

As individuals and employers seek a path forward, higher education is uniquely positioned to play a key role in Indiana's recovery. Colleges and universities are responding with the sense of urgency that is required to improve lives and communities.

### SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Indiana's institutions are stepping up to help students who are unsure of their next steps and may be struggling through personal hardships.

- Online and virtual counseling resources have been made available to students.
- Colleges and universities are connecting students with organizations that provide food and housing assistance, transportation, financial resources and other support services.
- Many campuses are offering grants and other supports, such as providing free laptops to students who need help transitioning to online-only coursework.
- Institutions are focused on ensuring academic rigor and quality online instruction so students are fully prepared to continue their education in the fall.
- Many campuses are offering grading flexibility, including extending the option to withdraw and offering pass/fail grades and ensuring students are aware of any implications of choosing these options – particularly for selective admissions programs.
- Graduating seniors are receiving graduation boxes with tassels, cords and more so any virtual commencement is a special experience.

### LOCAL AND STATE IMPACT

Indiana's institutions are doing their part to keep their local communities and the state moving forward.

- Institutions are opening their medical facility space or equipment to area hospitals, donating medical supplies and providing empty dorm rooms to medical workers to rest or safely quarantine.
- Chancellors and Cabinet members are serving on local boards and committees to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on communities and find solutions to move forward.
- Institutions are supporting local businesses by offering assistance on how to adapt to technological changes or by providing free services and resources.
- Colleges and universities are offering free internet access to the community in their parking lots to provide a safe way to stay connected.
- Campus career centers are offering guidance for students who are entering the job market during the pandemic and for alumni who have become unemployed.

**Indiana State University** is waiving graduation requirements for students unable to complete required hours for their internship.

**Purdue University** called every student that hadn't logged into their online course platform after one week to find out how they needed support.

**University of Southern Indiana** is offering wellness workshops through the counseling center to help students cope with stress to ensure mental and physical wellness during the pandemic.

**Ivy Tech Community College** in collaboration with the Office of CTE and Vincennes University are offering a Summer Completion Institute to ensure that dual credit students in Career and Technical Education disciplines are able to complete remaining hands-on course requirements, allowing for the successful completion of their dual credit course.

**Vincennes University's** office of career services has been providing advice and support to the public seeking employment during the pandemic.



## INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Indiana's institutions, including students and faculty, are at the forefront of some of the most innovative and important scientific discoveries and breakthroughs.

- Indiana's research universities are involved with scientists around the nation and the world, investigating various treatments for COVID-19, potential tools for testing, tracing and understanding the spread of the virus, as well as aspects of patient recovery.
- Students at many institutions are using campus 3D printers to make materials for face shields or other protective equipment for local health care systems.
- Faculty at many institutions are actively working in hospitals to support full-time hospital staff.
- Fourth-year and pharmacy doctorate students graduated early to begin practicing and contributing to the state's health care response.
- Institutions are internally documenting their responses to this crisis and creating new templates and action plans for the future.

## COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION EFFORTS

- The Commission is working to provide flexible policy changes to ensure the coronavirus poses no barrier to students entering or completing a postsecondary education, and continues to advocate for regulatory flexibility and emergency relief to meet emerging needs.
- The Commission extended the state's April 15 FAFSA deadline for students seeking the **21st Century Scholarship** and **Frank O'Bannon Grant**. The deadline extension to April 27 allowed for 6,048 additional Indiana residents to submit the FAFSA for award consideration.
- The Commission is supporting financial aid recipients by waiving up to 15 credit hours for students who use either the **21st Century Scholarship**, **Frank O'Bannon Grant** or **Next Generation Hoosier Educators Scholarship** during spring 2020. These waived hours will be added to the Credit Bank once spring 2020 credit completion data is reported. Students will not need to submit an appeal to receive the waived hours.
- The Commission mailed paper FAFSA forms to senior 21st Century Scholars and continues to provide 21st Century Scholars with resources to complete their required Scholar Success Program (SSP) activities virtually.
- For current senior 21st Century Scholars (cohort 2020) the Commission will waive the SAT/ACT entrance exam Scholar Success Program (SSP) requirement. In addition, high schools may report the greater of (1) the cumulative GPA at the time of graduation OR (2) the cumulative GPA at the end of fall 2019 to satisfy the GPA requirement.

**Indiana University** students in the Amolt Center for Investigative Journalism at the Media School led the creation of the first nationwide county-by-county coronavirus tracker.

**Ball State University's** Department of Theatre and Dance, with the help of retirees, current employees, students and other community members, has donated several hundred masks to the local medical community.

In collaboration with the **Indiana Department of Education**, the Commission is surveying high school seniors to provide targeted support and guidance for their postsecondary plans.

No student who is unable to complete a **Scholar Success Program** activity due to COVID-19 illness or disruption will be denied the 21st Century Scholarship.

## Have questions? Contact us.

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