



Dear Members of the HCCC Community:

On June 18, 2020, Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis, New Jersey's Secretary of Higher Education, in collaboration with Governor Murphy and his [Executive Order 155](#), issued [Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education in New Jersey](#). This Guidance provides direction for when and how institutions of higher education may gradually return to campus and resume operations.

The Guidance from the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) provides direction pertaining to permitted conduct at each Stage of Governor Murphy's Five-Stage Plan for New Jersey for various dimensions of campus life (e.g., instruction, computer labs, libraries, student services, transportation, and dining/food service). New Jersey is currently in Stage 2. Key takeaways from the Guidance include:

- Labs, clinical rotations, technical, and hands-on instruction are permitted in Stage 2. Instruction in these areas must adhere to state-established restrictions and required safety protocols.
- In Stage 3, most in-person instruction, labs, and other curricular activity is permitted while adhering to state-established occupancy restrictions and required safety protocols.
- Libraries are not permitted to operate beyond curbside pickup, and computer labs remain closed in Stage 2. Libraries and computer labs are permitted to operate with reduced capacity and additional health and safety protocols in place in Stage 3.
- Student Services are permitted to resume operation with reduced capacity and additional health and safety protocols in place starting in Stage 2.
- On-campus food services may only be "grab and go" in Stage 2 with outdoor dining permitted. Indoor dining is permitted in Stage 3 with limited occupancy and adherence to all CDC and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) protocols, social distancing guidelines, and sanitation protocols.

In alignment with the guidelines published by the CDC and the New Jersey Department of Health, the Guidance from OSHE also provides direction regarding general health and safety protocols and requirements that must be in place across dimensions and stages. Key takeaways include:

- Mandatory use of face coverings or masks for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors.
- Implementation of a regular cleaning and disinfection schedule.
- Expectation of regular hand cleaning with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Regulation of capacity in public spaces through social distancing.
- Maintenance of an adequate inventory of supplies.

In order to begin a gradual return to campus, institutions of higher education are required to submit a Restart Plan detailing how the institution will adhere to the conduct requirements established in the Guidance. Restart Plans must be submitted to OSHE a minimum of fourteen days prior to the institution resuming on campus activity of any kind. In addition to other activities, the Restart Plan requires institutions to:

- Deliver training for students, faculty, and staff regarding sanitization and social distancing practices.
- Perform frequent health screenings of students, faculty, staff, and visitors and provide education surrounding self-monitoring for symptoms.
- Establish COVID-19 testing guidance and contact tracing protocols developed in consultation with local health officials and in line with existing state and federal health privacy statutes and regulations.
- Provide alternate arrangements such as remote teaching and learning or flexible work for individuals who are unable to participate in in-person instruction or on-ground work.

The Return to Campus (RTC) Task Force is providing leadership for the completion of HCCC's Restart Plan and will be seeking input and feedback from stakeholders across the College.

In light of the Guidance issued by OSHE, the RTC would like to make the campus community aware of the following important developments in HCCC's planning efforts for a return to campus.

#### **Human Resources:**

- High-priority services that support students' needs will be first to return to campus. The majority of staff will continue to work remotely for now.
- HCCC is fully prepared to provide arrangements for people who are unable to work on-ground. Faculty and staff who have circumstances that prevent them from returning to work on-ground should work with their supervisors to determine appropriate arrangements.
- Prior to on-ground operations resuming, training for all students, faculty, and staff will be provided. Training sessions will focus on health and safety protocols issued by the CDC and NJDOH, procedures and practices specific to HCCC, and self-monitoring of symptoms.

#### **Academic Affairs and Teaching & Learning:**

- Per the Guidance, instruction is permitted to resume in lab, clinical rotation, technical, and hands-on settings in Stage 2. Instruction in these areas must adhere to state-established restrictions and safety protocols recommended and required by the health care community. While continuing to adhere to state-established occupancy restrictions, most other in-person instruction, labs, and other curricular activity is permitted in Stage 3
- The Guidance from OSHE is consistent with HCCC's planning-to-date. For fall 2020, HCCC will offer a mix of online and remote courses and selected on-ground instruction in areas such as labs, clinicals, and culinary courses.
- By offering a mix of classes online and remotely, additional space will be available so that on-ground classes can practice social distancing and take appropriate health precautions.
- Courses offered on-ground will adhere to specific recommendations including social distancing protocols, personal protective equipment usage, and enhanced cleaning and disinfecting operations.
- Students' academic and pedagogical needs will drive decisions regarding which courses have sections that are offered on-ground.

- Information about the fall 2020 schedule, including the modality of each course section, can be found at [www.hccc.edu/schedule](http://www.hccc.edu/schedule).

### **Campus Life & Student Support Services:**

- The Student Affairs and Enrollment team is identifying ways in which students can access services, such as admissions, placement testing, financial aid, advising, and registration in person, by appointment, in advance of the fall semester. It is likely this will include the use of the new Student Center so that proper social distancing is possible. Remote student support services will continue and students are encouraged to utilize those as a first option.
- In Stage 3, libraries and computer labs are permitted to open. We are in the process of determining proper safety protocols for their use.
- Campus meetings will continue to be held remotely in most cases. Any campus meeting conducted on-ground will be held in accordance with the capacity restrictions and health and safety protocols endorsed by the Governor and OSHE.

### **Health & Safety:**

- Students, faculty, and staff will be screened for symptoms ahead of entering HCCC facilities. The Health & Safety Working Group is currently exploring different methods of screening ranging from self-certification to temperature taking.
- The Guidance from OSHE requires institutions to have a testing protocol in place. The Health & Safety Working Group is working with local health officials and the guidelines provided by the CDC and NJ DOH to develop a protocol for HCCC.
- In the event an individual tests positive for COVID-19, a contact tracing plan will go into effect. We are in the process of developing a contact tracing plan with the NJDOH.
- Testing and contact tracing protocols will only be used to respond to those who present with symptoms on campus.
- Students and employees will be held harmless in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case. Students should not be penalized for their absences and employees will not be required to use accrued sick time.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, has also been ordered and will be disbursed as necessary to classrooms and offices.

### **Space & Facilities:**

- The frequency of cleaning operations will be increased in all buildings and areas where students, faculty, and staff will be learning, teaching, and working.
- Supplies have been ordered and will be disbursed to offices and classrooms prior to any return to on-ground operations. Supplies include paper towels, tissues, hand soap, hand sanitizer, latex gloves, disinfecting wipes, disinfecting spray, toilet paper, toilet seat covers, toilet bowl cleaner, and trash bags. Facilities is logging supply quantities into a computerized inventory that will allow us to reorder supplies before they run out.
- Hot water is available at all hand washing stations and we will ensure the water pressure is adequate.
- Signage communicating expectations for hand washing, mask usage, and social distancing and directions regarding traffic flow and space capacities have been ordered and will be displayed in multiple languages in high-traffic areas of campus.

- A capacity study for all classrooms, public spaces, and office spaces when taking social distancing protocols into account has been conducted. The capacity of each classroom will be clearly indicated outside of the entrance to the space.

HCCC remains committed to protecting the health and safety of its students, faculty, and staff while also ensuring students are able to maintain satisfactory academic progress. Our Restart Plan will be aligned with and informed by these guiding principles.

The RTC Task Force invites all members of the college community to attend tomorrow's Virtual Town Hall Meeting at 12 p.m. where, among other topics, HCCC's gradual return to on-ground operations will be discussed. The Town Hall provides a forum for students, faculty, and staff to have their questions answered.

If you have any questions, concerns, or information you would like to share with the RTC Task Force, please do not hesitate to reach out to [return@hccc.edu](mailto:return@hccc.edu).

Take care,

HCCC's Return to Campus Task Force

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