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Guidance for Reopening Campuses

A number of colleges and universities across the country are considering whether to reopen their campuses in the fall. Much of the discussion about reopening has focused on the financial challenges and on the potential impact on enrollments of continuing to offer instruction remotely. The decision to reopen a campus raises not only logistical and health and safety concerns but also concerns about how best to achieve the academic mission both during the COVID-19 pandemic and in its aftermath. The AAUP offers the following guidance on reopening campuses to our chapters, faculty governing bodies, and administrations. As with all the AAUP's resources related to COVID-19, we will continue to update this guidance as new information becomes available.

- The health and safety of students, faculty, and staff should be the primary consideration in decision-making about when to reopen a campus. Institutions should provide reasonable accommodations for members of the campus community who have underlying health conditions.
- Decisions on how to reopen campuses safely should be driven by [guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and state departments of health.
- The AAUP's [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#) notes that “the variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for adequate communication among these components, and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort.” Decisions related to “such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, . . . and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process,” the *Statement* also points out, are matters in which “the faculty has primary responsibility.” The faculty and academic staff—through their shared governance bodies or, when applicable, their unions—should accordingly participate in decisions related to how best to implement a return to on-campus instruction. In order to ensure full participation, administrations should be transparent, should keep the faculty fully informed, and should consult meaningfully with existing faculty governance bodies.
- Some institutions are considering moving to a blended instructional model for the 2020–21 academic year. The appropriate faculty governance body and, when applicable, the faculty union should have primary responsibility for determining institutional policies and practices around this form of instruction (for more information, see the AAUP's [Statement on Online and Distance Education](#)).