



# THE BOARD OF REGENTS AND NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S REOPENING INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

***RECOVERING, REBUILDING & RENEWING  
THE SPIRIT OF OUR COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES***

July 2020



New York State  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity



Chancellor Betty A. Rosa, the Board of Regents and Interim Commissioner Shannon Tahoe held a series of 4 regional meetings that:

- *Provided an opportunity for members of the Board of Regents and Department staff to engage with the field regarding plans to reopen institutions of higher education in the fall*
- *Attended by faculty, college administrators, students, and other interested parties from every region of the state*
- *Prioritized health, safety, educational quality, and equity*

## GOAL OF THE MEETINGS

### **Goal:**

These meetings were designed to provide the Board of Regents and the Education Department with thoughtful and inclusive input needed to develop the policies and regulatory changes that will support New York's colleges and universities as they open their campuses this Fall and beyond.

# MEETING DATES AND PARTICIPATION BY REGION

Date	Region	Number of Participants	Number of IHEs
July 1, 2020	Long Island	132	18
July 2, 2020	Western NY, Central NY, Finger Lakes, Southern Tier	233	41
July 2, 2020	Capital Region, Mohawk Valley, North Country, Hudson Valley	259	55
July 9, 2020	New York City	268	57
	<b>Total</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>171</b>

# AREAS OF FOCUS

Breakout sessions focused on 5 areas, to gather input that will aid the Board of Regents and the Department in developing guidance and regulatory changes that will enable New York's colleges and universities to safely open their campuses.

Health and Safety

Academics, Student  
Support Services  
and Financial Aid

Opportunity  
Programs

Clinical Experiences  
for Educator  
Preparation  
Programs

Clinical Experiences  
for Professional  
Licensure Programs

# GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What are the greatest challenges that institutions of higher education will face with reopening?
2. Can you provide concrete examples of creative solutions to challenging problems that could work in your college or university?
3. How can the Regents and Department help address institutional or regulatory issues that stand in the way of your success?

# GATHERING INPUT

- NYSED Senior Staff facilitated breakout conversations
- Region 2 Comprehensive Center, led by West Ed, hosted the Zoom meetings and is helping compile the data
- NYSDOH staff were a valuable resource in Health and Safety breakouts
- Participants were highly engaged in discussion and Chat
- Thought Exchange is an online conversation tool to crowdsource thoughts and ideas

# KEY TAKEAWAYS OVERALL

- First priority is safety for students, faculty, and staff
- New York's IHE community has suffered tragic human loss in pandemic. Participants reminded us of emotional impact this continues to have on students, faculty, and staff.
- Concern about economic impact of COVID on higher education sector
- *“NYSED must continue to be flexible in its regulatory oversight. These are unprecedented times, and we need to respond quickly and creatively.”*

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

- IHEs are required to follow guidance provided by NYS Dept. of Health
- Most IHEs are well underway with planning
  - Differences depending on unique features of each IHE
- Critical for IHEs to coordinate efforts with their local health department (testing, contact tracing, quarantine, etc.)
- Participants asked for metrics to know when a college should shut down, e.g., after a certain number of cases on campus

# ACADEMICS, STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES, FINANCIAL AID

- Department should continue to provide flexibility for IHEs to offer programs in online/distance education formats for entire 2020-21 academic year
- Flexibility to adjust length of semester
- Digital divide—applies to students and faculty:
  - Cost of internet may be prohibitive, and certain areas lack good internet coverage
  - Students and faculty may have to share bandwidth and devices with others in household; some may only have tablet or smart phone
- Additional supports needed for students with disabilities, including accessible technology and academic advising

# OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

- Concern that financial support for opportunity programs may be eliminated from the budget —
  - Some IHEs cannot afford to front the expenses
  - Low-income students and students from underrepresented groups face increased burdens
- Challenges to creating a supportive community among students in off-campus and virtual environments
  - Summer on-campus orientation was disrupted
  - Challenges are compounded for students in dual-enrollment programs

# CLINICAL EXPERIENCES FOR EDUCATOR PREP PROGRAMS

- IHEs are seeking continued flexibilities from Department for 2020-21 academic year:
  - alternative models for clinical experiences
  - extension of emergency COVID-19 certificate
  - edTPA safety net
- To help secure placements, IHEs are working to ensure that student teachers provide valuable support to teachers of record:
  - Student teachers may have strong technology skills and be able to assist veteran teachers in remote learning context
  - Some IHEs have developed curriculum and training to prepare candidates to work in remote learning environments

# CLINICAL EXPERIENCES FOR PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

- IHEs are concerned about the limited availability of clinical sites for students to complete their required experience
  - Seek assistance in securing placements
  - Telehealth/tele-supervision has provided some needed flexibility in certain professions
- Some IHEs seek permission to allow expanded use of simulation to meet a portion of the required clinical experience
  - High-fidelity models can enhance the learning experience
  - Important to find the right balance to ensure adequate preparation for licensure
- Equity issues must also be considered

# NEXT STEPS

- Region 2 Comprehensive Center is completing compilation of data
- Senior staff are reviewing data and using it to develop further guidance
- Considering possible regulatory changes and other recommendations, including guidance and best practices

# CONCLUSION

Thank you!