

# SAFE ON CAMPUS:

## A FRAMEWORK FOR REOPENING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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SUBMITTED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS HIGHER  
EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

TO THE GOVERNOR'S REOPENING ADVISORY BOARD

MAY 22, 2020

# Higher Education Working Group

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# Agenda

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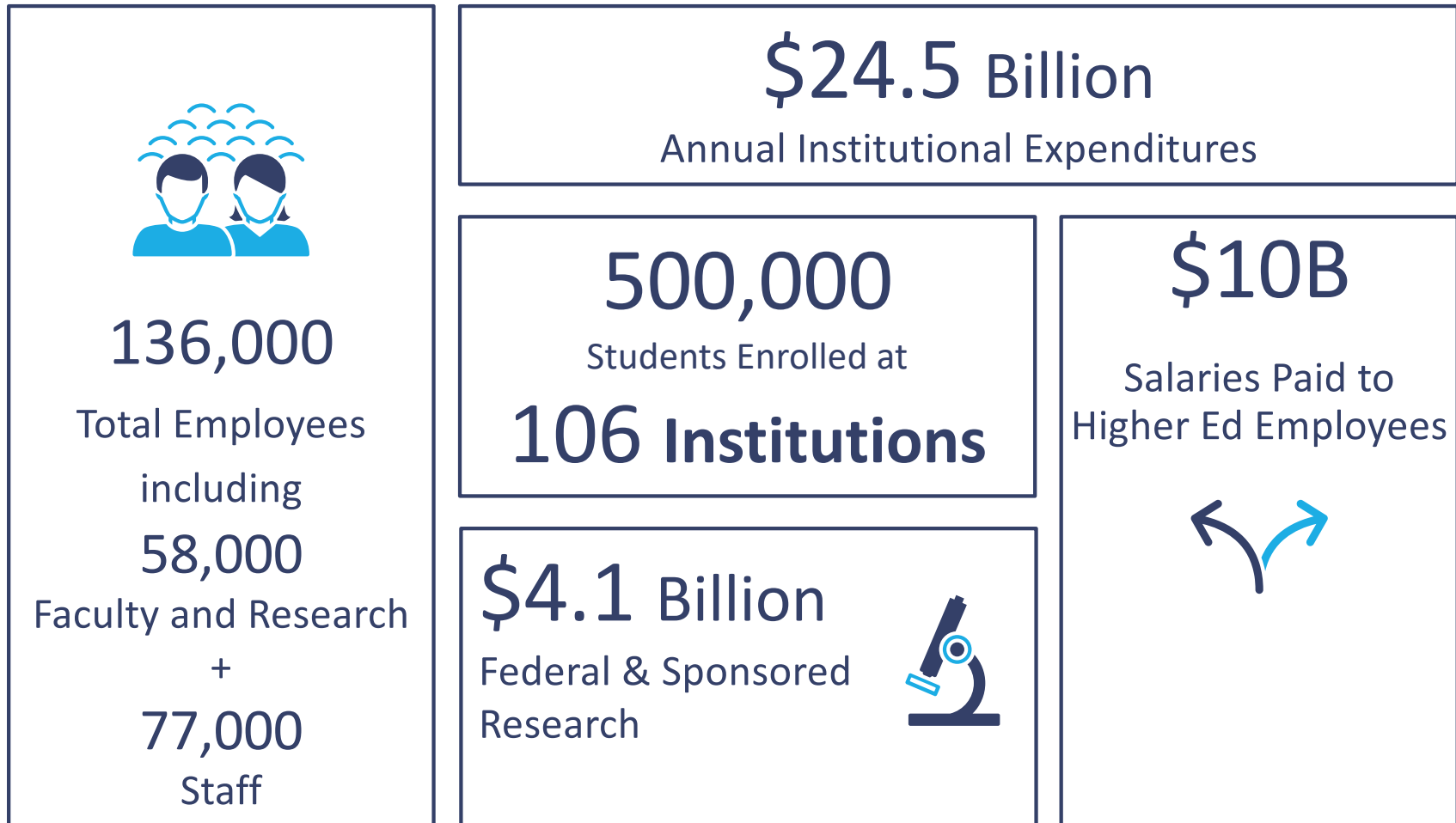
- Four Critical Topics
- Higher Education is Critically Important to the Massachusetts Economy
- Guiding Principles for Safely Reopening Colleges and Universities
- The Current State of Higher Education in Massachusetts
- Framework: Safely Reopening Colleges and Universities Using a Phased Approach
- Five Ways the Commonwealth Can Assist Higher Education

# Four Critical Topics

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- Phase 1: Repopulation of Research Labs and Clinical Education & Services
- Testing Protocols and Availability
- Residence Hall Safety
- Timing of Announcements About Fall 2020

# Higher Education is Critically Important to the Massachusetts Economy



# Guiding Principles for Safely Reopening Colleges and Universities

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- Protect the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and people in surrounding communities
- Enable students to make meaningful progress towards their educational goals
- Contribute to research and innovation
- Minimize adverse economic impact on families, employees and the Massachusetts economy

# The Current State of Higher Education in the Commonwealth

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We are **OPEN**: Teaching, learning, student support services, essential research, and health services continue at all institutions.

Most campus-based activities are supported remotely:

- **Courses**: Delivered remotely where possible
- **Research**: Working remotely, except some COVID-19 research
- **Residence Halls**: Occupied by very few who live permanently on campus or who can't return home
- **Dining Services**: Limited services to the few remaining students
- **Athletics**: Cancelled
- Intensive **virtual recruitment strategies** have been implemented to secure Fall 2020 new student enrollment

# Key Considerations for Higher Education

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## We are **DIVERSE**:

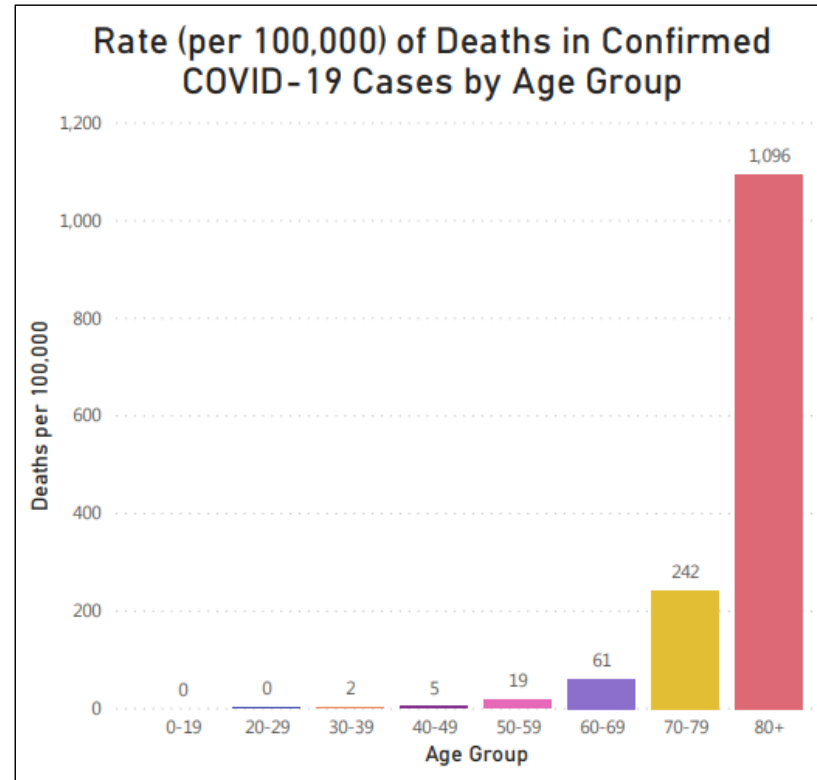
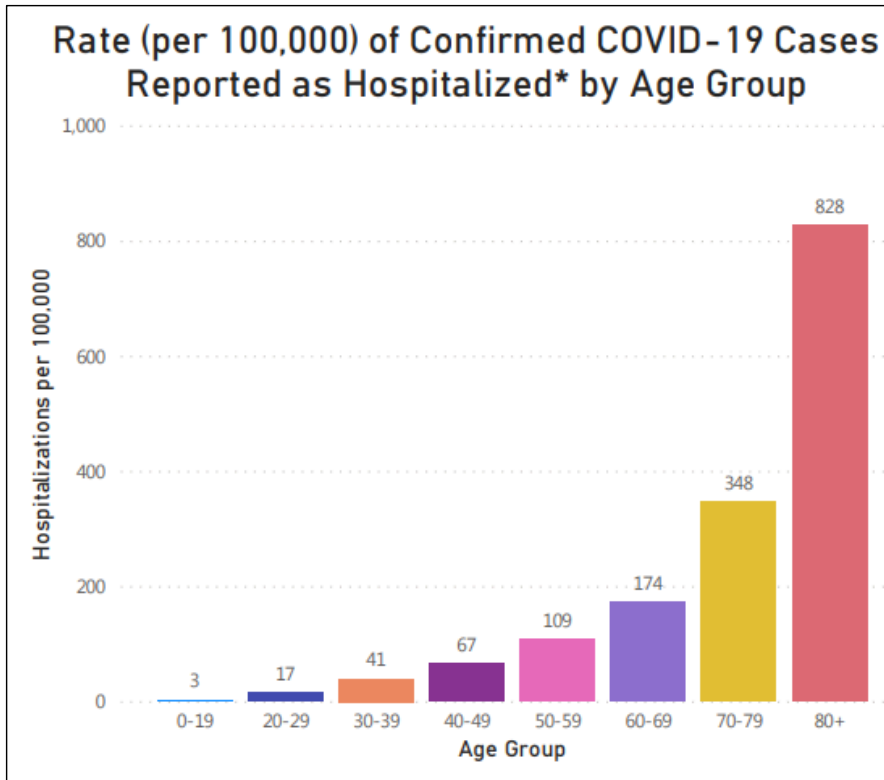
- Public/Private
- Residential/Commuter
- Urban/Rural
- Highly diverse student backgrounds
- Large endowments/Tuition-dependent
- Many campuses are like small cities: mostly self-sufficient environments with offices, labs, residences and dining options, health care facilities, etc.

**Recommendation:** Higher Ed is not a one-size-fits-all industry. Leveraging this framework and federal, state and local guidance, campuses will need to make their own tailored plans for safe operations in the face of COVID-19



# Key Considerations for Higher Education

While there are vulnerable people on our campuses, much of the population on college campuses is under age 30 and at significantly lower risk of hospitalization or death from COVID-19



Source: MA State COVID-19 Dashboard, May 11, 2019

# Framework for Safely Reopening Colleges and Universities Using a Phased Approach

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## **Phase 1: Start**

- Repopulate Research Labs, Medical, Dental, Veterinary & Allied Health Clinical Education and Services
- Repopulate Limited Functions Necessary for Students to Return

## **Phase 2: Cautious**

- Relaunch/Pilot Limited Student Programming on Campus

## **Phase 3: Vigilant**

- Opening: Carefully Repopulate Residence Halls, Dining Halls, Classrooms

## **Phase 4: New Normal**

- New Normal Operations on College and University Campuses

## Phase 1: Start

Repopulate Research Labs, Medical, Dental, Veterinary & Allied Health Clinical Education and Services

### Key Enablers:

- Modification of the ban on non-essential business
- Each institution prepares a comprehensive research laboratory and clinical education and services reopening plan

## Phase 1: Start

Repopulate Research Labs, Medical, Dental, Veterinary & Allied Health Clinical Education and Services

High confidence of safe **research laboratory repopulating** based on:

- Strict control of lab density and PPE compliance
- Expertise using PPE and managing lab exposure risks

High confidence of safe **clinical education and services** repopulating based on:

- Strict control of clinical area density depending on treatment modalities and other factors unique to each clinical service
- Protocols for point of care testing of patients/clients and clinical students, staff and faculty interfacing with patients
- Protocols for use of PPE and other unique clinical protections needed for both patients, clients and health-care providers unique to each service

## Phase 1: Start

### Repopulate Limited Functions Necessary for Students to Return

- In compliance with state protocols and guidance, return small numbers of staff to on-site work as-needed to support ramp up of campus operations and activities that cannot be supported remotely
- Support phased move out of student belongings remaining from Spring 2020
- Special attention to at-risk faculty and staff as we repopulate

## **Phase 2: Cautious**

### Relaunch/Pilot Limited Student Programming on Campus

#### **Key Enablers:**

- Applicable public health criteria are satisfied to move to Phase 2
- Adequate supply of tests and PPE sufficient for small numbers of individuals to participate in on-campus programs
- Preparation by each institution of an institution-specific plan detailing how physical distancing could feasibly be accomplished for specific proposed activities

#### **Examples of Limited Programming:**

- Small campus-based programs that would typically take place over the summer (e.g. summer bridge programs)
- Students in career technical education programs who could not complete degree/credential requirements in the Spring semester can safely return to low density labs, studios and shops on campus
- Reopening of housing, dining and classroom spaces, on a small scale, to accommodate limited participation

### **Phase 3: Vigilant**

- Opening: Carefully Repopulate Residence Halls, Dining Halls, Classrooms

#### **Key Enablers:**

- Applicable public health criteria are satisfied to move to Phase 3
- Testing, tracing and isolation protocols in place
- Adequate testing, PPE and cleaning supplies are available to meet protocols
- Each institution prepares a comprehensive reopening plan which includes protocols for symptom monitoring, social distancing, use of masks, isolation and quarantine space availability, and contact tracing
- Families, faculty and staff feel confident that campus will be safe

## **Phase 3: Vigilant**

- Opening: Carefully Repopulate Residence Halls, Dining Halls, Classrooms

### **Higher Education Testing Working Group**

Paula Johnson, MD, President of Wellesley College, is chairing a testing working group that will develop recommendations for testing protocols for colleges and universities:

- Access to testing across higher education is critical to repopulation of campuses
- The science and technology is rapidly evolving, so plans must be flexible
- The expectation is that large numbers of tests will be needed for the higher education community
- Contact tracing and quarantine and isolation protocols must be developed in conjunction with testing protocols



### Phase 3: Vigilant

- Opening: Carefully Repopulate Residence Halls, Dining Halls, Classrooms

## Residence Halls/Shared Living Arrangements Considerations

- Protocols for shared living arrangements will vary widely based on site-specific conditions
- Monitor social distancing and mask wearing outside of bedrooms
- Multiple options for managing risks associated with shared restrooms
- Determine criteria for students with co-morbidities and for students returning from other states and countries
- Residential strategies intersect with testing/tracing/quarantine protocols

**Wide range of flexible strategies being considered to protect students from infection and from mental health problems, including:**

- Organizing students into residential family-like “households”
- Clustering students with shared courses to minimize contacts
- Consider lower occupancy where capacity will allow

## Phase 3: Vigilant

- Opening: Carefully Repopulate Residence Halls, Dining Halls, Classrooms

### Classrooms/Education Spaces

- Reorganize spaces to accommodate necessary physical distancing
- Smaller classes moved to larger spaces
- Likely result is a mix of in-person and remote learning

### Dining Services

- Follow de-densifying guidance, similar to restaurants
- Partner with national food service providers on campus-specific protocols
- Use shifts and/or dedicate other spaces for dining as needed
- Meals to go/Meals in a box

## Phase 4: New Normal

### New Normal Operations on College and University Campuses

#### **Key Enablers:**

- Public confidence that the crisis is over
- Vaccine or other medical treatment is widely available
- Herd Immunity is achieved

# Five Ways the Commonwealth Can Assist Higher Education

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1. The Governor should call on each college and university to develop reopening plans for their own campuses. At a minimum, these plans should include:
  - A plan for a phased **repopulation** of the campus.
  - A plan for **monitoring** health conditions to ensure detection of infection.
  - A plan for **containment** to prevent the spread of the disease if detected.
  - A plan for **scaling back** operations if necessary.

# Five Ways the Commonwealth Can Assist Higher Education

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2. The Commonwealth should partner with colleges and universities to provide assistance with procurement of **testing, PPE, and cleaning supplies**, and with **technical assistance for the implementation of contact tracing** programs.
3. Through legislation or Executive Order, the Commonwealth should continue to **require MA health insurers to cover testing costs** that are not paid by the federal government.
4. The Commonwealth should continue to coordinate with licensing and regulatory agencies to enable **professional licensure and certification** in accordance with public health guidance.
5. The Commonwealth should provide a **safe harbor from liability** for those institutions that prepare comprehensive reopening plans consistent with State guidance.

# Readiness to Reopen

## Survey of Presidents

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College presidents report **very high confidence** in their ability to put in place policies and procedures by the fall that cover:

Education of campus communities about safety expectations and procedures (99%)

Enacting additional protection measures for at-risk community members (e.g., over age 60, those with underlying conditions) (93%)

Sanitization of common spaces on campus (91%)

Ensuring safe physical workspaces for staff and faculty who need to work on campus (91%)

# Readiness to Reopen

## Survey of Presidents

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College presidents report **high confidence** in their ability to put in place policies and procedures by the fall that cover:

Setting aside or procuring space to allow for the isolation and quarantine of students who are suspected or confirmed to have coronavirus (81%\*)

De-densifying classrooms (81%)

Re-allocating housing so that no more than two students are assigned to one dormitory bedroom (i.e. “de-tripling”) (89%\*)

\*Asked only of residential schools. Note that “de-tripling” is not necessarily the approach all will take.

# Readiness to Reopen

## Survey of Presidents

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College presidents report **the least confidence** in their ability to put in place policies and procedures by the fall that cover:

Contact tracing (in consultation with state and local health officials)

- 72% “Very” or “Somewhat confident”
- 13% “Not confident at all”

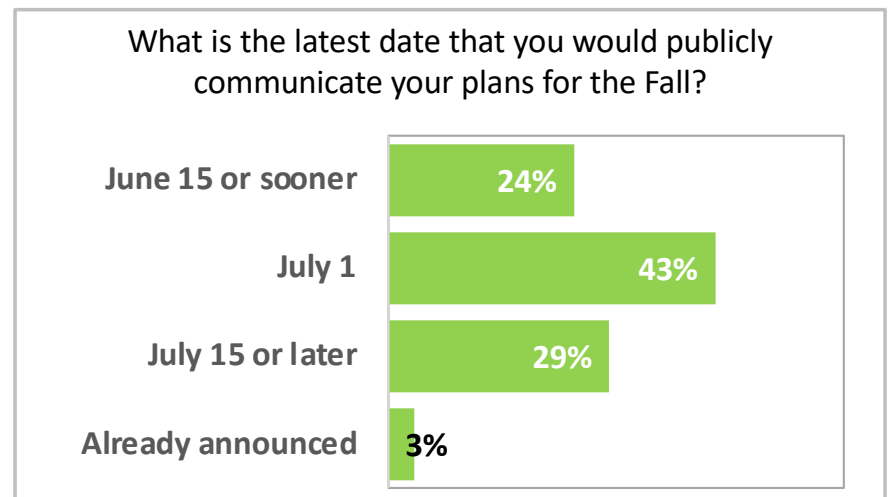
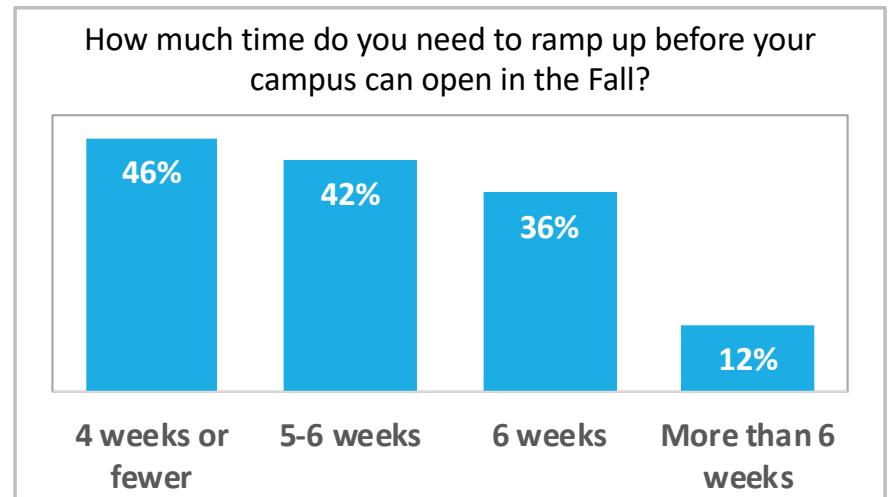
Testing protocols and procedures to screen all students, faculty and staff who are returning to campus

- 59% “Very” or “Somewhat confident”
- 15% “Not confident at all”



# Key Decision Points for Higher Education

- Repopulate research and clinical activities as soon as possible
  - These can ramp up quickly (days to weeks) with high confidence they be done safely
- Most institutions don't need to announce decisions for Fall until ~July 1
  - This gives time for creation of tailored campus plans and allows testing protocols to be responsive to latest science



# The 106 Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts

American International College  
Amherst College  
Anna Maria College  
Assumption College  
Babson College  
Bard College at Simon's Rock  
Bay Path University  
Becker College  
Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology  
Bentley University  
Berklee College of Music  
Berkshire Community College  
Boston Architectural College  
Boston Baptist College  
Boston College  
Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis Inc  
Boston University  
Brandeis University  
Bridgewater State University  
Bristol Community College  
Bunker Hill Community College  
Cambridge College  
Cape Cod Community College  
Clark University  
College of Our Lady of the Elms

College of the Holy Cross  
Conway School of Landscape Design  
Curry College  
Dean College  
Eastern Nazarene College  
Emerson College  
Emmanuel College  
Endicott College  
Fisher College  
Fitchburg State University  
Framingham State University  
Franklin W Olin College of Engineering  
Gordon College  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary  
Greenfield Community College  
Hampshire College  
Harvard University  
Hebrew College  
Hellenic College-Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology  
Holyoke Community College  
Hult International Business School  
Laboure College  
Lasell College  
Lawrence Memorial Hospital School of Nursing  
Lesley University  
Longy School of Music of Bard College  
Massachusetts Bay Community College

Massachusetts College of Art and Design  
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Massachusetts Maritime Academy  
Massachusetts School of Law  
Massasoit Community College  
MCPHS University  
Merrimack College  
MGH Institute of Health Professions  
Middlesex Community College  
Montserrat College of Art  
Mount Holyoke College  
Mount Wachusett Community College  
New England College of Optometry  
New England Law-Boston  
Nichols College  
North Bennet Street School  
North Shore Community College  
Northeastern University  
Northern Essex Community College  
Northpoint Bible College  
Pine Manor College  
Pope St John XXIII National Seminary  
Quincy College  
Quinsigamond Community College  
Regis College  
Roxbury Community College

Saint John's Seminary  
Salem State University  
Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital School of Nursing  
Simmons University  
Smith College  
Springfield College  
Springfield Technical Community College  
Stonehill College  
Suffolk University  
The New England Conservatory of Music  
Tufts University  
University of Massachusetts Medical School Worcester  
University of Massachusetts-Amherst  
University of Massachusetts-Boston  
University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth  
University of Massachusetts-Lowell  
Urban College of Boston  
Wellesley College  
Wentworth Institute of Technology  
Western New England University  
Westfield State University  
Wheaton College  
William James College  
Williams College  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
Worcester State University

# Backup: Background on Survey Results

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- Survey of College Presidents conducted 5/4/20 – 5/6/20
- 87 public and private institutions were surveyed; 86 responded
- The question posed was, “Assuming a sufficient supply of testing and PPE, how confident are you that your institution can do the following by early fall?”
- Respondents were given 4 possible answers to the questions: Very Confident, Somewhat Confident, Not Very Confident, and Not Confident at All
- Percentages shown on Slides 22 and 23 are for those who answered Very Confident or Somewhat Confident