



FOR YOUR FUTURE. FOR OUR FUTURE.



UL SYSTEM FALL 2020 GUIDELINES

It is our desire to return to campus Fall 2020 and this can only happen with the safety of our students, faculty, and staff as our top priority. The following is a framework designed to provide the Universities of Louisiana a path to return to campus life following the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The contents of this document should be considered as campuses develop, refine, and implement plans for the fall 2020 semester.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All planning conducted, decisions made, and actions taken by UL System institutions, collectively and individually, shall adhere to the following hierarchy of principles:

1. The health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and our communities are paramount.
2. The continuity of learning and research must be maintained, adapting to fulfill Principle 1 as appropriate and necessary.
3. The financial health and viability of the enterprise must be protected and are dependent upon the fulfillment of Principles 1 and 2.
4. The social, emotional, and economic welfare of our communities must be considered and are dependent upon the fulfillment of Principles 1, 2, and 3.

PHASED APPROACH

Universities' plans should include phased protocols for each of the following areas guided by science and recommendations by the CDC and other public health officials. Through each phase, considerations should be made for vulnerable individuals and those who share a home with a member of the vulnerable population:

Phases are defined by the [White House guidelines](#) as defined and declared by the Office of the Governor.

PHASE 1

Telework for non-essential* employees should be strongly encouraged if not mandated. If employees need to return to work it should be done in phases with appropriate social distancing

protocols and common areas should be closed. In-person classes and labs should be restricted to 10 or fewer including instructors, with strict adherence to social distancing guidelines.

Special accommodations shall be implemented for students, faculty, and staff who are members of a vulnerable population or are required to routinely be in the presence of a member of a vulnerable population.

PHASE 2

Telework should remain an option for non-essential employees. If employees need to return to work it should be done in phases with appropriate social distancing protocols and common areas should be closed. In-person classes and labs should be restricted to 50 percent of the fire marshal's max occupancy, with strict adherence to social distancing guidelines.

Special accommodations shall be implemented for students, faculty, and staff who are members of a vulnerable population or are required to routinely be in the presence of a member of a vulnerable population.

PHASE 3

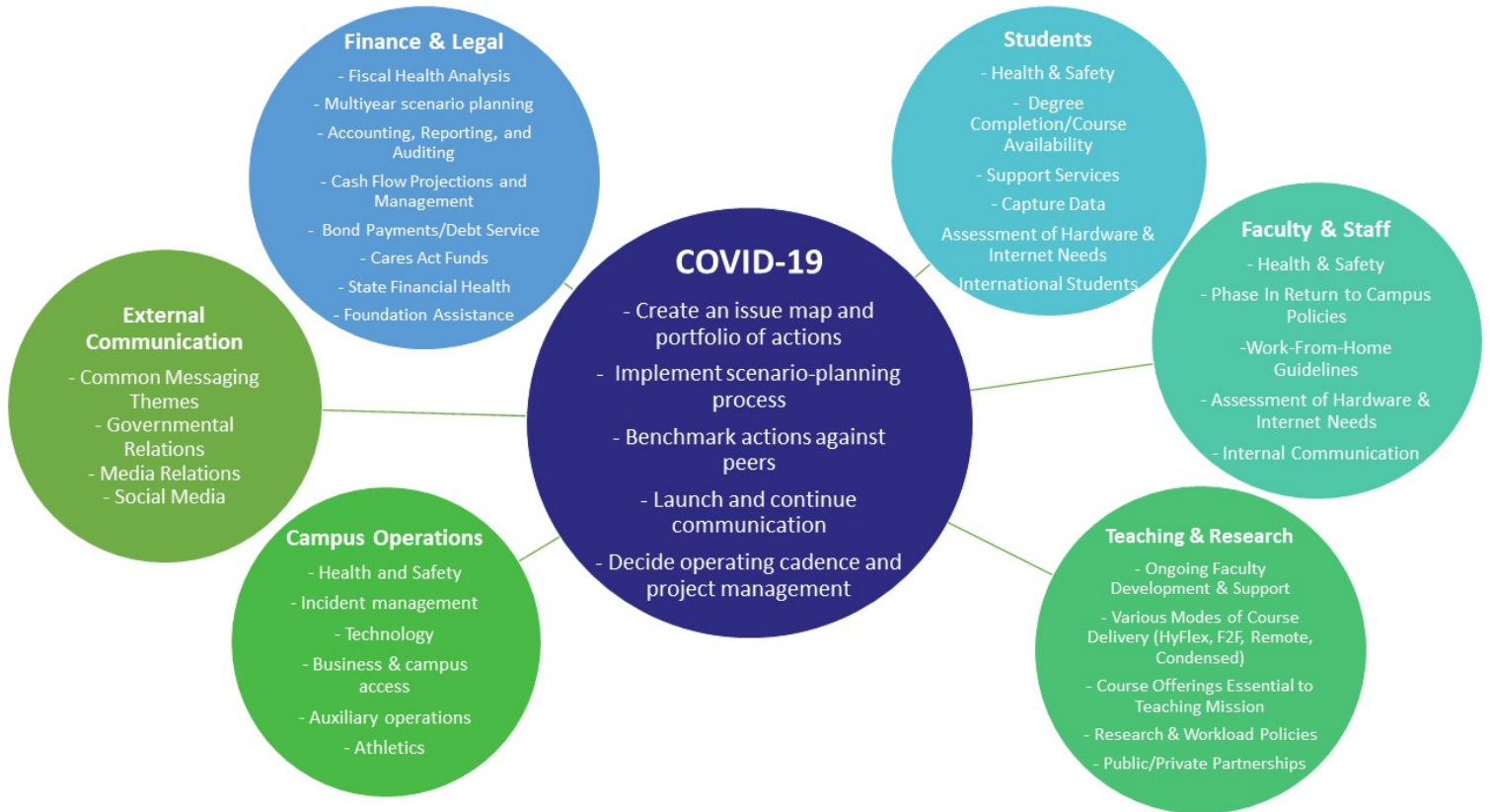
University operations should be near pre-pandemic operations with distancing and occupancy provisions in place based on the recommendations of the CDC, the Louisiana Department of Health and other public health officials. The university should remain flexible should a need arise to return to Phase 1, Phase 2, or Stay at Home.

Special accommodations shall be implemented for students, faculty, and staff who are members of a vulnerable population or are required to routinely be in the presence of a member of a vulnerable population.

* Non-essential means those employees whose physical presence is not required during an emergency. An employee's classification as essential/non-essential may vary in accordance with the type of emergency or the stage of emergency response.

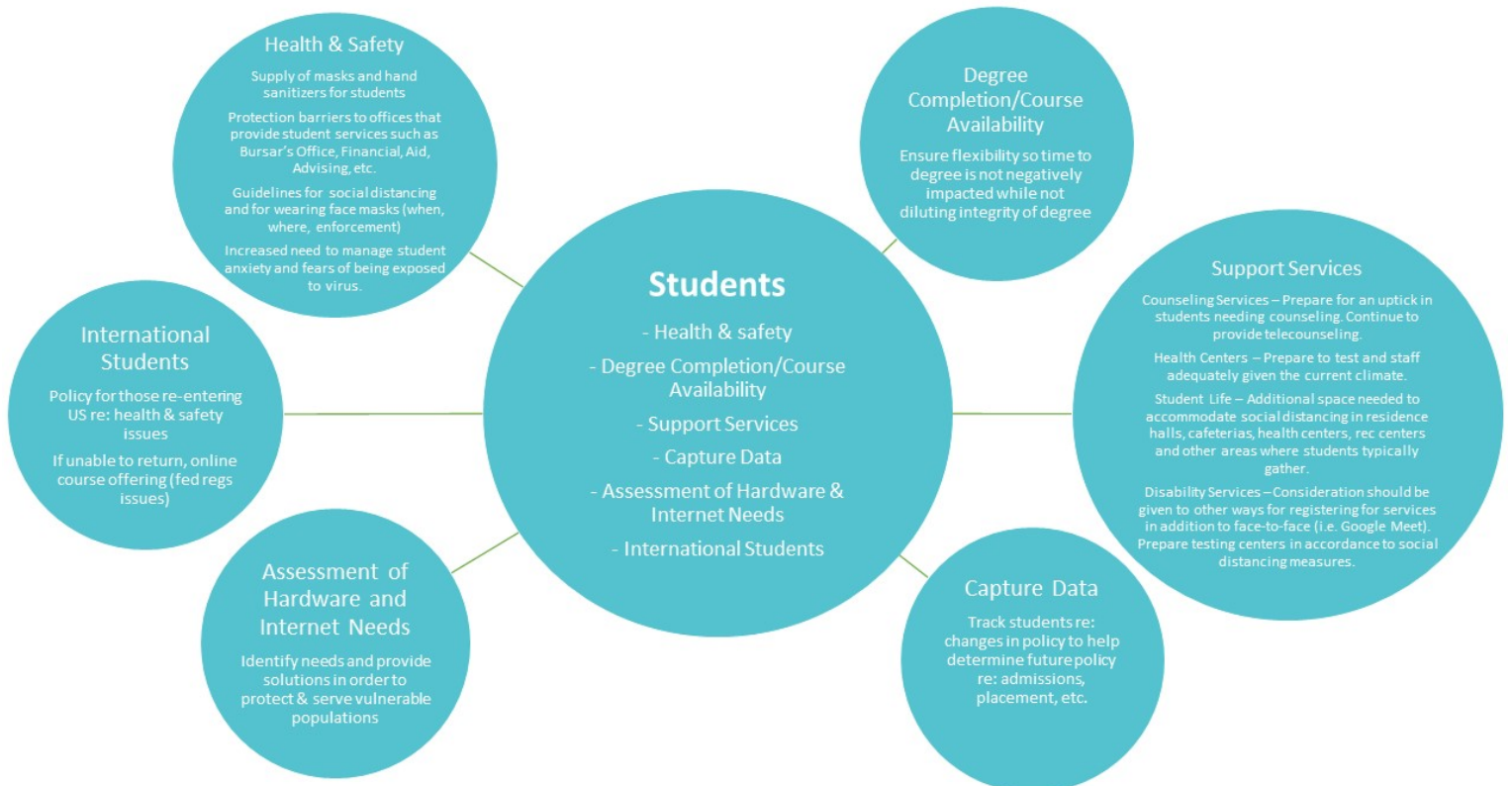
SIX AREAS OF FOCUS

Universities are extraordinarily complex organizations. When approaching a return to campus, considerations must address each area of operation. The framework for planning identifies six areas of focus and are providing corresponding diagrams and narratives to guide decision making.



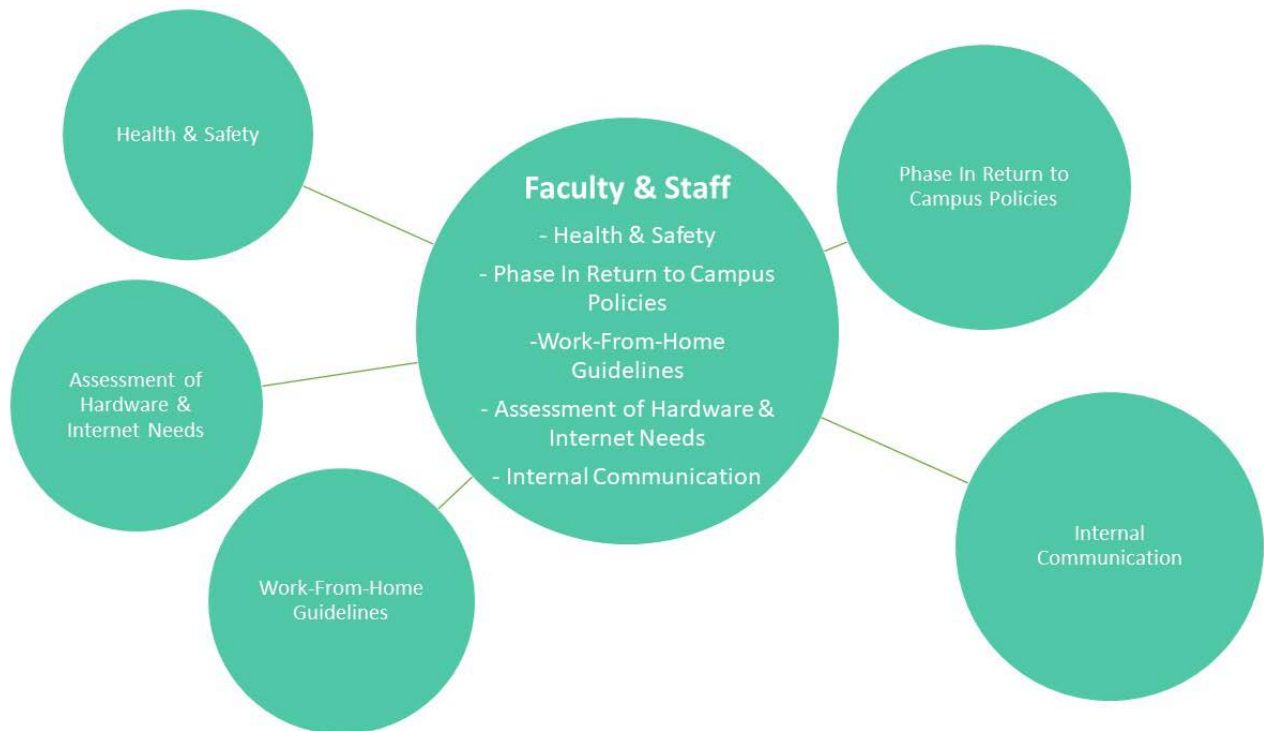
STUDENTS

Students will have to be reassured that their respective campuses are making their health and well-being a priority. Students and parents alike need to know what precautionary measures the campus is taking to ensure that the campus is safe for reentry. Post-pandemic support services should be available to students through multiple platforms (face-to-face and virtually) when appropriate to increase their availability. Ways in which international students can be supported and accommodated should be identified. Campuses should assess student needs when it comes to hardware and internet services; ways in which those needs can be addressed (hot spots, loaner laptop program) should be identified. In regards to academics, flexibility should be provided so that time to degree is not negatively impacted while not diluting the integrity of the degree. When allowances are made, data should be collected and evaluated to see if there is merit to changing existing academic policy.



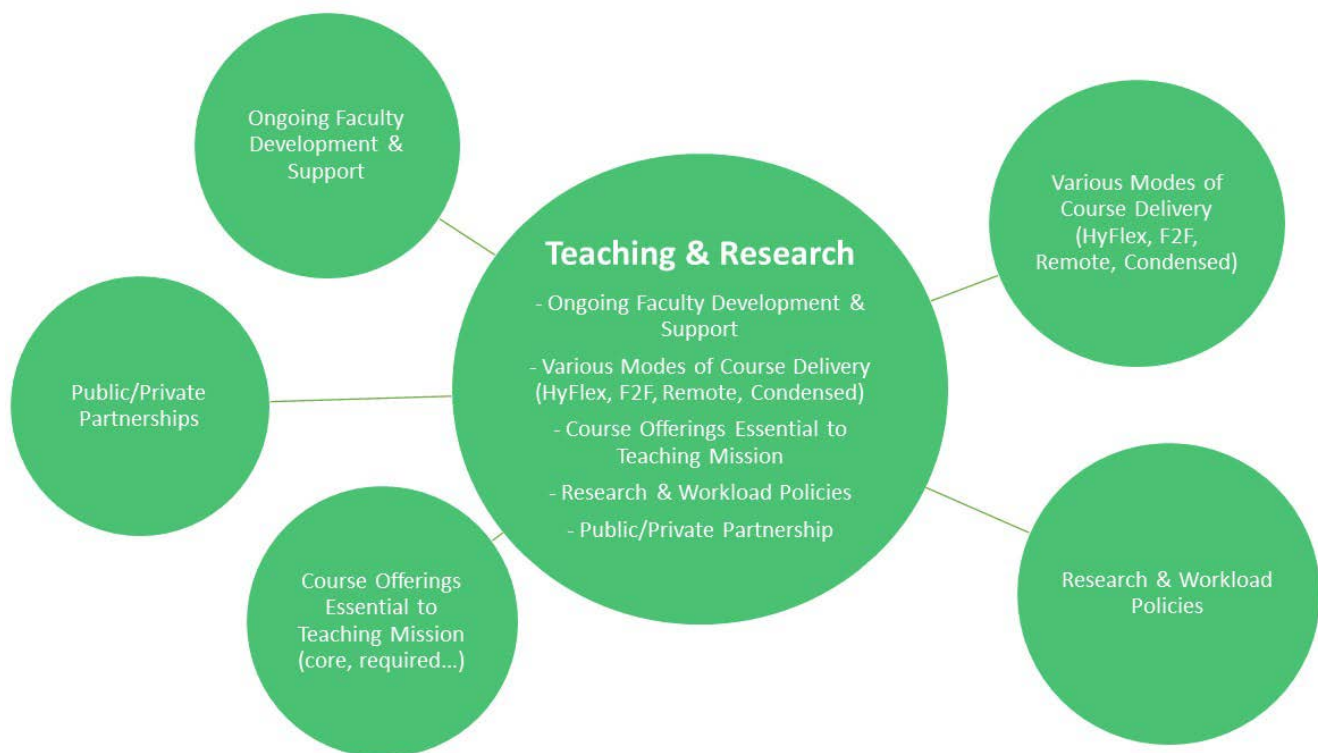
FACULTY AND STAFF

Ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of faculty and staff is of highest priority. With that in mind, phased-in return to campus plans/policies must call for appropriate workforce conditions as well as provide accommodations for those who are not able to return to campus to fulfill their duties. Temporary alternatives to onsite work should be provided for those members of vulnerable populations; HR policies need to remain flexible as we attempt to reinstate residential delivery systems, alongside ongoing remote delivery of instruction and service. To ensure that faculty and staff are able to provide remote instruction, work from home, etc., an assessment of hardware and internet needs should be conducted. Based on findings, solutions should be provided to those that require assistance. Expectations when it comes to self-monitoring and other guidelines specific to COVID-19 (i.e. self-distancing, wearing of PPE) should be clearly conveyed to faculty and staff. It should be strongly encouraged that meetings with internal and external constituents be conducted virtually when possible throughout the early phases.



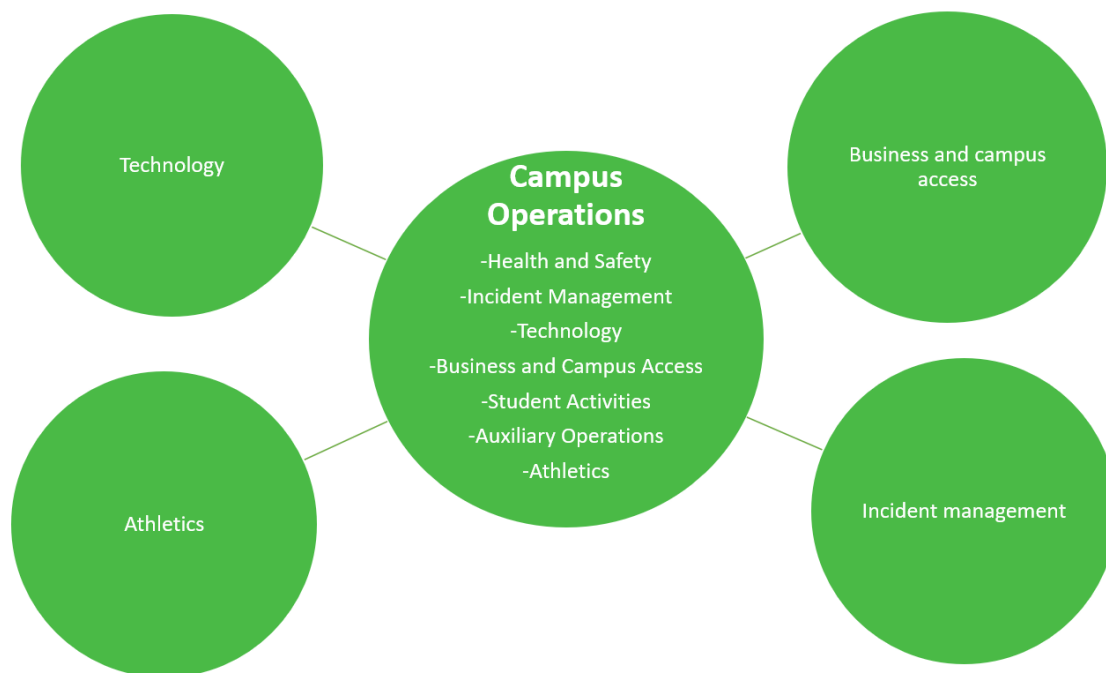
TEACHING AND RESEARCH

When planning for and implementing a new mode of operation, flexibility should be paramount while keeping the core academic mission at the forefront. A wide range of course delivery modalities (F2F, hybrid, remote, etc.) will need to be utilized to provide continuous instruction in light of CDC requirements (distancing and occupancy). This will require ongoing training and development for faculty to ensure online teaching skills are at their best; assessment of learning objectives is optimal; and technology is leveraged accordingly. Cultures that support instructional creativity, residential and/or remote, and reflect the academic integrity of program offerings will need to be supported. In addition, faculty will need to provide students with the assurance that the quality and viability of their coursework reflects a continued commitment to student learning, success, and degree completion. In regards to research, policy may need to be adjusted to address the disruption that has occurred (and most likely will continue) due to COVID-19. Operational plans for restarting on-campus research and fieldwork must be established with a focus on protecting the health and safety of faculty, staff, and students. Strong communication with public and private partners should occur so that relationships are not diminished; there may be new partnerships to explore as a result of what is learned from the pandemic.



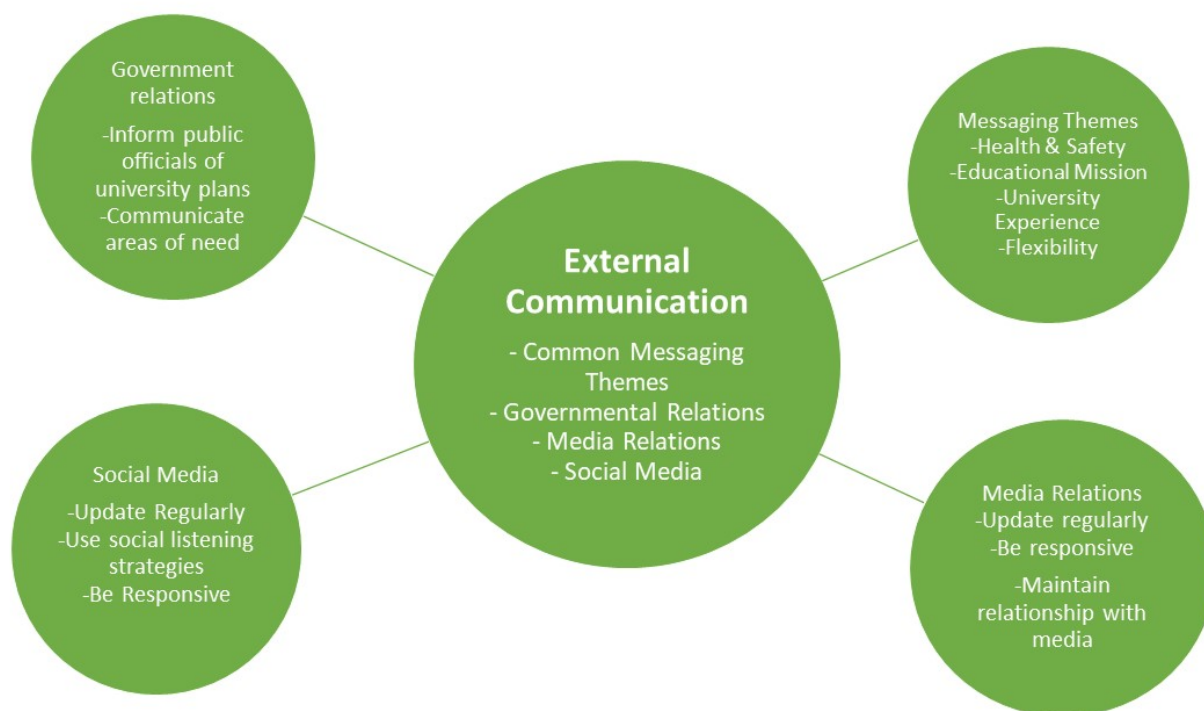
CAMPUS OPERATIONS

The health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors are paramount when planning a return to post-pandemic campus operations. Public health issues caused by the virus must be addressed in a manner that permits easing physical distancing practices and the resumption of many of the activities and educational experiences of a vibrant campus. With input from key stakeholders like HR, IT, university police, business affairs, athletics, and housing partners, the campus incident management group should be the driving force behind a safety-focused and medically informed plan to resume campus operations. The plan should include a guide to return to normal operations and a contingency plan in the event of a spike in COVID-19 cases after campus operations have fully resumed.



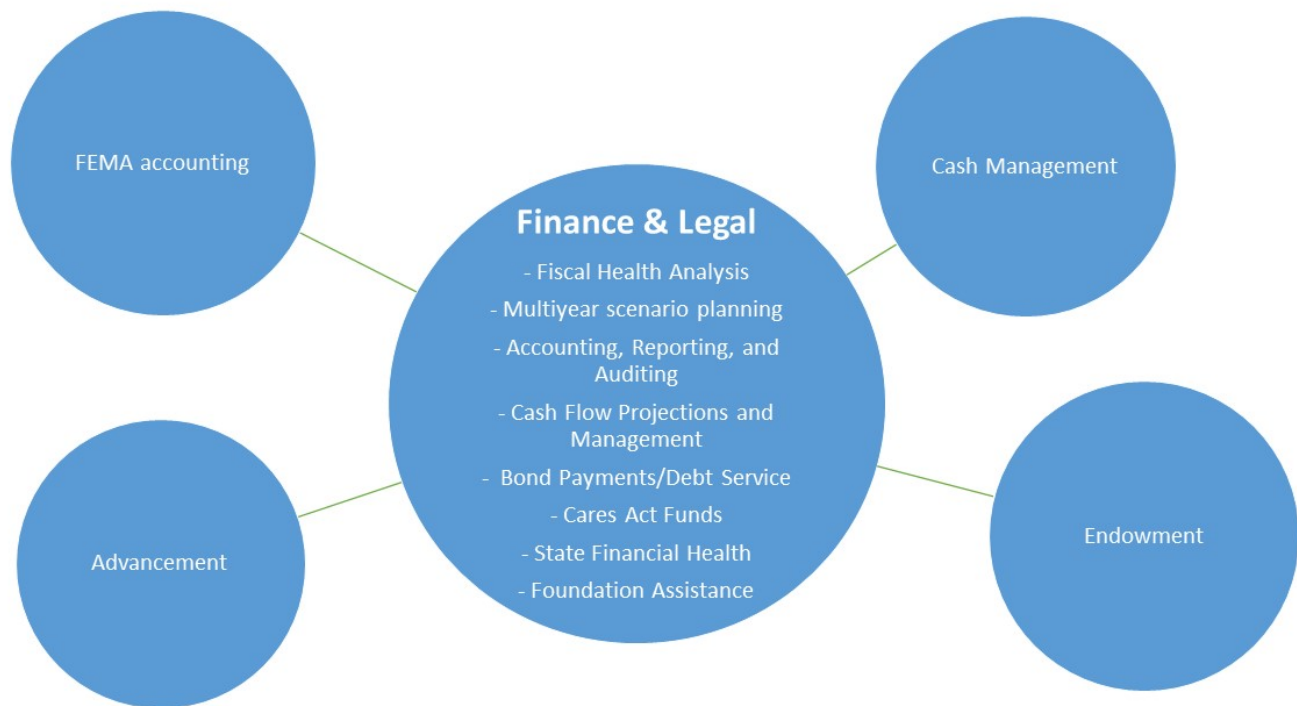
EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Increased communication is necessary in times of crisis. Though we are beyond the height of the crisis, there will still be a need for consistent communication with internal and external stakeholders. Not only will new campus protocols such as distancing practices and gathering restrictions need to be communicated but also messages about increased hygiene practices and provisions for vulnerable populations to ensure the community at large feels comfortable with restart plans. Internal communication channels, traditional media and social media provide myriad opportunities to share messages and institutional stories. Social media should be used beyond its capacity to send messages but also for its capacity to allow institutions to listen to constituencies and ensure common themes are addressed through monitoring and response.



FINANCE AND LEGAL

In a post-pandemic university environment, the institution's financial health is at the forefront of any transition back to campus operations. Despite the financial assistance provided and anticipated under the CARES Act and through other federal aid programs, institutions are faced with the real possibility of collapsing revenue if the health crisis is not resolved soon. With tuition and state appropriations being the two largest revenue sources, institutions must develop multiyear scenarios to plan for potential changes in enrollment and state appropriations. The most significant risks to institutions come from cuts in state funding and a potential drop in enrollment. A change in either will have implications on cash flow, bond payments, debt service, and the institution's overall fiscal health. It is vital that key stakeholders—HR, controllers' offices, auxiliary units, legal representatives, external debt holders, and other—play a role in shaping the institution's financial future post-COVID 19.



ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PLANNING

The following list is far from exhaustive but focuses on key areas outside of the norms of university operations and protocols that should be considered for each area and phase of restart.

- Temperature Checks
- COVID-19 Testing
- PPE
- Faculty accommodations
- Outbreak response
- Isolation quarters
- Quarantine practices
- Contact Tracing
- Course modality

Adjustments to existing institutional policies and practices

- Employee handbook
- Faculty handbook
- Student code of conduct
- Planning team
- Response team
- Refund policy
- Fees

