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Board Adopts COVID-19 Response Planning Principles

(Phoenix, Ariz.) – Today, the Arizona Board of Regents adopted COVID-19 response planning principles to provide a blueprint for universities to follow in the months ahead, focusing on the health and safety of students, employees and members of university communities.

“In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the board and universities are committed to managing through the challenges presented by the virus,” said ABOR Chair Larry E. Penley. “The principles adopted today focus on minimizing health risks for students and members of the university communities as well as maintaining academic excellence and the student experience. The principles are derived from guidelines developed by the Centers for Disease Control and represent what is needed in Arizona at this time to make our university campuses as safe as possible.”

University COVID-19 planning efforts should meet the following criteria:

- Promote the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff;
- Address the continuity of courses of study and other essential operations;
- Provide timely communications with key constituencies, on- and off-campus;
- Address special considerations such as clinical programs, research programs, health and counseling services, student basic needs, meal plans and residential housing;
- Address implications for student services and intercollegiate athletics; and
- Evaluate and address the short- and long-term financial implications.

Universities practices to address the pandemic will follow applicable law, including executive orders. The universities should also consider guidance from health and educational authorities, including the Arizona Department of Health Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, U.S. Department of Education and professional higher education associations.

The guidelines adopted by the board recognize the universities operate throughout the world and with multiple learning modalities; therefore response planning will be university specific. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Considerations for Institutions of Higher Education](#) state: “(i)mplementation should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable and tailored to the needs of each (higher education) community.”

Board-approved guidelines call for each university’s planning response to the COVID-19 pandemic to address specific measures including:

- Testing or screening of students, faculty and staff;
- Contact tracing;
- Promoting behaviors that reduce the potential for spread of the virus;
- Distancing and reduced density in classrooms, work areas and public areas;
- Addressing risk in residence halls and food service areas;

- Protocols for responding to students or employees who may have come into contact with an infected individual;
- Protocols for responding to students or employees who test positive for the virus or who experience symptoms consistent with the virus;
- Preparing student health resources and facilities for both the physical and mental impacts of covid-19;
- Education and direction for employees and students on issues related to public health (e.g., social distancing, hand washing, hand sanitizer use, wearing masks and signage promoting healthy behavior);
- Education and direction for employees and students on university health services, counseling support services and disability resources;
- Addressing facilities issues, including enhanced sanitation.

Each university is planning for the fall semester with safety and mitigation measures including:

- [Arizona State University](#) is offering three options for learning this fall: ASU immersion - on-campus, technology enhanced learning; [ASU Sync](#) - technology-enhanced, interactive remote learning that can be used simultaneously with some in-person instruction; and iCourses – courses delivered entirely online with lectures available on demand.
- [Northern Arizona University](#) is using [NAUFlex](#) a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning to ensure a quality and highly personal experience on the Flagstaff campus, also offering students the opportunity to continue their education where they live at 20 locations around the state, and continues its long history of online offerings. NAU will also start and end the fall semester early to take advantage of lower student travel and a period of expected lower COVID-19 case rates.
- The [University of Arizona](#), as part of its overarching campus reentry plan, will provide two masks for every student, staff and faculty member, allow both double and single occupancy rooms, a selection of standard meal plan options and will announce final plans for fall in July. In addition, they will closely monitor COVID science and best practice to inform necessary modifications to their plans.

“Arizona’s universities have the knowledge, expertise and capacity to continue to provide excellent education in multiple formats,” said ABOR Executive Director John Arnold. “This flexibility allows Arizona to employ appropriate safety protocols while maintaining a fantastic academic experience. The board is grateful to our university leadership, faculty and students for their dedication to the success of these institutions.”

[Click here](#) for more information, including the complete list of board-approved principles.

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