

COVID-19 Update: 05-12-2020

Good evening Stone Academy Community,

In light of the recent announcements by Governor Lamont, I wanted to provide you with an update of where Stone Academy stands on reopening our campuses. Before I do, I would like to tell you how appreciative I am of the level of support and patience that I have seen in our students, faculty, and staff. Time and time again I have witnessed moments of tremendous empathy and understanding, moments that show our true strength as a community during this exceptionally difficult time.

The process of reopening our campuses is one we are approaching extremely delicately so as not to create a condition with undue health and safety risks. We have broken down the approach to reopening the campuses into the three sections below:

#### Campus Operations

Per the executive directive from the State of Connecticut, on May 20th businesses may begin reopening, this would include aspects of our administrative operations. We have no expectations of broadly allowing staff on campus immediately, but will likely have non-academic departments begin transitioning on campus by the end of the month. This will be extremely limited at first and will expand as we monitor the situation.

Looking forward, and with the guidance of the Governor's Office, we will look towards the middle of summer to begin integrating academic staff to our campuses.

#### Clinical/Laboratory Experiences

As a result of the Department of Public Health's announcement, on clinical rotations being allowed at healthcare facilities, last week we began sending our first groups of students out to clinical sites. Extensive precautions are being taken at these sites to ensure the safety of our students and faculty and we have received insight from our clinical partners that our students are serving as an essential resource. In an effort to keep students on track towards their expected graduation dates, we have started with students closer to the end of their program. We will continue to slowly introduce groups back into clinical settings over the coming months as it becomes safer at more facilities.

In accordance with the Governor's plan to reopen the state, we are targeting the beginning of June to start allowing small groups of students on campus to complete their required laboratory competencies. We will provide more information as we get closer to the end of the month but students and faculty alike should expect that requirements for entering the building will be strict, with each student or faculty member being screened every day. This transition will likely begin by introducing students that are closer to their graduation date and moving on to students who have started more recently.

#### On-Ground Classroom Instruction

While the State has identified July or August as the date that non-residential programs can resume their coursework on campus. We will not make any such moves until a substantive set of campus safety protocols are in place and the campus can be opened without posing a significant risk to our community. I intend to provide more clarity on the resumption of on-ground courses at the beginning of June.

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On a final note, Stone Academy has developed a program that will provide funds directly to Title IV eligible students to be utilized for expenses related to the COVID-19 crisis. Students will need to opt-in to the program at [www.stone.edu/carescheck](http://www.stone.edu/carescheck) which will become active on May 15, 2020. Funds will be released directly to all registered and active students evenly at the end of each month until the funds are exhausted. We hope that this will serve to provide some additional financial security to our entire student body. In addition to this program, students with extraordinary economic impacts will be able to apply for relief from a separate fund. All of this information will be provided at the aforementioned link on May 15, 2020.

Thank you for continuing to be strong and kind to one another, and a special note of thanks to the many students that are continuing to work on the front lines throughout this crisis. In choosing to be a part of the Stone Academy community, each of you has signed on to take care of humanity and we need your courage and strength now more than ever.

Until I can see each of you on campus again, stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Bierbaum  
President