

Report and Recommendations for Reopening Campus

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Taskforce on Reopening Campus (TRC) was constituted to develop a plan for reopening Harford Community College's campus after the campus was forced to close because of COVID-19. The TRC researched data and state and federal guidelines, consulted with other colleges, and reviewed articles from various higher education and scientific resources. Notably, data and guidance changed rapidly, even during the time the TRC implemented its charge. The TRC also consulted with President's Cabinet (PC) on issues surrounding testing requirements and Public Safety's authorities, among other things. The TRC also sought advice from the College's legal counsel on waiver issues. The TRC has reconvened on multiple occasions to update the plan and address the pandemic's continuous evolution and current scientific knowledge about the virus, treatments, and vaccines.

The TRC strove to focus on developing recommendations for reopening in a manner that can best promote the physical safety and mental wellness of employees and students while allowing the College to achieve its mission. The TRC recommended a staged approach to reopening that aligns with federal and state reopening phases. As the governmental reopening phases have evolved in manners that are less applicable to a more discrete phased reopening, the TRC now recommends that community spread, and vaccination metrics be considered in moving between reopening stages.

The TRC described the state of the College at the time of closure in March 2020 as Stage 0. Stage 1 was triggered when the Governor lifted the stay-at-home order, and the PC determines that all measures are in place to make the campus as safe as possible given the circumstances. At that time, the College began to increase critical operational activities on campus, with significant risk mitigation controls in place. Face-to-face instruction did not occur in Stage 1.

Stage 2 was broken into two sub-stages: 2A and 2B. Stage 2A was triggered when state and local governments issued guidance that they were ready to move into Medium Risk and Phase 2 stages, respectively. Also, the PC determined that the necessary controls could be implemented so that the benefit of opening at that stage outweighed the risk. During Stage 2A, in which the college is currently positioned, essential activities and limited face-to-face instruction occur for essential courses. Essential courses and activities were determined by the Vice President of each division.

In Fall 2020, the TRC updated and refined State 2B to reflect current knowledge. This was done in anticipation of the college being able to move to Stage 2B at the start of the Spring 2021 semester. However, the pandemic became more severe, and the college had not moved to Stage 2B at the time of the writing of this report.

Under the metrics-based approach, in determining it appropriate to move college reopening to Stage 2B, CDC data must indicate low transmission of COVID-19 in Harford County for 14 straight days. Additionally, PC will consider, the percentage of Harford County residents fully vaccinated, incidents of COVID-19, if any, on campus and guidance from health officials. Considering these factors, if PC believes that sufficient controls can be implemented to expand activities on campus, the College would move to Stage 2B, which allows for the expansion of activities and face-to-face instruction to other courses that cannot be effectively delivered fully online.

It is not until the state and local government indicates that COVID-19 is controlled that PC may choose to move to Stage 3 and that operations may resume in a manner similar to before March 12, 2020.

