

Comments to the Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee from Patricia O'Neill, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Western Connecticut State University, and President, CSU-AAUP.

Good afternoon, Senator Haskell, Representative Turco, and members of the committee. I am Patty O'Neill, president of Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors (CSU-AAUP).

Let me first commend the System Office of the Board of Regents for meeting on a weekly basis with the presidents of the higher education union in the CSCU system. I think these meetings have helped avoid a lot of problems associated with the rapid shutdown and movement to on-line last March. I want to commend all of my colleagues, in both the CSUs, and those in the community colleges, for their dedication in this process, which went nearly seamlessly. It was impressive.

However, I must voice my concerns with the plans for reopening the Universities. Presently, there are plans only for testing residential students and residence directors. There are no plans for widespread testing of commuter students, staff or faculty. There are no plans for temperature screenings of anyone. On some campuses, there are no plans for designated entrances and exits. I am concerned about the quality of the HVAC systems.

Testing, masks, handwashing and contact tracing are all part of a containment strategy. I've already mentioned the lack of testing. Contact tracing will only be done for residential students.

These seem insufficient. Commissioner Gifford, when speaking at the recent Board of Regents meeting, said "Testing is not part of containment", yet the federal government recommends masks, hand-washing, testing, and contact tracing as the means by which spread of the virus can be contained.

In May, the Governor's office released a report by the Higher Education Subcommittee of Reopen Connecticut. It was said **"The State must ensure that colleges and universities have adequate supplies of viral diagnostic tests and adequate financial support to obtain, administer, and process them "**

Dr. Fauci, when appearing with Governor Lamont commented "You can keep the numbers down by following current protocols", and yet, here we are: about to drastically change those current protocols with seemingly inadequate safety precautions. Why are the safety precautions for the students of the CSCU less than for students at UCONN? Why is that acceptable?

Finally, I want to say that we faculty love to educate. We shouldn't have to risk possible death when we do so.

Thank you for your time.