

June 26, 2020

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray,

Thank you for giving the University of Oregon an opportunity to provide feedback to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions on how our nation will prepare for the next pandemic. As the Dean and Vice Provost for the Division of Global Engagement at the University of Oregon, I write to express how the federal government can *Expand the Ability to Detect, Identify, Model, and Track Emerging Infectious Diseases* by funding programs committed to training university and college students in an effort to expand the nation's contact tracing capacity.

Disease Surveillance – Expand Ability to Detect, Identify, Model, and Track Emerging Infectious Diseases: In [How College Students Can Help Reopen America](#), Terry Hartle of the American Council on Education, explores how establishing a Contact Tracing Student Corps in cooperation with our university and college systems is one way to create and quickly expand the nation's contact tracing capacity. Mr. Hartle aptly suggests that a student corps could save states and local health departments money and effort in implementing the contract tracing required to reopen our country safely.

In May 2020, the University of Oregon and five partner universities and colleges established the [Student Corps to Combat Coronavirus \(SCCC\)](#). The SCCC will provide students the chance to study public health responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and offer training to assist with the urgent work of contact tracing. The University of Oregon is proud to be developing the SCCC at our Center for Global Health, in close collaboration with the Lane County Department of Public Health and the Oregon Health Authority.

The University of Oregon is set to offer a new course on pandemic response, alongside almost forty courses on public health responses to the current pandemic, to students from all higher education institutions in Oregon. The courses and training programs will be remote-linked to students undertaking similar study and work at partner universities up and down the West Coast and around the Pacific Rim. Further, we will provide students trained to work as contract tracers with experiential learning credits over the summer to encourage reflection on and contextualization of their contact tracing work.

Students hunger for an education that matters, for coursework and degrees that help them make a difference in the messy world they will inherit. The current pandemic, and efforts to prepare for the next pandemic, offer an opportunity to inspire students, especially as we link courses to coronavirus mitigation and safe economic reopening.

To expand the ability to detect, identify, model, and track emerging infectious diseases, the federal government must provide funding to institutions of higher education committed to combatting coronavirus with a Student Corps.

Together, we can bring this virus under control. By becoming trained and certified as contact tracers, Oregon college students, and college students across the country, will have the opportunity to provide local public health authorities as well as their own campuses with the resources needed to monitor and contain outbreaks of COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Galvan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dennis C. Galvan, Dean and Vice Provost,
Division of Global Engagement
Executive Director, Global Studies Institute
Professor, Political Science
University of Oregon