms that meet ASHRAE guidelines for isolation spaces. Students in isolation spaces will not be permitted to leave their rooms until a negative result is received for symptomatic students and for 14 days for COVID-positive students. RISD has implemented the use of the CRUSH COVIDRI app for contact tracing and has trained 11 contact tracers to conduct contact tracing in the event of a positive case.

The majority of RISD's employees will be working remotely and not on campus. For those working on campus, a daily self-screening must be completed confirming that they are symptom-free before entering campus. Employees are required to wear a mask when on campus, maintain 6 feet physical distancing, and sanitize their work areas.

RISD has implemented sweeping changes to the physical plant to ensure that social distancing is possible in all studios, classrooms, shops and public spaces. Most dorms are single occupancy. High-touch equipment has been clustered in centralized output centers; shop occupancies have been de-densified with staggered schedules, checkerboard use patterns, and increased hours. Over 150,000 linear feet of floor tape has been placed to establish clearly marked

occupancy zones in studios and shops. To address building systems performance, RISD engaged a mechanical engineering consultant, and an occupational health and safety environmental engineering company, to review and evaluate the mechanical heating, cooling and ventilation systems of all campus buildings, and to recommend options for improved performance in the context of COVID-19. RISD is following the most recent (July 17, 2020) ASHRAE guidelines for all residential rooms dedicated to students awaiting test results, or students in isolation. RISD has placed over 4,000 signs in its facilities as part of an education campaign to maintain social distancing, wear a mask, mark capacity limits as well as directional signage.

RISD is committed to the health of both our academic community and the city at large. Therefore, RISD is reducing points of public contact on campus where feasible. The Fleet Library, the Edna W. Lawrence Nature Lab, Campus Exhibitions Galleries, RISD Museum, RISD Stores, and Portfolio Cafeteria will be open only to RISD students, faculty, and staff during the fall semester.

RISD has amended, and significantly strengthened, its Student Code of Conduct. RISD will take swift and decisive action to address, adjudicate, and resolve non-compliant behaviors. Employees who fail to observe COVID-19 workplace expectations, policies, and requirements as detailed on [covid.risd.edu](https://www.covid.risd.edu) and in RISD's required COVID-19 trainings may be subject to progressive, HR employment action in accordance with applicable disciplinary procedures. Mandatory public health training and a public health campaign will prepare students and employees to safely operate on campus and educate them about the need for personal responsibility to protect the safety of the wider community.



With campuses on the coast of Bristol and in the heart of Providence, R.I., Roger Williams University is a forward-thinking private university committed to strengthening society through engaged teaching and learning. At RWU, small classes, direct access to faculty and guaranteed opportunity for real-world projects ensure that its nearly 4,000 undergraduates – along with hundreds of law students, graduate students and adult learners – graduate with the ability to think critically along with the practical skills that today's employers demand. Roger Williams is leading the way in American higher education, confronting the most pressing issues facing students and families – increasing costs, rising debt and job readiness.

In addition to the assistance and guidance on reopening planning provided by the Governor's Office and weekly meetings with the IHE primary working group, Roger Williams University established a Reopening Roger Steering Committee in April overseeing five

working groups.

The Steering Committee, comprised of working group co-chairs, representatives from University College in Providence and the School of Law, and faculty and administrators with subject expertise, was charged with developing the Reopening Roger plan for review by the President/Cabinet and the Chief Operating Officer/Emergency Response Team. The working groups involved over 125 community members representing students, faculty and staff.

The How to Learn working group investigated adaptive practices in courses including modifying classroom layouts and scheduling to support social distancing, technology enabling livestream and recording for synchronous and asynchronous learning, classroom cleaning procedures, and communicated with Faculty Governance and Academic Planning.

The How to Live working group focused on residence life, dining, related cleaning policies, move-in scheduling, student guest policies, travel guidelines, and identifying isolation and quarantine space. This working group also addressed the importance of centering student health, well-being and resiliency and developed a COVID-19 specific honor code (Roger's Compact) emphasizing individual responsibility and commitment to community public health.

The How to Engage working group focused on community engagement and experiential learning, service, athletics, study abroad, student programs, events, clubs and organizations, and student employment and service on and off campus.

The How to Respond working group developed protocols for COVID-19 EMT and Public Safety emergency response, health services, quarantine and isolation, health education, and collaborated with our Testing and Contact Tracing Committee.

The How to Work working group focused on employment practices, office cleaning procedures, reducing density in offices, policy development to guide employees - or those they live with - who have underlying health conditions, employee wellness and balancing family responsibilities.

Our unifying mission was to develop a plan that would allow the campus to open safely as possible and remain open for the duration of the semester. After several intense weeks of meetings reviewing working group recommendations and key decision making points, Steering Committee leadership participated in several town hall meetings involving university community members and finalized the

Reopening Roger plan on June 12, 2020.

10 Key Strategies:

- Commitment to mandatory face coverings policy applicable for all campus facilities and activities, for all employees and students, in all locations.
- Investment in installation of classroom technology enabling livestream and recording for synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- Incorporation of physical distancing practices (6 ft. or more) across campus, especially in classrooms, library, fitness center, and residence hall common areas.
- Mandatory weekly PCR testing, with results generally within 24 hours partnered with the Broad Institute for all employees and students. After all move-in testing is completed, students and targeted employee groups will be tested twice weekly through September and we will reassess this frequency in October.
- Revised academic calendar resulting in opening one week earlier, eliminating all holidays, and completing all in-person instruction at Thanksgiving break.
- Staggered opening and check-in dates across 10 days instead of 5 days, both semesters.
- Significant occupancy and seat reductions in all dining facilities consistent with state guidance. Added two additional residential dining options with full take-out options.
- Investment in installation of Plexiglas screens for all customer-facing service desks. Designed and installed surface cleaning stations in all classrooms, office suites, and buildings.
- Installation of thermal temperature screening stations and FAR-UVC lighting in dining, library and fitness center.
- All students required to read and sign Roger's Compact, our COVID-19 specific honor code.



Salve Regina is a private, residential university that enrolls approximately 2,600 undergraduate and graduate students who are supported by 400 faculty and staff. As a smaller institution with many buildings, a relatively enclosed suburban campus setting with ample outdoor spaces and a small, average class size of 19 in normal times, Salve Regina began its reopening planning process with some distinct advantages. Nevertheless, as with other institutions, Salve's planning process has resulted in substantial modifications to life on campus in the fall and in new investments to support university operations including: physical changes to campus to reduce the population density of classrooms, residence halls, and other communal spaces; large scale deployment of classroom technology to support instruction whether a student is in the classroom or participating remotely; and a layered approach to the management and mitigation of the risks of

COVID-19 to the university community.

As the spring semester ended, the university president established a Campus Readiness Group (CRG) to design and implement the return of students and employees to campus in the fall. Led by a member of the president's cabinet and populated with representatives from across campus, the CRG was guided by a commitment to the health and safety of the campus community and the integrity of the academic experience.

The CRG began working to reopen campus with an understanding that the university would seek to allow for a smooth and rapid transition to fully online instruction should the need arise. Accordingly, the university will reopen with a hybrid blend of online and fully in-person classes. In-person classes will be offered in a high-flex model to allow students and faculty to attend in person or remotely as circumstances — including individual circumstances — change. Many in-person classes at Salve will run fully in-person while maintaining social distance without adjustment. However, a portion of classes will utilize a staggered attendance approach with students attending in-person on alternate days and attending remotely when not in class.

The high-flex model presented a significant challenge to Salve as it required the school to make a substantial investment in classroom technology, install that technology, and train faculty to use it. Each classroom space at Salve will be outfitted with video-conferencing systems to enable live-streaming and capture of each lecture offered for students to access in real-time or after the fact. In addition to supporting the staggered attendance model, this technology supports populations that are unable to return to campus or are temporarily unable to attend classes.

This approach to delivering classes is complemented by a careful reduction of the population density of Salve student residences. Due to social distancing requirements, Salve will open with a housing capacity of 1,041 students, reduced from its typical 1,264. To make up the shortfall, Salve will house up to 140 students in a local hotel complete with resident advisors, programming, and campus shuttles.

With instruction and housing addressed, the CRG developed a layered, comprehensive approach to risk management of COVID-19 that supports the new classroom and residential models. This layered approach consists of comprehensive preparation of the campus community, on-going surveillance of disease on campus and rapid response to suspected and confirmed cases. In addition to physical modifications of the campus and new sanitation schedules, Salve has instituted a comprehensive communication plan to keep its

community informed. This plan includes the establishment of a Back to Salve website, frequent virtual town halls, weekly email updates to the campus community, new signage across campus, and the development of a robust Salve Pledge that will help re-engineer community behavior to support COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

Individual health will be assessed with a self-screening of everyone on campus each day using the school's existing RAVE system. In addition, the school has partnered with the Broad Institute, one of the world's leading research labs, to test for disease on campus. Everyone returning to campus in the fall will be tested. Then, over the course of the semester, a random sample of students, faculty and staff will be tested regularly. Anyone symptomatic for COVID-19 will be tested immediately with results expected within 24 hours. The school has hired additional health services staff and will establish a respiratory clinic to focus on symptomatic cases and testing. Quarantine and isolation facilities are under construction. A contact identification team will support contact tracing in conjunction with RI DOH. Finally, Salve developed a detailed pandemic response plan supported by its 24-hour safety & security team and the university's emergency management team.

Salve Regina is confident in its reopening plan and continues to rely on the RI DOH and the best practices of its colleagues in higher education, both within and outside of RI, as it reviews and modifies its plan in response to ongoing developments.



The University of Rhode Island is a competitive and highly regarded public institution in New England and beyond. Founded in 1892, the university is the principal public flagship research and graduate institution in RI, enrolling about 14,650 undergraduate students and more than 2,240 graduate students.

In the last decade, the university has focused efforts on student success initiatives, implemented a new general education program, invested heavily in financial aid, and made significant improvements to campus facilities and infrastructure. The university funded a major strategic investment in new full-time faculty in high demand areas, resulting in about 47 percent of full-time faculty being hired within the past eight years.

The university is known regionally and worldwide for its big ideas and pioneering research in such areas as air, water, and ground pollution; biotechnology and life sciences; engineering, forensic sciences, marine and environmental sciences, neuroscience, pharmaceuticals, cybersecurity, the behavioral sciences and public health promotion. At the heart of the university is a strong core of traditional academic

disciplines that provide the foundation for all specialized, professional, and applied areas of study. The university's global footprint and influence is expanding, while its local profile is stronger than ever. International partnerships have grown and the university has forged hundreds of business partnerships that align with state economic development initiatives (cybersecurity, food strategy, innovation campuses/job creation).

Beautiful, tree-lined, and quiet, URI is quintessential New England. Its rural main campus is located on 1,248 acres in Kingston, where the campus core — including a quadrangle surrounded by stately granite buildings — is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The university's renowned Graduate School of Oceanography is located at the 165-acre Narragansett Bay Campus. The W. Alton Jones Campus in West Greenwich remains a 2,300 nature preserve. Its Providence Campus is home to the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies. Nearby in the city, is the new RI Nursing Education Center. The university employs 796 full- and part-time faculty and 384 adjunct faculty. Of the faculty complement, 51% are women and 21% are faculty of color. A total of 1,997 full- and part-time staff are also employed, 11% identify with underrepresented groups and 59% are women.

On the first day of classes for the spring semester in late January, URI received a call about a student who screened positive for travel history and COVID-19 symptoms. Eventually the student tested negative, but the university was prepared, given the frequent training for our doctors, nurses, EMS responders and staff in infection control procedures, how to don personal protective equipment, as well as conduct contact tracing, inventory control and supply management. Even given that knowledge and preparation, the COVID-19 experience has been extraordinary in terms of the number of unprecedented critical decisions that needed to be made within short timeframes, some under a great deal of pressure from students and parents for answers. Like colleges and institutions across the country, the experience was and continues to be challenging, in terms of the uncertainty ahead and the all-encompassing nature of the crisis. In setting the tone for the university, President David M. Dooley and the entire senior leadership said early on that the university would base its decisions on scientific data for the health and well-being of all members of our community.

The university's public health response to the COVID-19 outbreak continues to be led by the president and his senior leadership team, and carried out by the COVID Task Force, headed by the assistant vice president for health and wellness/director of Health Services and director of Emergency Management, with broad representation from

across the institution. In addition, teams of university officials were engaged in robust university-wide planning activities designed to carefully study options and strategies for a fall re-opening. After an extraordinarily detailed analysis, looking at the risks and considering the most up-to-date science related to the virus, on June 24 the university announced its decision to have students come back to campus in the fall under a blended or hybrid model of instruction delivery, in-person and online, with students leaving for the semester at the Thanksgiving break and completing their finals online.

The university has been committed to reopening our campuses while keeping the community's health and safety as top priorities. All of our plans strive to: protect the health and vitality of the URI community; ensure academic progress of our students and provide a high-quality learning environment; sustain the financial viability of the institution; and, maintain the university workforce at or near full capacity, if possible, under all of the guidelines for higher education re-openings.

In the plans for the fall semester, the university has outlined the health and safety expectations for every member of our community. These expectations are essential to a successful fall semester and are applicable to every member of the Rhody community. URI preparations for fall semester have been carefully coordinated with and reviewed by the RI Department of Health and align with recently published US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for higher education re-openings.

The university invested significantly in faculty development to help ensure the best possible virtual learning and online experience for students. More than 1,000 faculty have or will have taken one or more of the online or bootcamp trainings offered by the Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning in May or throughout the summer, resulting in a significant enhancement in online and blended teaching.

Although we have been successful, it has taken a great deal of effort and time to find a reliable source for a COVID-19 test with a rapid turnaround time to administer to resident students during move-in, and throughout the year for symptomatic students from on and off campus. General surveillance testing for community members, including students, faculty and staff will also occur and will enable us to better understand what is happening with the virus within our community.

Rising costs and supply chain issues have been and continue to be challenging in the procurement of supplies. The university has purchased and centralized distribution of sanitizing products,

PPE/masks, plexiglass, and other products used by the facilities staff to prepare buildings for reopening and for general use, following protocols beyond those issued by the state.

The abrupt nature of the spring semester pivot to fully online teaching and learning combined with the necessary decision to reduce the housing numbers, created a great deal of frustration among students and parents, many of them Rhode Islanders. Parental response has ranged from gratitude for all the precautions we are putting in place, to not being able to accept that their son or daughter will need to quarantine for 14 days if they are coming from one of the hot spots in the country identified by the CDC. Many of them have been wrestling with financial considerations to continue with their student's college education.

A communications strategy provides ongoing, frequent, accurate communications to all community members, but in particular, returning students, new students and parents of both. Community messages, a COVID-19 hotline, websites, live webinars, Eblasts, video messages, and social media posts have been part of the communications to inform, update and respond to ongoing student and parent inquiries. We launched a public health campaign, #rhodytogether, to reinforce the responsibility each of us has to take care of ourselves and, in doing so, help keep our entire community stay healthy in the midst of a global pandemic. To keep our community informed about ongoing efforts related to COVID-19 testing, URI also developed a COVID-19 tracker that displays the number of COVID 19 tests conducted and the number of positive test results received by date and cumulatively. In addition, the tracker includes an update on the number of students in isolation or quarantine. As we continue to work together to protect the health and safety of our community, all members of our community are encouraged to commit to the #rhodytogether pledge. The goal is not to simply get through this crisis and survive, but rather to emerge as a more resilient institution in a new, vibrant future.

VIII. SEPTEMBER

By Labor Day (September 7, 2020), all eleven IHEs had brought back staff, faculty and some or all of their student populations back to campus. With the steady state of the coronavirus levels in RI and a continuation of Phase III of Rhode Island's Reopening Plan, nearly all IHEs are implementing their plans for hybrid learning (i.e., some on-line, some in-person instruction) as formulated during late spring and early summer. The changes in the

scheduling of courses will accommodate a popular tactic of finishing in-person instruction by Thanksgiving, when nearly all students will return home and remain there until spring semester. It is hoped that this tactic will not only prevent viral resurgences on campuses post-holiday travel but will also reduce the level of testing, retesting, isolation and quarantine for the remainder of fall semester.

In an effort to thwart the temptation by students to engage in back-to-school partying, most IHEs have been proactive in student communications regarding the personal, societal and institutional consequences related to close, unprotected contacts. Updated codes of conduct, coordination with host community municipal leadership, and proactive communications have been used to deter behavior that is not consistent with public health guidelines. State leaders from the Governor's Office, RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner and the RI Department of Health coordinated these efforts and others with the IHEs for consistency and review. Because off-campus establishments are a draw for gathering, the Department of Business Regulation increased enforcement of public health measures of those facilities frequented by students.

All partners want to contain community spread for this population. It is recognized that the dynamic nature of this pandemic requires a flexibility that can be challenging. Communication and partnership between the state and the IHEs has increased during this time. Meetings have been held to assure clear guidance and safe recommendations are shared among the IHEs as well as coordination across IHE health directors, residence life, dining halls and testing processes, with additional ad hoc discussions held as needed.

The state responded to requests from IHEs to create public-facing information for students, families and friends to address COVID-related questions. IHEs shared their move-in data with the state to ensure student population data was current and to give context to case investigation and data analysis. An efficient system for receiving test results from IHEs and the contracted labs was developed. COVID testing among college populations varied by degree and scope, but most engaged in testing upon arrival, upon notification of suspected cases and/or randomly throughout the fall semester. Upon receipt of positive test results, the state engaged in contact investigation and contact tracing with assistance from the IHEs. Crush COVID, a state tracking app, was promoted by some IHEs for daily self-checks as well as GPS recording of travel data.

As noted in the individual summaries, IHEs engaged in extensive communications campaigns to ensure students understand the impact of community spread and the importance of following requirements for social gatherings, physical distancing, mask-wearing and Rhode Island Executive Orders. RI Department of Health, RI Department of Business Regulation, RI State Police, and municipal police departments support IHE communication and mitigation efforts with multifarious tactics, such as increased

monitoring of hospitality establishments, local ordinances related to partying, and fines. A rapid response to complaints is expected to address and contain incidents from escalating.

Community collaboration has been the hallmark of the planning process, with outstanding participation from numerous entities that share the same goal: Protecting Rhode Islanders and all who engage in postsecondary studies here from coronavirus.

IX. APPENDIX



- 1) Plan template
- 2) Sub-team committee members