



SAFER SCHOOLS AND CAMPUSES **BEST PRACTICES CLEARINGHOUSE**

Lessons from the Field - Strategies for Supporting College and University Students Holistically and Safely: CDC Guidance and Best Practices

Wednesday, June 9, 2021 | 3:00 - 4:00 PM ET

Transcript

Tim Duffy:

Good afternoon. Welcome to today's Lessons from the Field webinar, Strategies for Supporting College and University Students Holistically and Safely: CDC Guidance and Best Practices. It was good to have you with us today and thank you for joining us as we pursue these important topics in the field of higher education.

On behalf of the US Department of Education, I would like to welcome you to today's event. We had over 1000 people register for the webinar, so additional people will no doubt be joining as we kick off here. Thanks to all of you who are already online with us. My name is Tim Duffy and I'm the training specialist at the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments or NCSSE, and I'll be moderating today's webinar.

NCSSE is funded by the office of Safe and Supportive Schools within the office of elementary and secondary education. On the next slide, we share an image of our center's website homepage on the left of the screen, along with some of our key products on the right. And we invite you to visit this site after today's session. The web address is at the top of the slide and will be posted periodically in the chat.

I also want to draw your attention to the fact that all materials that you'll see today including bios for our presenters and the archive version of the

recording of the event will be made available at this website. All right, let's move on to ... Before I introduce the first speaker today, we want to get a better sense of who's joined us.

So we have three polling questions to help us with that. So once those appear on your screen, there we go, please select the appropriate choices and you'll see there's a scroll bar on the right of the poll. So once you've completed the first poll, please scroll down to see the second and third.

We first want to know about your role and we have nine options here, which we hope will cover much of the waterfront of the kinds of positions of people who are joining us. But if we've missed a descriptor that fits you well, please select other and then use the chat to more clearly identify your role in higher education.

So let us know about what professional positions you occupy, that's the first question. The next two questions relate to returning to campus in the fall. So the second question asks if your institution is going to be requiring COVID-19 vaccination for students that are returning in the fall, and yes, no, unsure or not applicable options there for you. So again will you be requiring it?

Question three, is, will you be asking about the vaccination status of students? So you may or may not be requiring it, but you might be asking students to indicate whether or not they are vaccinated. So I'll give you another little minute here maybe to respond to those. I see a lot of other interesting positions being entered into chat, so that's good.

And responses coming into questions two and three. Another 30 seconds or so if you haven't yet weighed in, please do, and then we'll take a look at results. Very good, thank you everyone for participating. It helps our speakers to get a good sense of who's joined us today. So clear, it looks like the response ... Thank you, the response rate has slowed down.

So let's look first at the positions represented. So administration roles took the lead there at 34% and then drops down to safety, security kinds of positions at 17%. And then a variety of other folks have joined us as well including many coming in in the chat. So thank you for that. And that'll help our folks get an idea of how to direct their comments today.

The second question about will you be requiring, 40% no, 30% yes and another 30% either unsure or not applicable. So that's good to know. And then will you be asking students and here the pattern's reversed a bit, so

it's 43% yes, 18% no and 31% unsure. Very good. All right, that gives us good information for our speakers to know about as we progress today.

So let's take a look at where we're headed for today. We are in item one on the agenda and are very near the end of our introduction and logistics. Following that we will hear from two staff members at the CDC regarding guidance for institutes of higher ED and content about the COVID 19 vaccine toolkit, specifically for institutions of higher education.

Following the CDC's comments, we will hear from the department of education regarding the strategies for safe operation and addressing the impact of COVID-19 on higher ED students, faculty, and staff. And the bulk of our time today is saved for item number four, which is a panel discussion of our federal partners that will present items two and three, but also two campus representatives who are joining us today to share information about their unique approaches to addressing the COVID 19 status.

At the very end, we'll have a brief wrap up and closing, and we do encourage you to stay with us through the entire hour so that we can get feedback from you about this event as well at the end. With that, I would like to introduce you to the first speaker for today, C.J Powell. C.J is a Special Assistant from the office of Post-secondary Education at the US Department of Education. As C.J introduces the other speakers for today, please know, again, that the bios of all speakers are archived on the event webpage that will be listed in the chat function periodically throughout the event. So with that, C.J I give up to you.

C.J Powell:

Thanks so much Tim and welcome everyone. On behalf of the entire US Department of Education and particularly Secretary Cardona, I want to thank you for joining us today. All of us at the department are keenly aware of the challenges colleges, universities, students, and families have faced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

While our resilience has been tested, critical lessons have also been learned that can inform practice as we return to in-person instruction more completely this fall. Part of our effort at the department to showcase effective practice is the establishment of the Best Practices Clearinghouse whose web address will be posted in the chat box for your access.

Through the Clearinghouse, the department will continue to provide resources for communities, schools, educators, and families, as we work together to reopen for in-person instruction and support the needs of

students, faculty, and staff, particularly those who have been impacted greatest by the pandemic.

As an extension of the Clearinghouse, this lesson from the field webinar series has been part of our effort to highlight the effect of tools, techniques, and strategies employed by everyday practitioners to address the challenges of the pandemic and strengthen the resilience of the education system.

Today's session is another opportunity for us to continue that journey by exploring resources and strategies for supporting students, faculty, and staff in returning to in-person instructional settings.

To help us explore this topic, We're joined today by several speakers with significant experience in this area. We have a superb panel of content experts with us today. From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we're joined by Jonathan Yoder, Lead for the Community Intervention and Critical Populations Task Force, and Shannon Stokley from the Vaccine Task Force.

We'll be hearing the latest CDC updates from them shortly. In addition, Nick Lee, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development at the US Department of Education, is here to provide an overview of the recently released volume three of the department's COVID handbook.

And for our panel discussion, we'll be joined by Antonio Boyle, Vice President of Strategic Enrollment at Delaware State University and Dr. Sharon Davis, Chief Critical Response Officer for Dallas College. So let's begin with an update from our colleagues at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Jonathan, let's turn to you first. Can you provide us with the latest information on guidance released by the CDC?

Jonathan Yoder:

Thank you C.J. It's great to be here and I work on CDC's COVID-19 emergency response as C.J mentioned on the Community Intervention and Critical Population task force. And just to begin, there are a number of things that we want to share with you. But this is certainly not an exhaustive list and we encourage you to read the full guidance. But as an overview, we share that goal with you of getting those IHE's open as safe as possible. This is on the next slide.

CDC's approach is developing these recommendations and several things have guided our thinking on this. One is the awareness of the disease in the community. How much COVID-19 is there, which really informs our

thinking of the actions needed. Secondly, that decision on when and how to begin in person learning is based on a thorough review of what strategies the sciences tells us. What have we learned over the last year?

And finally, we must learn from experiences, challenges, and perspectives of those on the frontline of teachers, school, staff, parents, the educators, the administrators, as we consider how to move this forward. So on June 4th, CDC released its updated guidance for institutes of higher education. The guidance provides resources that administrators can use to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students, faculty, and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

And today I'll start by sharing with you some of the latest situational updates on COVID-19 cases, and then share the updated recommendations for IHE settings. Personally, I'd like to provide a situational update on COVID-19 cases across the country, and then about CDC emergency response work.

The data on this slide updated a couple of days ago show really good news. Nationally, COVID-19 cases are decreasing and over the last seven days, there were 92,937 cases of COVID-19. CDC's COVID data tracker has the latest statistics nationally and by state and county. And I would encourage you to visit that site for key indicators for the pandemic, including what's going on locally in your community.

And if we look at those trends among age groups on the next slide, those COVID 19 cases in young adults have decreased since the fall of 2020 with weekly incidents lower in each successive age group. And it's shown on the graph which might be hard to read on this slide, those aged 18 to 24 have the highest rates but trends among young adults aged 14 to 24 parallel those among older adults.

So when we think of those college age or traditionally college-aged students, we still see those higher rates there. Although the good news is that they are declining along with everything else. Now I'm going to walk through the guidance and this is broken up into several sections. So initially there are benefits to getting a COVID-19 vaccine. This is really now the leading prevention strategy to protect individuals from COVID-19 and really end the COVID-19 pandemic.

These vaccines prevent serious illness and death and vaccines also reduce the risk of vaccinated people getting other people sick. They're tremendously effective, and they are the primary thing that we want to emphasize. And IHEs, institutes of higher education can help increase

vaccine uptake among students, faculty, and staff by providing information about and offering COVID-19 vaccination, promoting vaccine trust, confidence, and establishing supportive policies and practices that make getting vaccinated easy and convenient.

In the next slide, we show some of the ways to increase access to vaccines. And this could include providing onsite vaccination through local vaccination sites, such as the student health clinics, the state or local health department, mobile vaccination clinics, or to facilitate access to off-site vaccination services, offering transportation to get there.

And we believe that institutes of higher education can play a critical role in offering and promoting vaccination to help increase that proportion of students, faculty, and staff that are vaccinated to help us slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent interruption in-person learning. And I'm not going to go into a lot of detail here, because my colleague will be expanding on this topic, but I want to move to the next slide so we can talk about what these trends and the implications of vaccine for improving campus life.

So, as we wrote this guidance, we looked at the campuses where everyone eligible is fully vaccinated. People who are fully vaccinated are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. And there's a growing body of evidence that suggests people who are fully vaccinated are less likely to have asymptomatic infection or even transmit that virus to others.

And for this reason, the current guidance talks about these campuses where everyone is fully vaccinated can return to full capacity in person learning without requiring recommended masking or physical distancing for people who are fully vaccinated. And this is really in line with CDC's recent public health recommendations for fully vaccinated people.

On campuses where not everyone is fully vaccinated, they'll have a mixed population. There'll be people who are both fully vaccinated and people who are not fully vaccinated. And that requires some challenging decisions to make to protect people who are not fully vaccinated. And as an administrator, there are multiple factors that could inform that decision. Thinking about those layers of prevention strategies that might be needed and consideration would be given to both the direct campus population as well as the surrounding community in these key areas.

What is your level of community transmission? So how many cases are going on in the community around you and there are a number of places

to get these data. CDC's COVID tracker would have the latest information on that. What's the level of COVID-19 vaccination coverage, including that among students, faculty, and staff. Do you have testing? Is there a robust testing available and do you have students, faculty and staff that have access to that.

And then thinking finally about local COVID-19 outbreaks, increasing trends that may make you want to think about adjusting any of your prevention strategies. And we certainly suggest that these are decisions that might need to be made locally, especially in consultation with your state or local public health partners.

And we think there are prevention strategies that remain critical for these mixed populations. And these include offering and promoting vaccines which we've already gone into and we'll talk about some more. There are consistent incorrect use of masks for those who are not vaccinated. And the guidance goes into a little more clarity here because we talk about in indoor settings, that mask use is recommended for people not fully vaccinated, but then in outdoor settings, we say that outdoor mask use is not generally needed unless you're in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are also not fully vaccinated, but those universal mask policies as we've always said, you make exceptions for people who have a disability and cannot wear a mask or a person for whom wearing a mask would create a workplace health safety or risk to their health, safety, or job duties.

And we've also talked about guidance around shared housing, the broad range of settings that are in institutes of higher education, the issues around cohorting people in situations of physical distancing. So what's that cohort, that unit or suite where people are essentially a household. And what is the ... Now that they're a cohort, they would act just as a household. So those are key key principles that many places have already put into place.

And there are a number of other things on there that we continue to recommend that people continue to do. I think it's important that we remember that we want to support coping and resilience. IHEs play a important role in helping each other make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and reduces anxiety and fear. There's a lot that's changing and even we know that changing guidance can increase anxiety.

We want to make sure that these ... That you as leaders and IHEs are tuned to that, are tuned to the needs of your students, faculty, and staff. So encouraging employees and students to take breaks from listening or watching news stories, thinking about those and CDC has a number of resources to help manage stress, to think through ways to promote resilience during the pandemic.

And particularly round events and gatherings, crowded setting still are an important risk of transmission among people who are not fully vaccinated. So if you have ... We do encourage people who are not fully vaccinated to avoid large gatherings, but if they choose to attend, do as much as possible to reduce that risk, such as wearing well-fitting masks that cover the mouth and nose, maintaining physical distancing. Those are all key strategies among people who are not fully vaccinated.

How this might play out in a mixed campus of both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons, the in-person instruction should be prioritized over extracurricular activities. So those can include sports or school events and our thought is if we're really prioritizing that in-person learning, those are the things that we want to make sure that we maintain in these settings.

And that includes on the next slide sports. So people who are fully vaccinated don't need to wear a mask if they're participating in sports or attending sports, sporting events. We know that there are additional risks for people playing sports who are unvaccinated. And so one of the things that administrators can do, coaches can do is offer and promote vaccine particularly among those athletes, coaches, trainers, and think about those testing, if they're not vaccinated testing protocols that might be needed to keep them safe.

I know a number of campuses host large events, sporting events. And so what are those policies? And those are not necessarily easy, but what are those policies that protect both the athletes, the students, faculty, and the larger community.

One other thing that we cover in this guidance is around study abroad and travel. And just to note, the CDC does have have a list of very high COVID-19 level destinations, and these are called level four travel notices. And so we would encourage you to look at that those notices to plan travel and if possible, postpone travel to those areas. And again, if students are at increased risk of COVID-19, discuss that study abroad plans to make sure that it's safe for them to attend.

And finally, international students who have been vaccinated outside of the United States, this is a tricky issue, but CDC does have updated guidance on that as well. What vaccinations are considered to be fully vaccinated either according to the FDA and emergency use authorization or according to WHO. I really appreciate your time. We've gone through a lot in a very rapid period of time, but I look forward to the conversation and I'll turn it back to C.J. Thank you.

C.J Powell:

Thanks a lot, Jonathan. There's so much there for higher education colleagues to consider as they prepare for the fall. I encourage folks to capture the web links being posted in the chat or visit the NCSSE website where this event and all associated resource links will be archived to further pursue some of the details Jonathan shared.

Next, we're joined by Shannon Stokley from the vaccines taskforce at CDC. Shannon joins us today to describe the CDC's vaccine toolkit. Shannon?

Shannon Stokley:

Thank you and good afternoon, everyone. And thanks for this opportunity to present today. So as mentioned earlier, I'm really excited to say that our COVID-19 vaccine toolkit for institutes of higher education is now online and shown here is the webpage for the tool kit. And the link for the site is also at the bottom of the slide. And I think it will be posted in the chat as well.

The objective of this toolkit is to support IHEs promote vaccination. So it's many students are vaccinated prior to the 2021 fall semester. And we also want to provide resources to help you share clear, complete and accurate messages about COVID-19 vaccines. And this includes providing practical tools for partnering with pharmacies, strategies for building vaccine confidence and also print and digital communication materials.

Shown up here are just some of the suggested activities that are included in the toolkit to promote COVID-19 vaccination. And this includes fostering transparent two-way communication about the benefits, safety, side effects and effectiveness of vaccines. Educating students through various channels, and then helping students by incredible vaccine information and encouraging student led campaigns to promote vaccination.

So it's respect to providing access to vaccination services. We have information about how to partner with local pharmacies, and this may be really helpful for institutions that do not have existing infrastructure such as the student health center or vaccination can be incorporated into the

available services. So some of you may have already established partnerships with local pharmacies, but for institutions that have not, there is a website with the contact information for federal pharmacy partners.

So the partnership that can take many forms such as directing students to nearby pharmacy sites, institutions can also coordinate with local pharmacies to set up blocks of time or days for students to get vaccinated or even work with the pharmacy to provide on campus vaccinations. So again, the website shown on this slide provides the contact information for the pharmacies.

And the toolkit also has many resources that you can customize for communicating with students. Some examples shown here is a letter to students to encourage them to get vaccinated, and also explain the school guidance on COVID-19 vaccination if that applies. And we also have articles that can be used to post on your school website.

And then we also have a full library of print and digital resources shown here. There is a web widget that you can post on your website to help students find vaccination services near them. All they have to do is enter their zip code and it'll provide a list of locations that have vaccine. We also have infographics, fact sheets, stickers and a social media tool kit as well.

So again, that was just a very high level of review of our tool kit. And thank you for this opportunity to present. And I hope you find these resources helpful as we work to increase the proportion of students and faculty and staff that are vaccinated to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

C.J Powell:

Thank you, Shannon. Thank you so much for sharing details about the vaccine toolkit with us today as a foundation for the upcoming panel discussion. Next we'll learn about strategies for safe operation and addressing the impact of COVID-19 on higher education students, faculty, and staff.

Let's get one more piece of context before launching into the panel discussion. For that, we're joined by Nick Lee, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development at the US Department of Education. Today, he joins us to discuss volume three of Ed's COVID handbook, dedicated to higher education's pandemic response.

Nick Lee:

Good afternoon, and welcome. Before starting, I just wanted to add my gratitude to those of my fellow colleagues at the Department of Education and around the administration for your leadership and tireless effort over these last 15 months and adapting, and readapting over no doubt, long nights and weekends. Also you can continue to serving your students. Your students, faculty, staff in our nation are all the stronger for it. So thank you.

Just to provide some quick context around volume three, this volume was part of our response to an executive order that the president signed the day after he took office, directing the Department Education and other federal agencies to dig into the questions around how educational institutions in our country, from early learning through K-12 and higher education might reopen and safely operate. Volumes one and two released early this year focused on K-12.

And we were excited to release volume three last Friday, focusing on institutions of higher education. It's intended to compliment other federal guidance and resources, hearing from our colleagues to CC, just as part of this webinar on their setting specific guidance in the vaccination toolkit, but also other resources that Department Education has put out such as frequently asked questions associated with the higher education emergency relief funds.

It was also based on extensive stakeholder input. Over the last few months, we did a lot of listening, organizations, institutions, institutional leaders and students and practitioners on campus. Everyone ranging from mental health folks to caregivers, to aid administrators, to student affairs professionals. And so the product of that is the volume that we have here.

Some of the objectives that we try to achieve here, one was obviously that while things are on the upswing in some areas, there continue to be significant challenges in others around the ongoing response and recovery from the pandemic. So we wanted to provide some texture on the research about what has played out and the road ahead in terms of recovery and realignment for the students who left higher education, who are waiting on the sidelines to decide if they wish to enroll.

We're also trying to present some recommendations and practices. During our stakeholder sessions, we heard loud and clear about institutions wanting to be aware of what their peers are doing. And so we're hoping to at least try to scratch some of that itch through this volume. Then the third is the federal government has done a lot in terms

of providing various kinds of support, both financial and flexibilities. And we wanted to put all in one place, so that folks who were on the ground at institutions, trying to think through how to help their students, faculty, and staff, they can just turn to and hopefully find the information at their fingertips.

Next, these are just a few of the topics that are covered in the guidance. It's obviously a broad set of topics and we will obviously not have the time to dig into all of them during the few minutes we have here. But on the next slide, what we wanted to do is lift up some of the key takeaways on some of these topics. And so for safe practices for in-person learning, this section, one of the big takeaways is obviously trying to amplify the prevention strategies that our CDC colleagues just walk through some of the toolkit practices that Shannon also talked through, and also make it clear that a lot of these practices are covered with the relief funds provided through the American Rescue Plan that institutions have at their fingertips.

In the online learning section, one of the interesting takeaways was obviously this sudden transition to remote learning was a challenge for a large number of institutions and getting folks trained up to deliver courses that were taught in an in-person setting remotely was a big challenge. However, equally important to helping meet that need is around student engagement, not just in terms of ensuring that the students got the content and were able to progress in their programs of study, but also particularly given the great amount of isolation associated with the pandemic, particularly in its early stages, that type of engagement was important to maintain the health of those students and also of course engaging that, ensuring that they stayed on track.

On the technology access side, there were obviously a lot of great financial resources to help students and faculty and staff access broadband and devices, but there are also some more creative aspects that some institutions also innovated towards during the pandemic that did involve direct financial resources.

So looking at things like rental programs for students, looking at ways of doing both purchasing that might have lowered the cost of delivering this important need during the pandemic. In terms of basic needs and supports, the overwhelming takeaway that we heard was around minimizing barriers and making connections wherever possible. Minimizing barriers like forums, how do we encourage institutions or how might institutions not require students to fill out fastest to get access to things like emergency aid?

How do ... Reduce documentation requirements where before, when folks had access to printers, that was one thing, but in a virtual environment, what other forms of documentation might serve well in terms of providing sort of understanding of financial need or health needs?

The other was sort of a connection around needs. We heard a lot from institutions that were helping students say get some groceries, but that really serving as an intake point to assess and understand that there were a whole bunch of other needs behind that student and families life, everything from mental health. And so institutions were using that point of conversation to direct students towards other resources. So what were ways in which that could be a way of connecting to other needs that were critical to the student being able to continue their educational course of study.

For student caregivers, obviously a lot of great resources from a financial perspective to help students have access to childcare, and just caring for parents and other loved ones, but also a lot of innovation in terms of how to deliver supports in a virtual context around building community, providing tips, but also actually offering caregiving support in a virtual space.

And then finally, in terms of the federal funding and flexibilities, the Department of Education obviously has offered institutions a lot of financial resources, a lot of flexibilities, but also other federal agencies have extensive supports in place as well. Everyone from the FCC with their emergency broadband benefit to our colleagues at the USDA that work on the snap program. And so this is really intended to be a catalog of those places and resources that institutions that want to be aware of.

So the last I wanted to close just by saying that volume three is far from a comprehensive guide to all the resources. Obviously there's a lot of innovation going on and there will be a lot of innovation that will be needed over the days and months ahead. And that doesn't necessarily lend itself well to the timeline of producing necessarily a federal report.

Nick Lee:

So what we've done is obviously created a Best Practices Clearinghouse to gather some of these practices that you all are iterating on and putting into place, but also if there's anything that we missed, any other areas you might want to consider covering please reach out to us at this email address. Thanks.

C.J Powell:

Thank you, Nick. That's a great reminder of the support available from your office at the Department of Education and the continued response to the COVID pandemic. It's time for our panel discussion, which will include two on the ground practitioners in higher education settings to share their wisdom, experience and insight. As a reminder, our first campus representative is Antonio Boyle, Vice-president of Strategic Enrollment and Student Affairs at Delaware State University.

Del State is a medium sized four year public university. It's an HBCU functioning in a suburban setting with a residential campus. Delaware State came to our attention once they announced that they were canceling institutional debt held by graduating students to help them with their futures using the American Rescue Plan, higher education emergency relief funds.

Our second campus representative is Dr. Sharon Davis, Chief Critical Response Officer for Dallas College, a large urban community college comprise of seven main campus settings and 11 centers. The college offers online hybrid and in-person instruction. At this time, I invite Antonio, Sharon, Jonathan, Shannon, and Nick to join me on camera for our panel conversation.

Thank you all so much. It's great to see your faces and thank you so much for joining us. To our practitioners, I really, really appreciate you being able to join us and share what you've learned and experienced during this COVID-19 pandemic and how you really work to serve your students. Well, and welcome back two our former presenters to join us for our panel conversation.

Antonio, we're going to start with you. So Delaware State made news, a lot of these when you all announced that you were canceling the institutional debt for graduating students. Can you tell us what the impetus behind that decision was and what allowed you all to actually cancel the debt? And then the second question is, can you describe why this was so important to you all from an equity perspective.

Antonio Boyle:

C.J, thank you. Thank you on behalf of president, Tony Allen and the entire team here at Delaware State University, we are happy to be here. Early in the pandemic, we realized that we went to remote learning. We went through a process where we ourselves raised funds for students. And then as Lee said earlier, Nick Lee said earlier, we looked at some items that came up in terms of trauma that students were having, loss of employment, loss of life, loss of places to live, food insecurity and all of those things.

And we catalog that trauma to then look and see, well, as we go forward for retention purposes and those things, what were the things that were barriers to students and identified those and those students, as they self identify, we made changes to records. We did professional judgments. We did all of those things in year one for our first year in the middle of pandemic.

Year two, which is now, we literally looked at every student who fit in one of those 19 trauma areas in terms of are there ways for us to pay their debt by area in terms of what needs they may have had. So in many cases, students had challenges that were either immediate to them or and their family members change in their perspective as a student at Delaware State University.

So we use that to be a part of what we needed to do here to help students be successful. Our team got together literally to focus on how do we retain students, how do we make sure students matriculate, how do we make sure students can graduate? And then how do we support them through the trauma that they're going through, either keeping them on campus or looking at those things that were barriers for them to ensure that we are able the common site for that.

In year one, we raised about \$1.5 million ourselves. We disbursed that to students for the needs that they had. We also paid off debt. And now in year two, we did the exact same model just to look to see, well where were our students and how we can help our students do that. So our task force focused around those areas to solve our students situations here.

C.J Powell:

Thank you. And would you mind kind of going into thinking a bit bigger picture, why this was important from an equity standpoint for your particular student community that you have on campus?

Antonio Boyle:

Most definitely. For Title IV eligible students, we know that students upwards of 90% get some form of Title IV aid to attend our institution. And we knew that anything that changed that calculus, we need to address that if that support for the student, for the things that they need. Now, we're just one-offs right. In terms of my car broke down and childcare and all those other things that tied to living on campus.

So most important, we made sure that the student aid funds went to students and we didn't look at those other portions that we have, where can we be most impactful with those funds. President Allen and our entire leadership team, our board of trustees, folks rally together to make sure that we were focused on what our students are going through.

How do we help them and ensure because of the Title IV eligible students that we had to solve for them.

We also have a non-Title IV population of students that we serve on campus as well, too, that we serve them from our own institutional budgets to help those we serve and support dreamers here and other persons we support. So we looked at both Title IV funding for those students and help them as we can. And non Title IV eligible students to also help them as well too. And that was valuable to us because every single student needed our service at the point, and we needed to do that and do it well. And we hope that we did a good job to our students in the things that we've done.

C.J Powell: Thank you so much. Sharon, we're going to pivot to COVID prevention strategies now. Dallas College as I mentioned, has a number of campuses and you've been leading the response up there for Dallas college and you all have gone to great lengths to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Can you describe just what you all did as an institution?

Sharon Davis: Yes. Thank you, C.J. And thanks for the recognition of the mitigation strategies that Dallas College has put in place. So we did a lot of the similar things that other institutions did. We mandated masks, we reduced classroom capacities, we eliminated gatherings and we adjusted our ventilation systems to bring in more fresh air and required social distancing.

But some of the other strategies that we could in place that maybe not everyone put in place was we purchased a pre-screening app that required all of our employees and all of our students, if they were coming onto campus, they had to do a self assessment health screening. And we hired staff, we limited our entry and exit points. So we hired staff that would have to screen their QR code before they were allowed in based on their responses to those health screening questions.

Additionally, we put in place requirements for our vendors and visitors. Before they were able to access our campuses, they had to turn in their COVID strategies. We had to review and approve those. We also developed a COVID-19 dashboard that not only tracked the positive cases at our campus, but also in our county, in our state and nationally by zip code so that everyone could see what was going on depending on their location.

One of the other strategies we put in place as a mitigation strategy is we developed thresholds by which once we started back to coming face to

face, these thresholds established when something would require us to go back to a remote activity. So we had a 5% threshold for a class, a work group or building. If 5% or more of the population in that group developed a positive case then they had to return to a remote work environment.

Like many of our sister colleges and campuses, we did participate as testing sites for COVID 19. And currently we're participating with vaccine clinics, we're part of federal pharmacy program and we're continuing to implement and institute policies and protocols to keep our campus and our students safe.

C.J Powell: Thanks a lot. An additional question, as folks are across ... Our listeners are from across the nation. Can you help discuss or describe your decision making process when dealing with guidances that perhaps weren't always aligned completely.

Sharon Davis: Yes. Thank you. So, like many of our sisters and brothers across the country, we also followed all the guidelines as they related to the CDC. And one of the things our chancellor did early on in the process is he started having weekly meetings with our hospital associations, with our county judge and with our health and human services department. And those meetings helped us in making our decisions on how we would move forward so that we would ensure that we were in alignment with not only what was happening nationally, but what was happening locally.

C.J Powell: Thanks a lot. That's really helpful. Jonathan, one of the most common questions we have received is what constitutes a fully vaccinated campus. And we would love for you if you could describe that more.

Jonathan Yoder: C.J, you're giving me the hard question first. So thank you for that. Now this is a really good question. And at the moment, the definition in our guidance really is that all eligible students, faculty and staff are fully vaccinated. And I think that's we would love to have the science behind that to say, well, what if 90% were vaccinated? And what if 80% were vaccinated?

At the moment that science is not there to say this is where we should be. As we get more data on vaccination and I will say it looks really promising. The vaccine seems to be very effective for the viruses circulating now. As we get more data, I think you hopefully can expect some updates on that. But at the moment, what we could say is that it's a fully vaccinated campus for thinking of basically taking out all of your other prevention activities.

So, I know that may not be satisfactory and it would be very helpful if we could use a different number, but at the moment that is where we're landing.

C.J Powell: Really appreciate that transparency. That's the most helpful thing I think for our audience. An additional question is what do you think is the most important thing for folks to know as they continue to think about what their fall looks like on their campus moving forward?

Jonathan Yoder: So the most important thing as you think about the fall, and I think as we think about this guidance, it's resources that administrators can use to prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19 among the students, faculty, and staff. It doesn't replace any of your existing local, federal, state laws, rules or regulations. So I think that there are some other things that ... This has guidance and I think there's important things to think about.

I think the other thing to keep in mind is that we're ... I presented some of the data at the beginning and the trends are really promising right now. And we're all very ... I mean, we're very optimistic at the moment with the reasons that is going down, driven by vaccination uptake and we certainly hope that continues.

But we don't have ... We can't look 2, 3 months into the future to know exactly where that will be. So I think for ... This is what we're telling in a number of different settings is be ready to transition. Maybe things will look so good that it'll be even less than we're talking about now, but we can't predict that. And there might be variants of the virus that comes through that we really will have to start stepping up things again. So I think it's really staying in tune with what your local trends are. Thank you.

C.J Powell: Thanks a lot, Jonathan. We're going to pivot towards Nick now. So Nick, one aspect we haven't discussed yet is mental health. Where have some good models been from meeting the mental health needs of students, faculty, and staff?

Nick Lee: Sure. Thanks, C.J. There've been lots of interesting new ways of providing a variety of services during the pandemic and mental health is one of those areas obviously. Not being able to be in person has caused that innovation. So we heard from a lot of institutions that we're looking at, obviously providing things like virtual and telehealth methods of delivering mental health support.

Some institutions because a lot of their students weren't physically on the campus anymore, they were sort of elsewhere. They looked at

creative ways of working with community-based organizations to perhaps provide some of those services in a virtual setting as well. A lot of thinking around setting up and training students as being mental health ambassadors to their peers.

Another interesting innovation that we heard a fair bit about was looking at a holistic response system too. So not just having the folks on the front lines, the mental health professionals, the counselors delivering those services, but also those who had other interactions with students.

Obviously students even in a virtual setting came across a variety of folks along their educational journey, whether folks in the aid office, faculty, other administrators, and even providing simple training on sort of how that particular staff member could provide even general support, flexibility, encouragement, help with isolation during this period of the pandemic. Those were all innovations that we saw happened in place and were valuable.

C.J Powell: Thanks, Nick. So the COVID pandemic has brought on a lot of stress for our students and so thank you for addressing mental health. But there's also with the arrival of vaccinations has created a bit vaccine hesitancy or curiosity if we were to better frame it. So Shannon, do you have any additional thoughts on encouraging vaccines given the amount of curiosity that is still out there held by folks who will be returning to campus communities?

Shannon Stokley: I think it always helps to have really clear, transparent messaging with individuals, and pointing them to resources that are from trusted messengers, whether it's from CDC or local clinicians in your community. And then finding individuals who can provide messaging that resonates with your students or faculty and staff.

We have a lot of resources on our website with our vaccinate with confidence framework. I believe that's also linked in our tool kit as well, to have those messages that can be helpful and also tips for communicating with students, faculty, and staff around vaccine messaging.

C.J Powell: Thank you so much, Shannon. I would like to thank all the panelists so much for sharing their wisdom and their insight from their experiences on the front lines, or my federal government colleagues with whom we've been working extensively since getting on board. So thank you all so much for joining our panel today. We really appreciate you all sharing your perspectives.

Tim Duffy:

Thanks, C.J. We move on to ... We're nearly at the end of the hour. We go so fast when we have great information like this to be shared. We do have one final polling question for those of you that are with us today. So we've covered a number of topics in this webinar that you'll see identified on screen now in the poll. What we're interested in is if there are ... Which of these topics would you appreciate getting additional information on to serve your needs on your campus?

You can choose as many as seem like high priority to you. So we have allowable uses of American Recovery Plan funds, COVID-19 Prevention and Safe Operation Strategies, Mental Health for Students, Faculty and Staff, vaccinating students, faculty, and staff, and other.

And then the other category, again, please use the chat to let us know the kinds of things you might be thinking of there. We're going to let this roll for awhile. Comments are coming in strongly here, your votes are and perhaps comments in chat as well. This is very helpful information for the Department of Education and the CDC and their continued joint effort to support all of you on your campuses as this work moves forward.

As guidance continues to be updated, which I did note in the chat, a number of you asking about the frequency with which that might be happening and so forth, and that does occur as it's possible to be updated as information changes and new science is available. So, this will help inform that process.

It looks like responses have slowed down here, so maybe we'll end that poll. So the highest number of responses came in for prevention and safe operation strategies and followed by mental health concerns. A good number of you though, looking for support in a variety of these issues. And we'll certainly collect, catalog all this information and make sure that it's passed along again to the federal agencies that are assisting with this work.

All right, as we move forward, want to extend my thanks too to Jonathan, Shannon, Nick, C.J, Antonio and Sharon, for the excellent information that you were able to share with us today. As we close we're posting on the web page now a link to a SurveyMonkey, but also it's in the chat box. So please feel free to access it there.

I really encourage anyone who's on board with us today to take a minute or two and give us some important feedback on today's session so that we know how we can improve sessions like this in the future. Thank you so much for that.

In addition, please visit the NCSSE website following today's presentation, that's where you'll find the archived version of this event posted by the end of this week, perhaps as early as tomorrow, as well as the references, resources that were referenced here today and presenter slide, bios, all of that information will be on that website. So I encourage you to see that.

I just want to remind you too that we weren't able to get to all questions that were raised today, but those will be captured and will be forwarded to the federal agencies involved in this work so that they can use that information to better support you as you move toward the fall reopening of your campuses.

All right, my sincere thanks again to all of you who presented, to all of you who attended. There were nearly over 750 people at various points in today's session. So thanks to all of you for joining us this afternoon and for posing some really important questions along the way. Everyone has provided really important information for us to consider and to inform future webinars that will be upcoming in this series.

We're going to leave the Zoom link open here for a few more minutes, so that if you want to access any of the messages in the chat, any of the links that were provided there, the items that are on screen here, or again if you would take a minute or two, just to give us some feedback using the feedback form, and we'll put that link up again as well and it is in the chat.

So we greatly appreciate your time and energy toward each of those items. Appreciate your time and joining us today and are so grateful for all the efforts you put into providing students with safe, supportive learning environments throughout every single year that you're involved in this good work. Have a great rest of your afternoon, and thanks again for being with us.