



## Survey Responses from University COVID-19 Survey

We present to you the results of last week's survey on "Keeping our Campuses and our Communities Safe." In 2 ½ days, we received over 100 helpful ideas to prevent the outbreaks that have plagued other cities.

Clearly, we touched a chord. When the nation learned about the outbreaks of COVID-19 at the University of North Carolina, Iowa State and Notre Dame early last week, there was little surprise. College students who have been confined for months, often in their parents' homes, are likely to savor their freedom in every respect. Simply hoping they will mask and social distance—abandon the parties and social life central to college life—was wishful thinking.

The safety of the students, as well as the faculty, staff, neighbors, and health personnel at nearby hospitals, require vigorous and innovative measures. It is an ethical and public health obligation. The suggestions that we've assembled, thanks to our many respondents, are worth serious consideration. Hopefully, these ideas will prove helpful to our university officials as they accelerate protections.

We tried to remove redundant and Orwellian measures and sort these ideas into categories. We would like to hear from you and welcome additions.

### What is a creative solution/idea you have to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among university students?

#### Health Communications and Education

- **Communicate Consequences of Violating Best Practices**
  - Create public service messages from famous athletes and entertainment figures.
  - Predict how many lives one student could save and engage students in defining communications, t-shirts, and recognitions.
  - Begin every class with a message about Safety during a Pandemic. Prepare standard messages for faculty and for campus religious and extracurricular organizations. Corporations structured for safety do this routinely.
  - Describe and create scenarios about how disobeying the rules will lead to potential embarrassment, shame or guilt.
  - Introduce photos of people who have died from COVID-19 and place in the dormitories and around the colleges to remind people of the consequences of spreading COVID-19.
  - Post on school websites videos of people in hospitals with COVID-19 to display how illness looks in its extreme consequences.
  
- **Provide education on COVID-19**
  - Promote peer-based education. Allow students to create the content and conduct learning.

- Require all students to participate in one 60-minute COVID-19 seminar on social distancing, masks, etc. or institute a required (for credit) course on infection control.
- Offer guidance on how to socialize, dine out, exercise safely.
- **Make Healthy Practices cool**
  - Create & distribute masks with school logos, academic disciplines or pictures of favorite entertainers.
  - Align mask wearing to make it more of a fashionable accessory while dissuading the use of gaiters as they have been shown to be worse than normal mask types.

## Contact Tracing and Testing

- **Establish Internal Contact Tracing capacity**
- **Testing**
  - Obtain daily saliva testing along with random sample blood/mucosal testing to keep track of the spread, prevalence and incidence.
  - Require anyone testing positive to undergo 14-day quarantine and to be isolated on campus (unless of course they need to be hospitalized).
  - Test for the coronavirus through wastewater in residential dorms. This has been implemented in the University of Arizona, UC San Diego, and Syracuse University. This proactive method of testing may have prevented an outbreak at one of University of Arizona's student dorms, as they were able to lock down the dorm, engage another round of testing, and identified two asymptomatic students among the residence.

## Technology

- **COVID-19 Detection**
  - Run a crowd-sourced symptom monitoring experiment or study with as many students and staff as possible which could detect COVID-19 symptoms early and proactively by using wrist wearable and bed sensor devices (Oura ring, Ava bracelet, FitBits, Apple Watches, etc.) combined with symptom self-reporting systems.
    - Require that students wear a device that enforces social distancing (tracks where they are and where they have been and beeps when they are less than 6 feet together) recording this on a master database.
  - Invent some kind of synthetic biological material that could be put on a board in an entranceway, or in any room, and which turns a different color when there are COVID-19 particles in the air.
- **Enforce Mask Wearing**
  - Create an app where students record their mask wearing several times a day and an app to record pictures of students who are not wearing masks.
  - Require signed contracts from the students and their parents committing to compliance with infection-prevention rules.
  - Activate existing security cameras around campuses to identify faces of students without masks, matching with student ID photos. One offense=warning. Second offense=probation. Third offense=dismissal.
  - Activate off campus security cameras where students congregate to match unmasked students with their ID photos.

## Rules, Regulations & Policies

- **Close hot spots**
  - Close fraternity houses. Period.
  - Close all dorms where infractions occur, thereby not punishing those who follow rules.
- **Use codes and enforcement for individual behavior**
  - Control of infection through socialization 'passport control' rules.
  - Absolutely require masking and social distancing.
  - Penalize no faculty for choosing to work remotely. Paid TAs oversee small classes in distanced classrooms or tents.
  - Hire paid *health attendants* to enforce mask and social distancing rules.
- **Conduct remote learning and slowly introduce classrooms**
  - Offer On-line classes until January 2021 or until a vaccine is approved and given to high risk populations.
  - Close responsibly if a spike occurs. If possible, delay opening until other universities can experiment, maintain low viral loads and determine best practices.

## Infrastructure

- **Repurpose space for social distancing needs**
  - Set up a sign-up system for study rooms for students who do not have a quiet space for virtual classes and sanitize rooms between blocks.
  - Create campus facilities for safe drinking and socializing for student pods (12-15).
  - Create socially distanced exercise (or dance or music opportunities) on the campuses/fields.
- **Change how classes are held**
  - Contain classes to small groups.
  - Shorten the pod experiment to 4-6 weeks.
  - Find novel approaches to best practices for online learning. Open opportunities to hear world famous lectures and encourage university faculty to promote lively reflection and discussion.
  - Hold outdoor classes wherever possible. Heated tents with ventilation.
  - Create more 1-way signage and rope lines to increase physical distancing in cafeterias and other school buildings, etc.
  - Try virtual reality community apps such as VRChat and AltspaceVR where you can have meetings with virtual avatars of yourselves.
- **Reorganize residential facilities**
  - Avoid exposure in the residence halls; program activities for the students in the hall in order to limit the amount of outside exposure.
  - Minimize dorm and building occupancy rates, de-populate dorms, 1-2 to a room, not 3-4 (rent local hotels if necessary; and AirBnB).
- **Plan for and support students with COVID-19**
  - Recognize college students are generally healthy, but some will need special attention. Minimize hospitalization where possible and wise. Develop home kits where students monitor their condition and have online medical care available.

- Develop quarantine plans and reserve dorms/hotels in advance because some people will need to be isolated if proven infected or while being a person-under-investigation (PUI) pending test results.

## Competition and Incentives

### ● Competitions

- Announce a competition among the colleges and universities in the Pittsburgh region. The school with the fewest cases would win a prize. (*Unless this promotes inaccurate data sharing.*)
- Have a competition where college students get rewarded for bold and innovative ideas about preventing infection. Encourage social media postings.
- Partner with local media to sponsor a student competition to create public service messages targeted at their peers. The PSAs would be created, written, acted and/or recorded by students – and the winners would have their message posted around campus and/or publicly aired on local TV, radio stations, or promoted on ads nationally on Spotify, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, Google Ads, etc.

### ● Incentives

- Test daily for COVID-19 and those pods that have no spread or positive cases get a tuition break.
- Pods of students (12-15) could be given incentives to remain isolated to themselves.

## Student Engagement

### ● Get student input

- Mirror this survey with students and use their ideas.
- Pair departments and challenge them to engage the theater department to create remote entertainment opportunities open to other students (virtually).
- Encourage creative volunteerism remotely e.g., phone check ins to the elderly.
- Create socially-distanced exercise (or dance or music opportunities) on the campuses/fields. For freshman, engage them in remote tours of Pittsburgh including Phipps, museums, etc. Make them feel welcome and responsible for keeping a welcoming community safe.
- Create bigger pods of organic groups in a place they can eat, study, party together.
- Social distance game nights on zoom or in person such as: heads up, Pictionary zoom, cornhole, and tossing a football.
- Encourage students to form pods of friends, about 12 and no more than 15, to study and socialize. Perhaps allow use of campus facilities for safe drinking and socializing for the pods.
- Ask for student volunteers in each campus residence facility to serve as a "health promoter" to exert positive peer pressure to help with enforcement. Create group award for those with greatest adherence and lowest positivity rate. Enlist respected campus athletes to also serve in this role.
- Create an open forum (open mic) for the students, staff, and faculty to openly share their experiences and how they have been personally affected by the pandemic. This could both not only provide a chance to normalize and underscore the severity of the pandemic's impact, but also provide some catharsis/grieving/healing for those directly impacted in sharing their stories.

- **Encourage protective behaviors**

- Acknowledge the role that intoxication plays in relaxing caution and wise choices. Create a recognition/ reward system and request students to pledge and support one another in being sober or at least intoxication-free for one semester.

## What can/should Universities do right now to help protect the community?

### Health Communication/Education/Promotion

- **Communicate with the community**

- Inform the community about the strong measures you have taken to keep them safe.
- Engage communities in conversations with your students and faculty about their common goals for health disparities, social and racial injustice.
- Share an academic overview of the science behind COVID-19 and new developments in treatment and prevention as they unfold; use public media channels to disseminate information.
- Ask the community how they think the university can be a partner in protecting all. They did not have a voice in campus reopenings, so engage them now.
- Inspire students to value the common good and community service. Create rewards and awards for students who contribute the most to community.

- **Gather and Provide Accurate Information**

- Consult with public health officials and LISTEN to the facts.
- Provide updated, accurate information about your infection rates.

- **Promote community safety regulations and enforce them**

- Have campus eating establishments only provide take out.
- Support restaurant, grocery stores, bars and parks who institute *Student-free* hours or days/evenings. Encourage special hours (or days) for adults 60+ and people living with serious health conditions.

- **Promote health through resources**

- Provide free cloth masks to campus restaurants, and neighborhood businesses and community gathering spots as well as to all students, faculty, and .staff.
- Provide low cost, self-administered saliva tests to the neighborhoods proximate to the campus when available.

- **Make masks mandatory, and social distancing, testing**

- Make mask wearing mandatory when students leave their residence halls or other living units or campus.
- After vacations, require a negative COVID-19 test within 14 days prior to arriving on campus. No one could move into student housing or attend university functions without a negative test
- Keep the students on campus as much as possible. Require students who have violated protocols to sign out and sign in when they leave campus.
- Cancel return to campus after Thanksgiving to end of term (at peak flu season, etc).
- Create immune cohorts that have universal passports that entitle them to serve as teaching assistants, dorm monitors, community health “police.”

- Engage campus security and RAs in social distancing rounds.
- Create a "citizens patrol" to remind students to respect the health of all.
- **Community enforcement**
  - Close bars that violate protocols.
  - Work with local health officials, local eating and drinking establishments to identify and close violators that allow risky socializing and drinking.
  - Encourage neighborhood businesses to enforce the same mask mandate as their university neighbor.