

## **Update #1 to the Higher Education Report: Recommendations for Reopening Undergraduate Colleges and Universities**

### **Questions about reopening on August 24 in Phase 3 and other matters**

**Issued by Mark Ojakian, State Lead for Reopening Higher Education**

**May 15, 2020**

Below I respond to four questions that have been raised by colleges and universities.

1. A question was raised about whether schools could start on August 24, 2020, gating conditions permitting, rather than the original date of September 1, 2020 as suggested by the Governor's phases of reopening. I support this solution and suggest institutions, if they so desire, can make plans to start bringing students back to campus on or after August 24, 2020. I will relay this change to the Governor's office.
2. Questions were raised about reopening under Phase 1a. Those institutions opening 1) administrative and business offices or 2) research operations will be following the business reopening guidelines except for limits on capacity and on size of gatherings. Instead, institutions must observe 6-foot separation.

Those private institutions of higher education opening offices under Phase 1a should complete the DECD certification required for all businesses and forward a copy of that certificate to me (CSCU-President@ct.edu). Those opening research operations should submit to DPH that they are in compliance with the business guidelines with the two amendments noted, with a copy to me (CSCU-President@ct.edu); the email addresses for DPH are noted at the end of this memorandum.

3. A question was raised about whether the Subcommittee Report calls on all institutions to undertake contact testing. The intent of the report was to enable those institutions that want to undertake contact tracing to do so by training their own contact tracers. No institution is obliged to do contact tracing, and the assumption is that institutions with commuter students will rely on the regional health officials. I encourage discussions with local public health officials about referral process for non-residential students who test positive so they can conduct tracing.
4. A question was raised about testing: whether or not colleges and universities could partner with a medical provider to perform testing. Colleges and universities should not commit to purchasing test kits at this time. But, while we wait for additional information from the Governor's office on the availability of testing in time for residential students in August, colleges and universities may begin discussions with local providers to ascertain whether partnerships might be available if needed to administer the state-provided tests.

Institutions need only submit plans for phases in which they intend to reopen activities, and they need not submit plans for later phases when submitting plans for an earlier phase. Plans should be sent to

the Department of Public Health (Thomas.St.Louis@ct.gov; Av.Harris@ct.gov and Brie.Wolf@ct.gov) with a copy to me (CSCU-President@ct.edu), as the State's education lead, so that we are aware of who is opening which activities and under what conditions.