COVID-19 UPDATE

Colorado Mesa University (CMU) has completed two of three phases of reopening campus for in-person learning in Fall 2020. This report reflects progress made to-date and outlines ongoing work for a third phase of reopening in August 2020.

Publication last updated: July 15, 2020
A message from President Tim Foster

It’s conventional to say COVID-19 has tested society’s limits, resilience and composure. At CMU, COVID-19 revealed that toughness, creativity and resilience are part of our Maverick community and that we rise to any challenge.

From the first day of the health crisis, CMU employees — from groundskeepers and facilities professionals to faculty and administrative staff — worked tirelessly to close and then reopen campus with no template or precedent to guide us.

Our challenging work, however, pales in comparison to that of CMU parents and students who are working to persevere while losing jobs and income all while trying to sustain their plans for higher education. The stories I have heard about the resilience of our students and their families are inspiring.

As we have navigated the pandemic novel words and phrases have entered our lives and daily communication. “Flattening the curve,” “social distancing” and “surge capacity” are just a few of the dozens of concepts and phrases that are now common. We have learned new ideas as our team assessed “how to protect vulnerable campus populations” and “how to ensure adequate healthcare and testing capacity.” The new information and language emerged as CMU conceptualized and launched Safe Together, Strong Together (ST2). This planning initiative secured input from the region’s health and medical experts and focused the time and talents of staff to reimagine campus life.

The ST2 Task Force co-chairs, committee chairs and contributors showed a commitment to fostering a safe, incremental and adaptable process that resulted in where we are today.

Life is different now and campus will be too. I look forward to exploring higher education in this new world as students, faculty and staff return to CMU together, and stronger as a result.

Sincerely,

Tim Foster
President, CMU

Safe Together, Strong Together Task Force
CO-CHAIRS

“Higher education has long served as a critical voice in responding to history’s challenges and creating opportunities for humankind’s future. Education is the way forward and it is why we are returning to in-person learning this fall.”

John Marshall,
Colorado Mesa University Vice President and Task Force Co-Chair

“Safe Together, Strong Together is the crossroads of medical expertise, best practices in public health and integrated campus operations. When these distinct areas of focus become a singular focus, we will be ready to return to in-person learning.”

Amy Bronson, EdD,
Colorado Mesa University Physician Assistant Program Director and Task Force Co-Chair
Safe Together, Strong Together Task Force

MEDICAL AND HEALTH ADVISORY TEAM

Amy Bronson, EdD,
CMU Director of Physician Assistant Program

Heidi Dragoo,
Mesa County Public Health Epidemiology Program Manager

Sue Goebel,
CMU Associate Professor of Nursing

Lucy Graham, PhD,
CMU Director of Nursing Education

Jeff Kuhr, PhD,
Mesa County Public Health Executive Director

Yumi Lee, MD,
Community Hospital and CMU Infectious Disease Advisor

Erin Minnerath,
St. Mary’s Hospital Infection Prevention Manager

Mike Reeder, DO,
Physician and Director of the Monfort Family Human Performance Lab

Bette Schans, PhD,
CMU Director of Health Sciences

John Skillicorn,
Community Hospital Executive Director of Physician Practices

Katie Smith,
Mesa County Public Health Community Network Coordinator

Chelsea Stacy,
Mesa County Public Health Epidemiologist

Thomas Tobin, MD,
Community Hospital Chief Medical Officer

“Supporting our community partners to ensure the health and safety of the community is a priority for my team at Community Hospital. We will continue to assist CMU in monitoring, guidance and best available science as they prepare for what education looks like moving forward.”

Yumi Lee, MD,
Community Hospital and CMU Infectious Disease Advisor

“Ensuring health and safety remains the number one priority for Mesa County Public Health. Our agency continues assisting CMU as the campus community prepares for what education looks like moving forward.”

Jeff Kuhr, PhD,
Executive Director of Mesa County Public Health

Safe Together, Strong Together Task Force

CMU FACILITIES TEAM

Dave Detwiler,
CMU Director of Facilities

Tressa Jones,
CMU Custodial

Dave Taylor,
CMU trade crews

“While the Colorado Stay at Home order left most people in our community at home, the CMU facilities staff never left campus. These individuals kept CMU up and running during these times and I’ve never been prouder of our team as I am when I think about their response effort.”

Dave Detwiler,
CMU Director of Facilities
Safe Together, Strong Together Task Force
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Tim Foster, President
- Jeremy Brown, Vice President for Information Technology
- Laura Glatt, Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Kurt Haas, PhD, Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Liz Howell, Acting Vice President for Student Services
- David Ludlam, Director of Public Relations
- Michael Mansheim, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications
- Liz Meyer, Vice President of Development and CEO of the CMU Foundation
- Bryan Rooks, Co-Athletic Director
- Kris Mort, Co-Athletic Director
- Tim Pinnow, Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, Director of Graduate Studies and Distance Education
- Brigitte Sündermann, Vice President for Community College Affairs
- Derek Wagner, Vice President of Intergovernmental and Community Affairs

Safe Together, Strong Together Task Force
SUBCOMMITTEES

Turn to page 9 for detailed descriptions of each subcommittee and the work they have accomplished.

- Testing, Case Response, Protocols and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Procurement
- Academic Adaptations
- Administrative
- Athletic Adaptations
- Budget and Finance
- Communications
- External Relations
- Student Services Adaptations

“Thousands of hours from hundreds of people contributed to getting CMU where we are today. Many employees and faculty members have given their time and energies rising to this challenge. Their efforts are to be commended and are appreciated.

Tim Foster, CMU President

Safe Together, Strong Together SIGNAGE

Safe Together, Strong Together signage guidelines were established during the initiative’s successful implementation of Phase 1 that included Hamilton Recreation Center and The Maverick Store. A catalog of signs reinforcing best practices regarding COVID-19 were created to be used across campus — wall signs, window clings, floor decals and yard signs are a few of the types of signs included.

Yard signs

Miscellaneous signage

Floor decals

For the latest information on COVID-19 visit coloradomesa.edu/covid-19.

“Thousands of hours from hundreds of people contributed to getting CMU where we are today. Many employees and faculty members have given their time and energies rising to this challenge. Their efforts are to be commended and are appreciated.”

Tim Foster, CMU President
Entering the unknown

In late 2019, a previously unknown disease was found in Asia that for many Coloradans remained only a headline. As the months advanced, the disease would become a household name spreading throughout the world at remarkable speed. In a matter of weeks, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a public health emergency of international concern. Life would be different for everyone moving forward.

In February 2020, cases of COVID-19 were found on the east and west coasts of the United States and soon thereafter Colorado Governor Jared Polis began issuing executive orders that would prepare Colorado for a response. On March 11, the WHO assessed that COVID-19 be characterized as a pandemic. These orders required CMU to migrate this past spring’s courses online and effectively closed campus.

The Maverick Response

CMU President Tim Foster appointed Vice President John Marshall to chair the COVID-19 response team on March 2, 2020. The task force included campus leaders and the team met multiple times daily for weeks responding to new health orders and changing conditions. The team compiled campus updates and passed along health agency guidance to the CMU community while creating working groups to assess specific challenges.

CMU not only focused on internal challenges, but used the resources and scale of the campus community to support the larger community:

+ The Little Mavericks Learning Center made more childcare slots available for a community workforce strained and disrupted by the cancelation of in-person K-12 education.

+ CMU students launched Maverick Mentors – a remote tutoring service supporting the children and parents of Mesa County Valley School District 51.

+ The CMU Foundation launched the Maverick Relief Fund to...
supply resources for students experiencing financial hardships.

+ CMU President Tim Foster launched the CMU Open Studio project with aid from CMU-TV to produce and promote the arts and humanities reminding people about humanity’s resilience.

+ CMU dining services partner Sodexo reorganized supply chains making groceries available as shelves in traditional retail outlets were empty.

+ Western Colorado Community College contributed to the response effort by sewing face masks and 3D printing face shields for health providers.

+ More than 120 students and faculty volunteers organized and supplied support at the Mesa County COVID-19 community call center and the COVID-19 testing center.

+ CMU nursing students decided in a special meeting to graduate early and join Colorado’s frontline pandemic responders.

+ During the response CMU faculty never lost sight of the importance of academics, moving CMU courses online while also working to plan a virtual commencement ceremony — something that had not previously been done at CMU.

+ CMU President Tim Foster launched an open and transparent communication effort with parents hosting a series of five telephone town hall meetings that logged more than 4,000 listeners.

+ The co-chairs joined the president in presenting the Safe Together, Strong Together plan for local elected leaders.

COVID-19 in the community

Despite CMU’s strong preliminary response, little was known about how the global pandemic would affect Mesa County and western Colorado.

Trends around the world and nation show Mesa County, like so many other communities, will likely experience a surge in cases. The Safe Together, Strong Together campus plan aims to help minimize risk of overwhelming the Grand Valley’s healthcare systems. This effort is critical as Mesa County not only serves the population of the greater Grand Valley, but also as a regional medical regional center for eastern Utah and southwestern Colorado.

In June of 2020, Mesa County’s larger community reopened under Colorado’s Safer at Home order.

“... The EMT program at WCCC is large and has lots of human resources to serve. Because of this capacity, I contacted the Mesa County Health Department and inquired about how our team of aspiring EMTs could help.”

Pamela Holder, Western Colorado Community College Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Program Director

Holder and her EMT program students have worked in the Mesa County Public Health call center, collected nasal swab samples to identify positive cases and have been sewing and delivering masks to emergency rooms, fire departments and the homeless.
doctrine because of a variance waiver granted by Colorado’s Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). The result was a slight increase in case numbers but still well within a manageable range for local hospitals. Amidst much speculation, there are multi-variable reasons for the ongoing increases in cases, that despite the increase, are not even close to straining Mesa County’s response ability. The fact remains that Mesa County’s health infrastructure and response ability well outpaces any modeled outbreak scenarios currently expected by health experts. 

On June 15, 2020, a positive COVID-19 case was found within the Little Mavericks Learning Center. Because of the Safe Together, Strong Together planning initiative community and campus officials were able to respond using the testing, tracing and communications process developed.

As of July 15, Mesa County had a total of 164 cases, 127 recoveries and four hospitalizations. The county experienced some of the most robust healthcare space capacity, per capita, in Colorado.

**Mesa County variance and CMU**

An inability to predict the spread of COVID-19 in Colorado resulted in a first approach to containment that was ubiquitous across the state. A series of executive orders closed businesses and restricted public movement on a state-wide basis. The first Executive Order D 2020 017 was called Stay at Home. This order closed all facilities not considered essential. This policy decision was made based on assumptions of a rapid, community spread.

Throughout time, data showed COVID-19 was not affecting all communities in the same way and that infection rates were vastly different. In fact, Mesa County experienced almost no significant community spread and limited hospitalizations. As a result, Mesa County enjoyed acquisition of a variance that hastened opening the community.

This variance also allowed for the previously described CMU ST2 phase one pilot opening that included the reopening of the Hamilton Recreation Center and several outdoor recreation facilities.

On May 22, Mesa County’s low case numbers persisted and resulted in the county receiving a second, phase two variance from CDPHE. CMU’s opening plan was given approval under this guidance.

The third stage of re-opening, “Protect Our Neighbors” was introduced June 30 by Governor Polis. This stage will expand reopening and allow larger gatherings. Mesa County will apply for the variance considering it meets the following requirements:

- A county’s two week positive percentage has to be below 5%. Mesa County’s percentage is 2.27%.
- A county has to be able to test at least 225 people per week. Mesa County tests 600 weekly.
- A county must have the resources to contact at least 500 people per day in contact tracing efforts. MCPH can contact as many as 1,000 people a day.
- A county’s hospital must be able to handle a 20% increase in positive cases. Mesa County has

**COVID-19 Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/31/19</td>
<td>China reports a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, Hubei Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>The disease caused by the novel coronavirus is named COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>World Health Organization (WHO) recommends activating highest level of response management protocols to contain COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Colorado Mesa University organizes a COVID-19 Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>100,000 COVID-19 cases globally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>WHO assesses that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>Colorado Governor Jared Polis issues an executive order declaring a disaster emergency in Colorado due to the presence of COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>CMU’s Spring Break begins; extended through March 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All CMU campuses close, classes held online</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
90 intensive care beds and can handle a 20% rise in COVID-19 hospitalizations.

• A county must be able to provide all its healthcare settings with at least two weeks worth of personal protective equipment (PPE). Mesa County has a month’s worth of PPE.

Abundant capacity within local healthcare infrastructure

As of July 15, 2020, Mesa County like most communities is experiencing increases in reported COVID-19 cases. This increase is what the Safe Together, Strong Together plan expected and is the very development that campus has prepared for.

Mesa County is a federally designated metropolitan area that exists in a rural setting. The communities' relatively large size, in relation to other communities on the western slope, affords Mesa County a robust healthcare and social service infrastructure.

The Grand Valley is home to a large community hospital, a regional medical center and a litany of smaller community hospitals throughout the CMU service region. All told, this medical network of hospital providers includes a high number of respirators and beds to support a significant increase in COVID-19 cases.

During the first peak infection curve around 50 known cases were recorded with fewer than a dozen hospitalizations and no reported deaths. This means that CMU and the community have ample space available for the second and future waves of COVID-19 infections.

“Partners at Mesa County Public Health and area hospitals are helping CMU use the best available science at every decision point. We are focused on testing, tracking, tracing and creating a culture of social responsibility as students arrive and live on campus this summer and fall.”

Amy Bronson, EdD, Colorado Mesa University Physicians Assistant Program Director and Task Force Co-Chair

FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE

On May 11, CMU President Tim Foster dissolved the campus COVID-19 Task Force Committee and announced the Safe Together, Strong Together return to campus initiative. This initiative was predicated on Mesa County’s response to the pandemic, the area’s abundant healthcare capacity, support from area health and medical experts, and an enduring belief in the need for higher education to continue even through a pandemic.

CMU Vice President John Marshall and Amy Bronson, EdD, were appointed as initiative co-chairs. The co-chairs established a committee structure and appointed committee chairs focused on every area of campus.

The Safe Together, Strong Together initiative committees began drafting protocols, mitigations and building-by-building return plans that integrated state and local health guidelines. Committees presented recommendations to the Safe Together, Strong Together executive committee, which reviewed and then submitted the site-specific opening plans to health and medical experts for review.

Once preliminary site visits were complete, plans were presented to Mesa County Public Health for review and approval.

On June 16, 2020 Mesa County Health officials audited CMU’s phase one and two opening plans for compliance. The audit report resulted in favorable outcomes that validated the planning process protocols and strategies designed by CMU.
As of June 16, CMU is operating with most of the campus buildings open and is planning for the third phase of reopening under the Safe Together, Strong Together effort.

SAFE TOGETHER, STRONG TOGETHER COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

CMU is a campus of 11,000 students with over 1,000 employees including faculty and staff. The campus includes dozens of buildings, hundreds of instructional spaces, and dozens of student housing and services facilities.

Drafting a planning structure for returning to CMU in the fall of 2020 means each area of focus needed a ST2 subcommittee. In May, committees began meeting to create questions and answers around the various challenges and opportunities for their designated area of focus that would then contribute to the overall ST2 plan. These subcommittees include:

1. Testing, Case Response, Protocols and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) Procurement
   
   **Purpose:** Coordinating with community health experts and hospitals to implement a campus-wide screening and prevention strategy.

   **Co-Chairs:** Amy Bronson, CMU Director of Physicians Assistant Studies Program; Lucy Graham, PhD, CMU Director of Nursing Education

COVID-19 TIMELINE

04/05/20–05/01/20

- **April 5**
  Over 6,000 confirmed cases in New York City, 1,100 hospitalizations and almost 600 deaths.

- **April 9**
  Colorado’s level 1 public health order, “Colorado stays at home” begins. Everyone encouraged to stay home except for grocery shopping, exercise and necessary activities. Only critical businesses open.

- **April**
  CMU partners with Mesa County Public Health and Community Hospital to design partial opening plans for the CMU Recreation Center, The Maverick Store and some outdoor recreation facilities.

- **April 27**
  Public health order “Safer at Home” issued. Coloradans are strongly advised to stay home, critical businesses are open and limited non-critical businesses are operating with strict precautions in place. Mass gatherings prohibited.

- **April 27**
  Mesa County receives variance to Safer at Home plan allowing gyms, restaurants and places of worship to operate.

- **April 30**
  Mesa County restaurants, fitness facilities and places of worship allowed to open with capacity limits.

- **May 1**
  Mesa County businesses allowed to phase-in opening. Personal service businesses can open following best practices.

COVID-19 testing for students began in early April. Residence Life student employees received training from Mesa County Public Health and were then able to test their peers who were living on campus and attending summer courses.
This committee was charged with focusing on three key areas including testing, contact tracing and treatment. The goal of the committee work was to provide recommendations on how testing, tracing and tracking will help CMU students, faculty and staff safely return to campus in the fall. Recommendations for policies and procedures related to a safe return were based on current literature, medical and health expert consultation, current local and state guidance, and sustainability of on-campus operations. The committee met weekly to review the literature, coordinate with health experts on best-practices, and review partnerships with local and national testing supply companies, technology companies and state health officials to support testing, tracking and tracing plan implementation. The final committee report included recommendations for testing and screening protocols, contact tracing, symptom tracking and campus-wide COVID-19 monitoring strategies for decreasing transmissibility of COVID-19 on campus.

2. Academic Adaptions

**Purpose:** Working with faculty and students to perfect course delivery and teaching strategies to meet student expectations within the framework of health and safety realities. Work also includes planning for career and technical education delivery at Western Colorado Community College (WCCC), academic services and arts venues.

**Co-Chairs:** Tim Pinnow, CMU Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives/Director of Distance Education/ Director of Graduate Programs; Carol Futhey, PhD, CMU Provost

The Academic Adaptions Subcommittee is the largest and most exhaustive subcommittee of the COVID-19 Safe Together, Strong Together planning initiative. The committee includes a large cross section of operational and academic members covering CMU’s multiple campuses, buildings and disciplines.

In addition to assessing the academic calendar the committee also assessed classroom and facilities safety protocols that will allow for safe and sustainable instruction that accommodates the presence of COVID-19.

In addition to the governing committee members the Academic Adaptions Subcommittee consists of the Calendar Review Subcommittee; the Arts Subcommittee; General Classrooms Subcommittee, Labs and Academic Office Space Subcommittee; the Centers and Studios Subcommittee; the Laboratories Subcommittee and the WCCC and Montrose Campus Subcommittees.

Each working group supplied a range of alternatives for consideration as well as final recommendations. The final recommendations were presented to the Safe Together, Strong Together Executive Committee and were reviewed by community health and medical experts.

The final recommendations included safety protocols for special instructional spaces; modifications to the academic calendar; safety protocols for labs and academic spaces; enhancements for distance education.

“A final recommendation from the Academic Adaptions subcommittee included safety protocols for labs and academic spaces such as maintaining social distancing between computer workstations.”

Kurt Haas, PhD, Vice President for Academic Affairs

“The work done by CMU faculty adapting academics to sustain the highest standards in the face of difficulty has been remarkable. We will look back and see this time as a moment where challenge created innovation and opportunity, and new ways of delivering knowledge and skills to the next generation.”

Kurt Haas, PhD, Vice President for Academic Affairs
learning as well as health and safety adaptions for a litany of academic support buildings and service departments.

The final subcommittee report included more than 100 pages of alternatives and recommendations created during the span of many committee and subcommittee deliberations.

3. Student Services Adaptions

**Purpose:** Optimizing residence halls, dining services, Student Life and student support services.

**Co-Chairs:** Jody Diers, CMU Director of Residence Life; Liz Howell, Acting Vice President for Student Services

The Student Services Adaptation Subcommittee included campus personnel and officials who work for and or manage various aspects that have a nexus with Student Life. The topical areas covered by the Student Services Adaptions Committee included plan recommendations for the Maverick Innovation Center, the University Center, The Moss Performing Arts Center, the Outdoor Program, Residence Life and more than twenty additional programs and facilities.

The committee issued final recommendations that contemplated details like where and how to place sanitizing stations; where and how to place interpretive signage for social distancing; how to manage the CMU University Center and a host of other operational considerations.

4. Budget and Finance

**Purpose:** Scenario planning and evaluating, and implementing budget modifications to confront potential budget shortfalls due to COVID-19.

**Chair:** Laura Glatt, CMU Chief Financial Officer

Every state order, health ordinance and campus policy decision comes with financial implications. The Budget and Finance Subcommittee meets on a regular basis to conduct budget scenario planning relative to the range of impacts CMU faces from COVID-19. The committee conducted a department by department scenario panning exercise and continues to assess the costs associated with modified operations and other cost considerations. One example is while the university may see an increase in disinfecting and custodial services costs there are savings resulting from travel restrictions. Balancing increased costs and maximizing efficiencies is a critical function of the budget and finance committee.
5. Administrative

**Purpose:** Team is planning for safe and efficient return to work, evaluating short and long-term staffing needs including redeployment of talent across campus.

**Chair:** Liz Meyer, CMU Foundation CEO

The Administrative Subcommittee issued its recommendations and findings in a communication to campus. This communication outlined a human resource plan called “Stepping Forward Together.” The stepping forward plan was comprised of three distinct steps and resulted in a tiered approach for employees returning to work. The plan was communicated on May 27 and included phase one called, “Easing Back to Campus.” The third and final phase called “Together Again” started on July 6 with special considerations and protections for those most at risk from COVID-19.

6. External Relations

**Purpose:** Remain in regular communication and working together with community leaders, external partners, elected officials and state agencies.

**Chair:** Derek Wagner, CMU Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs and Community Relations

The External Communications Subcommittee met regularly with leaders from the elected and business community. The committee received input about communications, strategy and how CMU’s plans for return to campus might affect the community. Based on a series of committee meetings CMU engaged the Safe Together, Strong Together co-chairs and President Foster to share with community leaders CMU’s return to campus. This information sharing occurred as a presentation to the Mesa County Commissioners as well as the Grand Junction City Council. Both presentations occurred in June 2020. Full audio and video of these presentations are available on the CMU ST2 website.

7. Communications

**Purpose:** Ensuring relevant, prompt and correct information flowing to all campus stakeholders.

**Chair:** Mike Mansheim, CMU Executive Director of Marketing and Communications

The Communications Subcommittee meets daily working to ensure that CMU stakeholders are informed about new and emerging information as it becomes available. The committee planned and organized a web-based question and answer platform, a pandemic blog for daily updates, a weekly email update, a series of published stories and videos about CMU’s response to COVID-19 and a series of tele town hall meetings to share information with parents, students and community members.

8. Athletic Adaptations

**Purpose:** Evaluating varsity, club sport and intramural athletic operations and in regular contact with external partners including Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference (RMAC) and NCAA.

**Co-chairs:** Bryan Rooks, CMU Co-Director of Athletics; Kris Mort, CMU Co-Director of Athletics

Many protocols and standards for athletics are established by the NCAA and the RMAC. While these standards continue to evolve the CMU Athletic Adoptions Subcommittee meets on a regular basis and proposed a series of operational recommendations specific to use of athletic facilities, testing, signage and integration of campus-wide protocols and...
incorporating county conditions for reopening both indoor and outdoor athletic facilities for limited use.

The Safe Together, Strong Together subcommittees work was compiled into proposals that proved compliance with Mesa County’s reopening variances and Colorado Department of Higher Education guidance, and were instrumental in the ST2 overall plan.

GOALS OF THE SAFE TOGETHER, STRONG TOGETHER PLAN

➤ Colorado Mesa University was among the first in Colorado to communicate intent to return in the fall and will sustain this leadership mindset throughout the reopening process.

➤ CMU will use modern technologies, carry forward skills and lessons learned to sustain and increase the elevated level of services provided to students.

➤ Campus will maximize safety through the Safe Together, Strong Together plan that relies on screening, testing and tracing as a supplement to best operational prevention practices.

THREE PHASES OF THE SAFE TOGETHER, STRONG TOGETHER PLAN

PHASE 1: Providing a safe path
May 2020 (ongoing)

PHASE 2: Building capacity
June/July 2020

PHASE 3: Stronger together
August 2020

CMU believes the unprecedented global response to COVID-19 was made possible because of higher education, and that higher education is critical for preparing humanity’s response to future challenges. Awareness of the role higher education plays in public health, pandemic response and civic life has shaped CMU’s approach to reopening.

CMU was among the first universities in Colorado to formally announce intent to return to in-person learning in fall 2020. Since that time, the university has not wavered from that goal. CMU’s leadership reflects what students want, what the community needs and what institutional responsibility demands. The three-phase plan was structured to parallel the three-phase variable approach used by Mesa County Public Health in reopening the Grand Junction area.

The process of crafting the Safe Together, Strong Together phases

The CMU ST2 Task Force advisory team met weekly to pose questions, find answers and supply recommendations for the CMU ST2 Executive Committee. Facility managers and directors worked with committee chairs to assess these recommendations and vet all policies and procedures with CMU medical and health advisory teams who supplied feedback. This input was then implemented into opening proposals submitted to Mesa County using the approval application form.

Example: The Phase one pilot opening began with first review from Mesa County Public Health and regional medical experts. The team first reviewed a list of prevention and mitigation strategies based on guidance from Safe at Home and the Mesa County variance(s). After commenting on draft documents, members of the medical and health advisory committee conducted physical site tours of the facilities, and reviewed protocols as proposed for on-ground implementation and operationalization. The advisory
board concurred the plan met Mesa County Public Health requirements outlined in the agency’s variance.

Collaboration with committees and MCPH will continue as CMU moves towards final opening. Additionally, CMU will work with the Colorado Department of Higher Education if more approvals are necessary. Moving forward, the following steps will occur.

1. Preliminary review
2. Site visit
3. Post site visit review by health experts
4. Formal submission to Mesa County Public Health and Colorado Department of Higher Education

Phase 1 Pilot Opening: Providing a safe path (May 2020)

Hamilton Recreation Center:
On May 11, CMU submitted a pilot opening plan: Providing a safe path. The phase one pilot included the Hamilton Recreation Center and a list of outdoor sports and recreation facilities. The opening was proposed under guidance from Colorado’s Safer at Home order and provisions of the Mesa County variance issued on April 29, 2020.

Phase one results are positive with the Hamilton Recreation Center now open under restrictions:
• Only first floor fitness areas open.
• Integrated employee and customer protections and social distancing.
• Limited capacity.
• Temperature checks on entry.
• Face masks required.
• Locker rooms only open for restroom use while lockers, showers and congregating remain prohibited.
• Social distancing with a minimum of 10 feet between users.
• Wipe down each piece of equipment between use and observe the limited operating hours.

CMU phase one opening operations were audited for compliance and the plan was reaffirmed by Mesa County health on June 16 with more inspections expected in the future.

Outdoor Recreation Facilities:
The plan opened on a trial basis of CMU outdoor sports and recreation facilities so long as Mesa County variance standards of social distancing and limited use were observed.
• Tennis, basketball court and volleyball courts were opened successfully.
• No team or league play allowed.
• No tournaments.
• Limited spectators.
The Maverick store began ST2 pilot operations on May 11 with the following restrictions implemented:

- Number of customers allowed in store at once not to exceed eight customers.
- Plexiglass sneeze guards installed at checkout counters.
- Doors from University Center closed for one-way flow of traffic only from the exterior of the store.
- Designated one-way entrance/exit doors with signage.
- Customer traffic flow marked on floor.
- Six-foot social distancing markings on floor.
- Face masks worn always by employees and patrons.
- Outdoor line areas set up with social distancing markings defined.

Phase 2: Building capacity (June/July 2020)

On June 4, 2020, CMU announced the "Building capacity" segment of the plan had been approved by Mesa County Public Health with review from medical experts. The ST2 Task Force executive committee and co-chairs sent a series of site-specific plan approvals to Mesa County for formal adoption under Mesa County phase two variance provisions. Site specific plans/open approvals submitted under phase two included:

- Summer 2020 semester hybrid plans including limited in-person learning
- Western Colorado Community College Summer Camp operation protocols
- Maverick Innovation Center (TBD)
- Outdoor Program (June 8)
- The Natatorium restricted use proposal (June 11)
- Hotel Maverick (June 18)
- Moss Performing Arts Center (preliminary health on-site inspection June 16)
- The University Center limited opening plan (June 22)
- Stepping Forward Together: a return to campus for CMU employees (July 6)

Phase 3: Stronger Together, a fall return (August 2020)

In July 2020, the Safe Together, Strong Together Task Force will review an updated comprehensive opening plan for Mesa County Public Health that includes adaptations for student housing, dining and academics necessary to return to campus.
BEYOND SAFE TOGETHER, STRONG TOGETHER

The Safe Together, Strong Together plan has provided a framework for action since the beginning of the pandemic response. The outcomes of the planning effort are critical to the opening of campus in a way that aligns with state and local recommendations and mandates.

The health and medical advisory team were instrumental in crafting the preliminary and ongoing testing, tracking and tracing policies. Their role was important in designing a process that will effectively respond to positive cases on campus and quickly use mitigation strategies outlined in this report to limit the transmission of COVID-19.

CMU learned more about COVID-19 through each day during the Safe Together, Strong Together project. This learning was a result of the medical team who were and remain dedicated to ensuring policies and protocols are grounded in the emerging science of the virus. This plan report has outlined the infrastructure and the protocols for readiness that were a result of this community-wide effort.

FORWARD FOCUS

COVID-19, 2020 and beyond

The world maintains hope that a vaccine will be available soon. CMU shares this hope. However, campus is planning to operate without a vaccine. The path forward will be one of continuous adaption and the layering of strategies and tools. The CMU strategy will evolve as headlines, research, data and medical expert opinion informs an evolving strategy.

This adaptive strategy will live in a custom application (app) that students, faculty and staff can download onto their smartphones (see image below). The “Scout” web and mobile app will be the hub for COVID-19 adaption and serve as a digital passport to campus. The campus community will use this app to track symptoms, report contacts, and will be central to our efforts to mitigate any spread of COVID-19 on campus. A complementary back-end app will be used by the ST2/COVID-19 team to monitor and respond to what is happening at an institutional level.

CMU will work to overcome desires for simple answers, and will take a nuanced, thoughtful approach to maximizing safety, minimizing risk and delivering critically important in-person instruction at CMU.

coloradomesa.edu/covid-19
safety@coloradomesa.edu