COVID Safe Campus

CSC graduation guide contents: COVID (p1-2), Accessibility (p3-4), Alternatives (p5-6)

Graduation Ceremony COVID Mitigation Checklist

☐ **Mask requirement for everyone**
- ☐ High filtration requirement (N95, KN95, KF94, FFP2 or FFP3)
- ☐ Provide free high filtration masks
- ☐ No exceptions to indoor mask requirement – speakers and photo ops must be masked #COVIDisAirborne

☐ **Venue**
- ☐ Reduce capacity
  - ☐ Reduce number of guests
  - ☐ Require ticketing
  - ☐ Consider limiting to meaningful groups (ie. related majors)
- ☐ Distance — the more distance between people the better
  - ☐ Seating (ie. leave every other seat empty)
  - ☐ On stage
  - ☐ Procession
- ☐ Consider a fresh air setting (weather permitting) to decrease risk
- ☐ Reduce duration of ceremony to a minimum
- ☐ Break up large ceremonies into smaller groups
- ☐ Require venue staff to follow strict COVID precautions and enforce them among others
  - ☐ Negative test required for all participants
  - ☐ High filtration mask required

☐ **Ventilation**
- ☐ MERV-13 equivalent or better HVAC system
- ☐ HEPA filters or Corsi-Rosenthal boxes throughout
- ☐ Utilize CO_2 monitoring
- ☐ Follow more in-depth guidelines listed at this link

- ☐ **Testing and tracing**
  - ☐ Require negative tests
  - ☐ Keep a registry of all attendees
    - ☐ Notify all attendees of positive tests in the days following

- ☐ **Hybrid and remote options**
  - ☐ Allow graduates the flexibility to change their mode of participation
    - ☐ Give graduates an easy way to change their mode of attendance from in person to virtual, or vice versa without deadline or consequence
  - ☐ Provide meaningful opportunities for participation and that are interactive, fully accessible, and inclusive
    - ☐ **Incorporate best practices in meaningful inclusion listed here**

- ☐ **Transparency**
  - ☐ Make data-responsive decisions as local conditions change (ie. cases, test positivity, hospitalizations)
  - ☐ Publish a contingency plan detailing changes the community can expect if cases reach a certain threshold or level of concern
    - ☐ Increase precautions, postpone, or move virtual at that threshold
  - ☐ Disclose who is involved in commencement decision making and how they may be contacted by individuals with COVID concerns

- ☐ **Health communications**
  - ☐ Provide clear and comprehensive communications explaining COVID risk, precautions taken, and further resources to allow people to make informed decisions about attendance
  - ☐ Communicate up to date COVID data from campus and the local area as the ceremony approaches

Graduation Ceremony Accessibility Checklist

In person ceremony

- ☐ **Entrances**
    - ☐ Wheelchair accessible entrances and parking
    - ☐ Option to use a back entrance at request to enter and leave without crowding
    - ☐ Masks required for all at entry

- ☐ **Bathrooms**
    - ☐ Wheelchair accessible
    - ☐ Designate gender neutral bathrooms
    - ☐ Masks required in bathrooms

- ☐ **Signage**
    - ☐ Directional signage
    - ☐ COVID precaution related signage

- ☐ **Stage access**
    - ☐ Ramps
    - ☐ Handrails
    - ☐ Masks required for everyone on stage, including speakers

- ☐ **Seating**
    - ☐ Wheelchair accessible seating
        - ☐ Accompanied by guest seating
        - ☐ Integrated unless requested otherwise
    - ☐ Companion seating at request [ie. graduate is seated with a designated student, faculty, staff, aid of their choice to meet their needs]
    - ☐ Option for assigned seating at a greater distance, or in a masked area for high risk graduates, families, and guests
    - ☐ Seating near exit for graduates who must leave early to minimize their risk
    - ☐ Early entrance for graduates and families to arrive ahead of a crowd to minimize their risk

- ☐ **Auxiliary aids**
    - ☐ Qualified interpreters
    - ☐ CART (Computer Assisted Realtime Translation)
    - ☐ Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)
    - ☐ Open and closed captioning
    - ☐ Large print materials
    - ☐ Braille materials
    - ☐ Audio description of prepackaged video content
    - ☐ Auxiliary aids should provide access to the entire commencement program, including the announcement of each graduate as they cross the stage.

Remote ceremony

Auxiliary aids
- ☐ Qualified interpreters [spotlighted on screen or picture in picture]
- ☐ CART (Computer Assisted Realtime Translation)
- ☐ Open and closed captioning
- ☐ Large text
- ☐ Audio description of prepackaged video content
- ☐ Auxiliary aids should provide access to the entire commencement program, including the announcement of each graduate as they cross the stage.

Flexibility to change one's own attendance format at any time
- ☐ Easy option to change their mode of attendance from in person to virtual, or vice versa without deadline or consequence

- ☐ **Incorporate best practices in meaningful inclusion listed [here](#)**

Notes:
- Auxiliary aids and mobility access should be offered by default and guests may need such, in addition to their graduates
- Commencement planners should establish and communicate a way for graduates and guests to request COVID related accommodations directly

Meaningful inclusion for a hybrid graduation ceremony

Build in opportunities for graduates at home to feel celebrated and seen by creating ways virtual attendees can interact and be integrated into the ceremony, rather than just watch it.

- Go beyond reading a name on a powerpoint slide, add extra emphasis for virtual participants
  - Allow a classmate or professor in attendance to walk the stage in honor of the virtual attendee (ie. carry the graduate with them across the stage on a phone or tablet, when the graduate would be called to walk; bring a sign celebrating the virtual attendee, or physically walk a picture across the stage)
- 'Zoom' graduates directly into a portion of the ceremony
  - ie. bringing them across stage by video call on a mobile device, or to have every virtual attendee on a group Zoom call on the screen of the venue, to recognize the graduates as they flip their tassels alongside their peers
- Utilize interactive elements like using 'reacts' that appear on screen
  - ie. clapping hands/applause, heart, or other celebratory emoji react feature built into streaming and video-conferencing platforms
- Enable live chat alongside the stream
- Host a portion of the commencement event that is entirely virtual
- Consider a virtual reception using a video-conferencing platform (ie. Zoom, Webex)

Alternatives to the traditional commencement ceremony

Alternate settings:
- Relocate graduation to an outdoor setting
- Break events up across multiple locations and times
- Think of creative alternative settings, drive in movie theater or drive up diploma+photos

Smaller ceremonies:
- Encourage departments and student groups host their own smaller graduation events (in person or virtual)
- Host a "COVID-cautious" ceremony with extra precautions if policies cannot be applied to all ceremonies

Virtual ideas:
- Hold an entirely virtual alternative graduation where everyone is included by default
- Consider a virtual reception using a web-conferencing platform (ie. Zoom, Webex)
- Set up a virtual photo booth
  - High quality digital backdrop that makes it look like the graduate is at the venue or on campus

- ○ Create virtual graduation photos for graduates, have them stand against a white background have someone with the skills crop the student into the graduation backdrop
- Host virtual grad parties with friends and family

Photo opportunities:
- Have the school photographer do official outside pictures too
  - ○ Set up an official time surrounding the ceremony or offer it as an accommodation at request for those who have to miss the in-person photo op
- If there is an official outdoor photo area or photo booth with cardboard cut out with notable figures at the college (people, college mascots, etc)
- Have the president or whomever gives out diplomas on stage set up an outdoor time where they wear a mask and take pictures for people who can't go indoors

Have a suggestion you don't see here? Tweet it or email it to us and we'll add it!