

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



GEORGE M. BORRELLO
SENATOR
57TH DISTRICT

June 12, 2020

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Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor
State of New York
Executive Chamber, State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As we continue to move through this pandemic in New York State, many uncertainties remain such as when institutions of higher education can expect to reopen their campuses.

With colleges and universities included in the fourth and final phase, many are hopeful that they can reopen in July with a structured plan in place. Although New York State is in the process of developing guidance for colleges and universities to follow in order to draft their reopening plans, to most efficiently and effectively plan for the reopening of campuses, it is imperative that these institutions of higher education receive state guidelines as soon as possible.

I recently received correspondence from Mark Zupan, President of Alfred University, an outstanding institution of higher education in my district whose graduates are highly sought after by local businesses, stating that the University will have their preliminary reopening plan in place by June 15. Execution of the University's plan will continue throughout the summer, and four teams are working on elements of the plans to reopen. These teams and the specific areas of focus include:

- Academic Affairs — Focused on academic continuity, accreditation, courses and sections to be offered, course delivery methods, and exam schedules.
- Campus Life — Focused on health and wellness (screening, testing and monitoring; mental health services), residential living (residence hall protocols and occupancy standards and guidelines), student recruitment, dining services, athletics, public safety, and student conduct (for on- and off-campus students), campus visitor compliance.

- Operations — Focused on facilities design and retrofitting, logistics and operations, supply procurement, information technology services and infrastructure, student and employee training.
- Communications — Focused on communicating plans, schedules, and requirements for reopening to all of the University's audiences.

This plan will facilitate the safest possible return to campus for their students, faculty, staff and campus visitors, all while continuing to protect the safety and well-being of their local community.

Businesses across the state have simply been required to develop plans that follow state guidelines. Information available for colleges and universities require these institutions to develop and then submit their plans to the state, all while continuing to recruit and retain students. To maintain a level of equity, colleges and universities should be allowed to follow the same standards as businesses. It has proven to be successful thus far.

Institutions of higher education are the cornerstone of New York State's economy and in small, rural communities like Alfred, they are particularly vital. We must get our colleges and universities back up and running as soon as possible to ensure that students are not only continuing their education here in New York State versus choosing an out-of-state option, but also keeping our locally educated students in the area.

I thank you in advance for providing institutions of higher education with state guidelines for reopening as soon as possible, and for all that you are continuing to do to protect the well-being of every New Yorker. I look forward to hearing from you.

Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,



George M. Borrello
Senator, 57th District