



SUNY OLD WESTBURY

“IN THE NEWS”

MARCH TO APRIL 2020

Prepared by
The Office of Public and Media Relations
SUNY Old Westbury

Temporary Army Corps hospital to be built at SUNY Old Westbury as coronavirus cases climb to 2,400 in Nassau, nearly 21,000 statewide

Posted March 22, 2020



A temporary U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hospital is being built at SUNY Old Westbury.

COURTESY SUNY OLD WESTBURY

By Scott Brinton

Speaking Sunday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo called on the federal government to step in and set up four temporary U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hospitals — at SUNY Old Westbury, Stony Brook University and the Javits Center in New York City, as well as one in Westchester — in the ongoing fight against the coronavirus.

Hours later, President Trump promised to begin setting up the hospitals within 48 hours.

The growing need for patient beds, Cuomo said, could soon exceed hospital capacity. On Monday, the governor reported more than 2,400 cases in Nassau County and 20,000 statewide.

Cuomo also called for four 250-bed Federal Emergency Management Agency hospitals at the Javits Center, to be fully funded by the federal government. Normally, the state would fund 25 percent of the cost of FEMA hospitals. The state, however, does not have the funding now to establish, supply and staff such hospitals, the governor said. The Army Corps hospitals would be supplied and staffed by the state.

Again, Trump promised to provide the hospitals, at no cost to the state.

Cuomo also called on the federal government to nationalize the acquisition of medical supplies. "The states simply cannot manage it," he said. Right now, he added, "states are savaging states."

With states competing against one another for supplies, prices are rapidly rising, Cuomo said. An 85-cent protective mask now goes for \$7. A ventilator can cost \$16,000 to \$40,000. New York needs 30,000 ventilators, he said.

Trump, Cuomo said, should invoke the Defense Production Act, which would allow the federal government to order private companies to produce medical supplies, including protective equipment. "If I had the power, I would do in New York state," he said.

At press time, there was no word whether the president would invoke the act.

Feds Eye Stopgap Hospitals At SBU, SUNY Old Westbury

MARCH 23, 2020

By GREGORY ZELLER //

The federal government will construct four emergency hospitals across Downstate New York, including two on Long Island, in response to the coronavirus crisis.

The Stony Brook University and **SUNY College at Old Westbury** campuses have been identified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as potential sites for temporary hospitals, along with Manhattan's Jacob K. Javits Convention Center and the Westchester County Center – and on Sunday, President Donald Trump announced the National Guard would immediately begin work at the four sites, with Washington footing the bill.

Each of the temporary hospitals will include 250 beds, for a total of 1,000 additional beds across the state. Trump also announced plans for the National Guard to begin construction of eight emergency medical facilities in California, totaling 2,000 additional hospital beds.

The Army Corps of Engineers joined representatives of multiple New York agencies – including Albany's Office of General Services, the state Dormitory Authority, the NYS Department of Health and the NYS Division of Military and Naval Affairs – to visit and review more than a dozen statewide sites for potential temporary-hospital use.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who has repeatedly called on the federal government to nationalize the country's COVID-19 response, applauded the Army Corps of Engineers' final proposals.

"We know that by all projections, we're going to have more hospitalizations than we can deal with in our healthcare system," Cuomo said Sunday. "After meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers and hearing their recommendations, we stand ready for the building of temporary hospitals at four facilities in New York State.

While healthcare hubs like SBU are already on a wartime footing, the transition to emergency-medicine hotbed is a little starker for SUNY Old Westbury – though the college, already following Age of Coronavirus campus-lockdown protocols, is ready to step up, according to Vice President of Communications Michael Kinane.



Campus clinic: The locked-down SUNY College at Old Westbury campus could soon house a temporary emergency hospital to help deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"SUNY Old Westbury will do all it can to fully support the governor's effort to stem the tide of COVID-19 and to help those who are impacted by this disease," Kinane said Sunday.

While the precise composition and capacities of its temporary, federally funded, National Guard-built hospital are not yet clear – "The exact scale at which our campus will be used is yet to be determined," Kinane noted – hosting the coronavirus-response facility is in line with SUNY Old Westbury's overall approach to the pandemic, according to its chief communications officer.

"As it has been for the past several weeks, the goal for each of us must be to ensure the safety of ourselves, our friends and loved ones, and the community at large," Kinane added.

Cuomo, who said he planned to tour all four of the Army Corps-recommended sites this week, stressed that community-focused efforts were key to the Empire State's coronavirus strategy.

"This is a public health crisis, but worse than the virus is the fear," the governor said. "We have a plan and we are doing everything we can to keep the people informed and save lives."



Michael Kinane: Team effort.



LI hospitals in a hurry: Temp facilities expected in 2-3 weeks

By Yancey Roy and Robert Brodsky

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Updated March 23, 2020 5:39 PM

State officials said Monday that construction of temporary hospitals at college campuses in Stony Brook and Old Westbury will begin in a matter of days, with the goal of having them operational and ready to receive at least 500 patients apiece in just two to three weeks.

The makeshift hospitals would be equipped to deal not only with coronavirus sufferers, but also other typical patients who could be crowded out of regular hospitals. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is moving to hire contractors now.

"Teams are there on site now. The Army Corps will be procuring supplies. We'll be seeing contractors (on site) in the next few days or the beginning of next week," said a Cuomo administration official, who asked not to be identified because plans haven't been finalized. "They will be retrofitting field houses. They will be erecting tents outside."

Asked when the facilities would be expected to open, the official said: "I think we're talking two weeks, three weeks."

The Long Island facilities will be established on the campuses of Stony Brook University and **the State University of New York at Old Westbury**. Each is expected to house 500 to 1,000 patients.

The speedy buildup is latest example of how New York -- the state with the most coronavirus cases in the nation -- is reacting to the pandemic spread and working to soften the impact on an already overwhelmed health care system.

The Long Island facilities are two of the four temporary sites the Trump administration has approved for New York to deal with the pandemic. Others will be at the Jacob J. Javits Convention Center and the Westchester Convention Center. The locations were selected based on current — and expected — hot spots for the virus. New York now has more than 15,000 cases, by far the most of any state.

The temporary hospitals will be run by existing hospital operators so that patients and families will recognize a "trusted operator they've been going to for years," the Cuomo official said.

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State officials are in the process of choosing the operators, who are expected to tap into a pool of some 30,000 medical and mental-health professionals who have signed up to help the state since Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo asked for volunteers.

About 4,000 Long Islanders have signed up, officials said.

The state's plan is that coronavirus patients in need of acute care will go to existing hospitals. The temporary hospitals "will absorb those with less acute symptoms," the official said. They also might handle patients who have to go to a hospital for non-virus reasons but can't get into existing facilities because of expected overflow.

"Some of the beds will be for people who are there a couple of weeks, some for a night," the official said.

Besides using field houses, contractors will be building hospital tents at adjacent athletic fields.

"These will not look like hurricane shelters. These are hospitals," the Cuomo official said. "You'll have individual rooms, with 1-2 beds each — not rows of cots."

The large-scale tents will be climate-controlled.

"We told the Army Corps we wanted the most amount of beds in the shortest time and in a way that's sanitary, and this is what they recommended," the official said.



SUNY College at Old Westbury is on the list of places in the State of New York to be converted to a temporary hospital site for the treatment of Coronavirus, COVID-19, patients. Credit: Kendall Rodriguez

Health care staff will reside at college dorms, which are sitting largely empty since universities switched to online classes for the rest of the semester.

The cavernous Javits Center is expected to handle at least 1,000 patients.

The governor has been pushing the Trump administration to quickly retrofit facilities to handle what's expected to be a deluge of patients.

The administration also is trying to increase the number of beds statewide from about 50,000 to at least 75,000, the governor said, after announcing hospitals are required to cancel or postpone all noncritical elective surgeries and asking them to find ways to double capacity.

Michael Kinane, a spokesman for SUNY Old Westbury, said the university **does not yet have details about the size, scope and specific location of the makeshift hospital.**

"SUNY Old Westbury fully supports the governor's efforts to increase hospital capacity and will make available those facilities needed to help flatten the COVID-19 curve," Kinane said. Stony Brook Interim President Michael Bernstein, in a Facebook video message, said: "To the extent our medical facilities get outstripped in terms of capacity, the campus is well-poised to provide space and opportunity for additional capacity whether it's to treat patients or to house people, including staff who might need it."

Stony Brook University Hospital has 624 beds, but hospital officials said the goal is to double its capacity.

SUNY Old Westbury to become field hospital, postpones commencement

By Rose Weldon - March 25, 2020

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SUNY Old Westbury will become a temporary hospital for those affected by the coronavirus, with construction expected to be complete on April 19. (Photo courtesy of SUNY Old Westbury)

SUNY Old Westbury will become a temporary hospital for those affected by the coronavirus, and has postponed its 2020 commencement exercises.

Plans were announced Tuesday by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to turn the school into a temporary field hospital to combat the virus. Old Westbury will be joined by Stony Brook University in the effort.

The hospitals will be set up in field houses and outdoors, and staff will live in campus dorms. Staff will not be provided and will have to be recruited from the surrounding areas.

Michael Kinane, the school's vice president of communications, said the school would comply.

"SUNY Old Westbury will do all it can to fully support the governor's effort to stem the tide of COVID-19 and to help those who are impacted by this disease," Kinane said. "As it has been for the past several weeks, the goal for each of us must be to ensure the safety of ourselves, our friends and loved ones, and the community at large."

In accordance with Cuomo's ban on mass gatherings of more than 500 people, the school's 2020 commencement, which was scheduled to take place Sunday, May 17, at the NYCB Live at the Nassau Veterans Coliseum, has been postponed, according to a letter sent to faculty and students and by President Calvin O. Butts III.

"Your health and well-being remains our highest priority during these unprecedented circumstances," Butts wrote. "As such, it is extremely important to comply with the guidelines outlined by the CDC, the State of New York, and the SUNY system in regards to mass gatherings as we have done with the announced changes to our campus this semester. As a result, we have made the incredibly difficult decision, as have many other SUNY campuses, to postpone the 2020 commencement ceremony to another date later this calendar year."

No rescheduled date has yet been announced.

"To the class of 2020, commencement will be the culmination of your inspiring educational journey," Butts wrote. "We know you have worked incredibly hard, overcome significant obstacles, and sacrificed much to be able to reach the point of graduation at SUNY Old Westbury. You deserve to wear that cap and gown. You deserve to hear the cheers. You deserve the moment. As soon as we are able to announce when that will be, we will make sure to share the date with the Class of 2020 and our campus community. We look forward to celebrating as you cross that stage."

The Fight Against Coronavirus Requires We Work Together

LEE ZELDIN MARCH 29, 2020

New York is the state hardest hit in the country by the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, and containing its spread and combatting this outbreak must continue to be a whole-government, top-to-bottom approach.

On the national level, the federal government has taken unprecedented steps to ensure that travelers do not spread the virus in the United States, including travel restrictions from highly affected countries, and has declared a public health emergency that has allowed for the utilization of reserve funding to help support response efforts.

The Families First Coronavirus Act was recently signed into law, which, in addition to providing free coronavirus testing and paid sick leave, also provides family leave for caregivers, food assistance for the needy and enhanced unemployment insurance.

The federal government is also wielding the power of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is now authorized to build four temporary hospitals in New York, including at SUNY Stony Brook and [SUNY Old Westbury](#). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is also committing its resources to utilizing the Javits Center in New York City to assist area hospitals in increasing patient capacity.

In addition to taking new steps to ensure medical professionals have the tools they need to confront any outbreak of the coronavirus, including expediting the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the federal government is working to expedite the development of a vaccine, therapeutics and monoclonal antibodies that can be used both to protect from infection and treat people already infected.

This is no time to play politics, and, on Long Island, every level of government is committed to working together. The first drive-thru, free testing center in Suffolk County is open at Stony Brook University, featuring six lanes to accommodate up to 1,000 tests per day. The site is open 7 days a week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. To schedule an appointment, call 888-364-3065. A doctor's prescription is not required. If you cannot travel to Stony Brook, please contact your medical provider, because additional testing options are now available.

All across my congressional district, Long Islanders are coming together. Small businesses are donating meals to senior centers and those who cannot leave their homes. Organizations like Island Harvest and Long Island Cares are teaming up with school districts across Long Island to put together Grab & Go Meal Distributions at local schools. The U.S. Postal Service continues to deliver mail, vital prescriptions and more. Truck drivers, grocery store workers, and farmers continue to ensure the healthy and abundant availability of a strong food supply chain.

We are New Yorkers, and there's no doubt we will emerge stronger than ever, but when this outbreak is over we must ensure that our way of life has been preserved to the best extent possible.

That's why it was critical that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) issued an emergency declaration last week making Economic Injury Disaster Loans available to small businesses and private, non-profit organizations in the State of New York, including Suffolk County.

The SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance per small business and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue. These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid due to the disaster's impact. For more information, visit disasterloan.sba.gov/ela.

The Internal Revenue Service recently announced that the tax filing and payment deadlines were extended from April 15 to July 15 without penalty or interest for the delay.

In addition to waiving interest on federal student loans, the federal government has also announced a 60-day payment deferment for student loans, for all those who are currently in repayment, a critical step especially in the midst of such uncertainty. For more information, including how to contact your student loan provider, visit studentaid.gov.

The ongoing outbreak of coronavirus is an ever-evolving situation and there's no doubt we can and will do more to rise to meet this challenge. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you to make it through this challenging time for our community, state, and nation.

Congressman Lee Zeldin represents New York's First Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives where he serves as a member of the bipartisan Congressional Coronavirus Task Force.

State senator offers up medical center shuttered by Superstorm Sandy to house coronavirus patients



Posted: Mar 27, 2020 5:05 PM EDT
Updated: Mar 27, 2020 5:05 PM EDT

A state lawmaker is discussing his plan to help make sure the New York has enough hospital beds to handle the coronavirus crisis.

State Sen. Todd Kaminsky sent a letter to the state Health Department suggesting a solution for getting to the target number of hospital beds Gov. Andrew Cuomo is looking for -- reopening Long Beach Medical Center, which has been shuttered since Superstorm Sandy.

"I think the state needs to think about buildings like this - every year we can't be scrambling looking for a temporary site," says Kaminsky.

Cuomo says the state needs 140,000 hospital beds, but has just 53,000 right now. There are two field hospitals set to open at Stony Brook University and **SUNY Old Westbury**. Nassau County Executive Laura Curran said the Old Westbury site should be ready within two weeks.

When asked how likely it would be to reopen Long Beach Medical Center since its been closed since 2012 and is visibly in disrepair, Kaminsky admits it would require a lot of work. He says it would need a new HVAC system and new windows, but thinks in this environment, things need to be fast-tracked.

The state Health Department also gave a directive to nursing homes to readmit current residents and accept new residents how may be coronavirus positive, so long as they no longer require hospitalization.

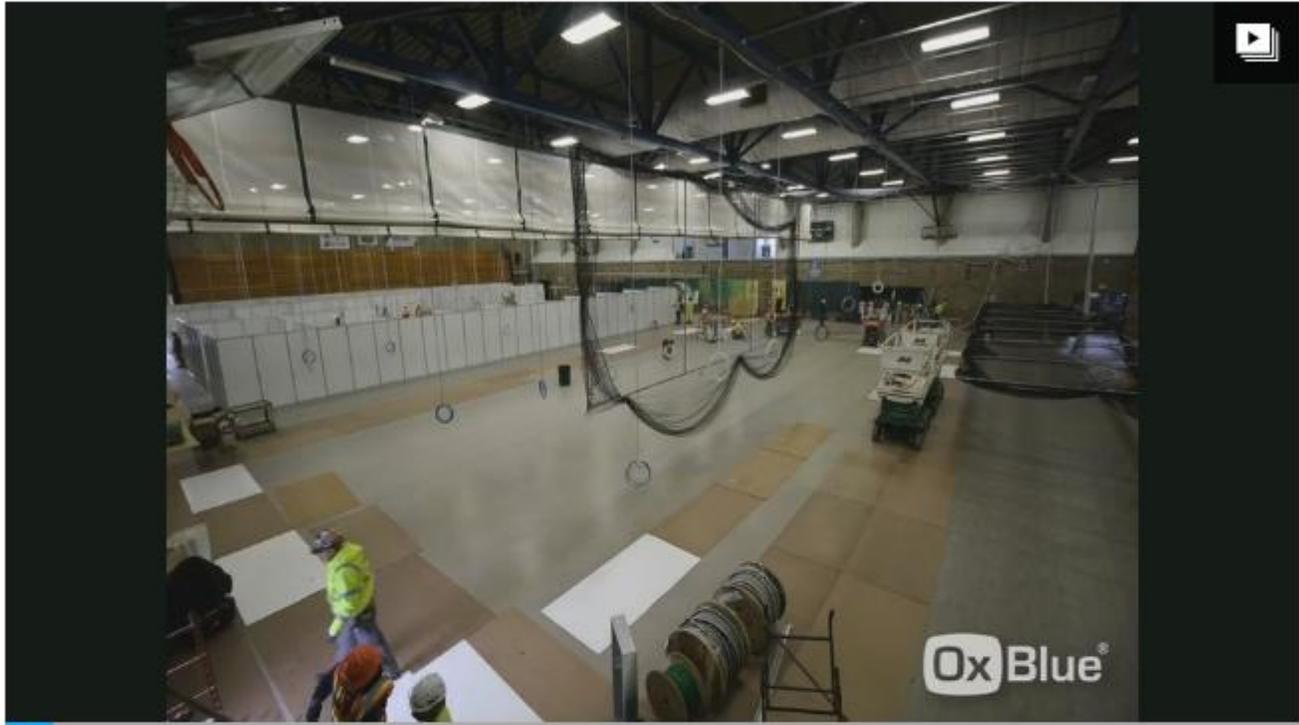
NY mandate that brings COVID-19 patients to nursing homes drawing worries from WWII vet's daughter

SUNY Old Westbury being converted into field hospital to battle COVID-19



Posted: Apr 07, 2020 6:42 AM EDT
Updated: Apr 07, 2020 6:45 PM EDT

Work has begun on turning a Long Island college into a field hospital to battle COVID-19. Construction crews were on the scene at SUNY Old Westbury setting up shelters on campus. The move is part of a joint effort by federal and local officials to boost hospital bed capacity. Construction is expected to wrap up on April 19. A similar set-up is also being built at SUNY Stony Brook.



Long Island College Gym Converted to Field Hospital as Coronavirus Death Toll Rises in New York

Conversion of the Clark Athletic Center at SUNY Old Westbury continued on April 8, as the New York division of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) worked to temporarily convert the college into a field hospital. Local reports said crews were working to install 1050 beds to ease the burden on New York hospitals amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. A similar field hospital was also being built at SUNY Stony Brook. The New York Times reported that as of April 8, New York State had more confirmed cases of the virus than any country in the world besides the United States, with 149,316 officially recorded. Credit: US Army Corps of Engineers, New York District via Storyful

SUNY Old Westbury field hospital to be finished by April 19

By **Rose Weldon** - April 8, 2020

421 1



SUNY Old Westbury will become a temporary hospital for those affected by the coronavirus, with construction expected to be complete on April 19. (Photo courtesy of SUNY Old Westbury)

The field hospital for Covid-19 patients at SUNY Old Westbury should be completed in less than two weeks, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The corps is building the field hospital to accommodate those affected by the coronavirus as the pandemic creates severe overcrowding in hospitals.

“We expect to complete the project by April 19,” Michael Embrich, a member of the corps’ press office, said.

The facility is designed to hold 1,024 beds, he said, and part of the school’s gymnasium will be used for the capacity.

“Some beds will be inside the gymnasium, but most will be in the temporarily constructed alternate care facilities around the campus,” Embrich said.

The state of New York, which operates the school, said early last month that the staff would be made up of volunteering nurses and doctors from around the area.

NEWSDAY SPECIAL REPORT

College-bound high school seniors on Long Island challenged by coronavirus

By Joie Tyrrell

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Updated March 29, 2020 10:57 AM

Newfield High School senior Gabby Pegg applied to 17 colleges and universities and was about to tour a few — including Harvard and Yale — before making her decision where to attend.

But with campuses closed nationwide because of the coronavirus, Pegg, 17, like thousands of other high school seniors who have yet to commit to a college or university, will have to make her choice from a distance.

"There is only so much a virtual tour can show you," said Pegg, of Coram, who attends high school in the Middle Country district. "It can't show you the teaching style or the peer environment, and if these next few years are supposed to determine the rest of my life path, I want to make sure I am in the right environment and making the right decision. But I don't know if I can get that through a virtual tour."

High school seniors typically make their commitment around May 1, but many colleges and universities have extended that deadline to June 1 - and some are prepared to go beyond that. The State University of New York system on Friday extended its deadline to June 1.

Colleges and universities nationwide currently also implementing distance learning for students and dealing with other issues, such as figuring out how to reimburse displaced students for housing and other costs. Michael B. Horn, of Lexington, Massachusetts, who has authored and co-authored multiple books on education, said uncertainty abounds for higher education nationwide.

"Families don't know what they'll be able to afford, and there's no certainty that students will be able to live together on college campuses in the fall," said Horn, co-founder of the Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation and a distinguished fellow at the nonprofit think tank.

However, schools that are flexible, display empathy and understanding of what students need in college, and show "parents how they will get value for their money, could go a long way toward helping students feel comfortable committing to a school," he said.

About 400 prospective students signed up for a Hofstra University virtual tour March 22. High school seniors chatted online with Hofstra students, faculty and deans, and took a virtual tour of campus.

"What we are looking to do is to change every form of engagement," said Sunil A. Samuel, assistant vice president of Admission and Enrollment Management at Hofstra. "It is still face to face, but in a virtual environment."

With the coronavirus expected to overwhelm hospitals, a temporary medical site will be set up on the SUNY Old Westbury campus. Officials there have moved in-person events to other formats and hosted a webinar for admitted students, spokesman Michael Kinane said.

At Molloy College in Rockville Centre, school representatives have been calling each of the 2,500 accepted students personally to give them information before they make their final decision. They also have created a website just for admitted students and are planning virtual accepted days for each of the college's four schools, spokesman Ken Young said.

Adelphi University has made admissions counselors available through several platforms, including Google Hangouts and Zoom. The school will host a virtual spring open house April 26 featuring interactive chats with key offices, faculty and current students, as well as presentations from various programs.

Centereach High School senior Laura Diaferia, 17, was recently accepted to Long Island University in Old Brookville, her top school.

"They are making virtual tours and informational videos to kind of make up for closing campus, which is super helpful," she said.



A quarter of New York City residents could have antibodies

By **AMANDA EISENBERG** and **SHANNON YOUNG** | 04/28/2020 10:00 AM EDT

TEMPORARY HOSPITALS OPEN — **POLITICO's Nick Niedzwiadek:** New York wants to maintain recently completed temporary hospitals on the campuses of **SUNY Old Westbury** and Stony Brook University through the flu season. Physical construction of the facilities by the Army Corps of Engineers was completed in the past few days, although they are not fully set up or staffed to take in Covid-19 patients. Instead, they will be kept in place in case they are needed in the event of a second wave of the coronavirus.



LIU Post students push for traditional graduation ceremony; others going virtual

By Joie Tyrrell

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Updated April 30, 2020 3:15 PM

As commencement season approaches, colleges and universities across Long Island have taken a varied approach to graduation ceremonies — from postponing events to holding virtual celebrations.

Some seniors disagree with the virtual approach and say they deserve a formal graduation after restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic are lifted. Several online petitions with hundreds of signatures are pushing for Long Island University to change its virtual ceremony May 20 to a formal graduation.

"It is a huge event for college students and a once-in-a-lifetime event and we have been working so hard for the past four years," said Adam Silverstein, 21, of Northport, who will graduate from LIU Post in Old Brookville with a degree in social work.

Colleges and universities nationwide have closed campuses and provided online instruction since mid-March. Several have announced summer classes also will be offered remotely.

LIU, with campuses in Old Brookville and Brooklyn, has scheduled a virtual commencement to include a slide show of graduates, speakers and the awarding of honorary degrees. Officials said there will be a celebration for seniors during homecoming in October.

"Like many other universities across the country, LIU wants to ensure its graduates are recognized for their accomplishments at the end of this semester, even though stay-at-home orders have prevented us from doing so in person. We are proud of the resiliency, compassion and understanding our students have shown while navigating these challenging and uncertain times," read a statement from LIU.

Silverstein's petition and a handful of others have a total of about 5,000 signatures.

"We want everyone to know how much this means to us and convince our school to make it happen," he said, adding he will participate in the virtual event and will purchase a cap and gown for graduation.

Senior Adam Pilzer, 24, of Manhattan, who is graduating with a degree in health information management from LIU Post, launched an online petition, too.

"You are only a graduate once," Pilzer said. "We are fine with delaying it, or if they invite us back next year."

At Adelphi University in Garden City, officials created a commencement steering committee of students, faculty and staff to explore alternatives to traditional graduation ceremonies held each May. They decided to host an in-person, traditional commencement at a later date yet to be determined.

"I know they are making the decision based on what is best for students and ... it celebrates their accomplishments," said Matthew Bustruc, 21, of Wantagh, who is graduating with a degree in nursing and is the Class of 2020 president. "I am sure a lot of us are disappointed because it was postponed ... but we completely understand all the precautions."

Molloy College will host a virtual ceremony May 18, but this year's seniors may join in a formal commencement next year to celebrate the 2020 and 2021 graduating classes at the Rockville Centre school, officials said.

Farmingdale State College and **SUNY Old Westbury** have postponed their May graduations and are looking at other options.

Hofstra University announced it will celebrate its graduates with a ceremony Aug. 23, officials said. If not allowed, a commencement will be held in December, officials said.

SUNY Stony Brook interim president Michael Bernstein said in a video message on the school's website that the university is assessing alternatives for commencement. He said that on May 22 — the traditional commencement day — the university will hold a virtual graduation.

"I am very sorry your final semester at Stony Brook has been derailed by this tragic health crisis," Bernstein said to the Class of 2020.

SUNY College at Old Westbury: A Model of Diversity

KARL GROSSMAN MARCH 15, 2020

Long Island is the 10th “most racially segregated metropolitan area” in the U.S., says Elaine Gross, founder and president of the Syosset-based organization Erase Racism. That’s a result of racially restrictive covenants — banned by the Supreme Court in 1948 — and racial steering by real estate agents, sending whites to certain areas, minorities to others. That’s illegal, too, but still common.

But there is an island of diversity on Long Island, a remarkable exception to this pattern, a place where people mix: SUNY/College at Old Westbury. Experiencing diversity is a major part of the educational process at the college.

It has to do with the numbers 30:30:30:10. The vision has been to be college with a student body of 30 percent African-Americans, 30 percent white, 30 percent Latino and 10 percent Asian-American, Native American and foreign. This is inclusionary, not exclusionary. If the percentage dips in any group, there is an effort to up it.

The college was established in the 1960s as an innovative, indeed experimental, SUNY campus. John Maguire became its president in 1970. He came from a family representative of the segregationist South. His grandfather was lieutenant governor of Alabama.

“You could not imagine a more conservative, racist man,” he recounted when I interviewed him when he returned to Old Westbury to be the commencement speaker several years ago.

As a sophomore at Washington and Lee University in Virginia, he saw a sign posted about a conference in Pennsylvania for prospective ministers. It was a chance to go to the North, where he had never been.

When he got to the Crozer Theological Seminary he was advised that he would room with a Crozer student “from Atlanta, Georgia... You’ll like him... He’s already been named the president of the student body.”

The other young man was Martin Luther King, Jr. And that began “a long friendship and it was a glorious friendship,” a “transformative element no doubt... in my life... We became wonderful, fast friends.”

Maguire became deeply involved in the civil rights movement and was a Freedom Rider. When he came to SUNY/Old Westbury he and the faculty developed a plan to thoroughly mix people — based on 30:30:30:10. The concept was, explained Dr. Maguire, “no one would feel left out, but it wasn’t so big that one group ruled the other.” The students “came together” and began “to say, ‘he’s not so bad, she’s not so bad,’ and sure enough friendships developed, and it was... remarkable.”

It still is.

I’ve been a professor at the college since 1978 and I marvel watching the students come together and develop understandings and friendships. When a new academic year begins, some African-American students from Wyandanch might sit together and several Latinos from Brentwood might sit together and a couple of Chinese-American students from Flushing might sit together and several white students from Plainview might sit together.

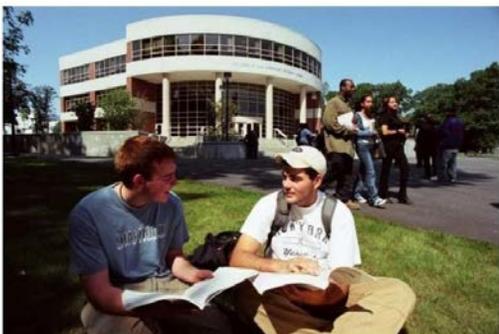
But by the following week, an African-American student is sitting next to a Latino student, a Chinese-American student is sitting next to a white student — indeed all the students have mixed together. Many had never before gotten to know those of other ethnicities and races.

“Old Westbury is rightfully celebrated as a college community that brings people of all races, creeds, and socio-economic backgrounds together,” says Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III, who recently retired as president of the college after 20 years. “Being designated among the top diverse campuses in the country reinforces that Old Westbury is at the forefront of cultivating intercultural understanding and global citizenship in its students.”

In its SUNY Old Westbury Magazine in 2018, the college reported that the prior year’s entering class was 31 percent white, 27 percent African-American, 25 percent Latino, 12 percent Asian-American and 5 percent “international and other backgrounds.” The two-page spread was headed, “In the Spirit of ’30:30:30:10.” It ended with: “The model founded in those earlier days continues... and prospers.”

The faculty, administration and staff are also fully diverse.

It’s an extraordinary model needing to be replicated — on Long Island and elsewhere.



SUNY College at Old Westbury.

Reviving the Original Purpose of Pass-Fail

We should use this moment to recapture some of the initial spirit of the option, argues Jonathan Zimmerman.

By Jonathan Zimmerman // March 26, 2020

10 COMMENTS 

In 1966, a student committee at the University of Pennsylvania issued a broadside about the poor quality of instruction at the institution. The committee denounced huge impersonal lecture courses where bored faculty members doled out disconnected bits of information, which students dutifully recorded in their notes and regurgitated on their exams. It called for smaller seminar-style classes, student evaluation of faculty members and an innovation that was gaining popularity across the country: the pass-fail option.

"It will lessen the pressure for grades by offering to the student a chance to study a certain number of courses for no end other than knowledge of the material," the committee argued. Letting students choose pass or fail would promote "an attitude towards learning as an end rather than a means," it underlined, which was "central to a liberal education."

I thought of this report as I read a petition last week by students at Penn, who demanded that all classes for this semester be moved to pass-fail in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. But their rationale had little to do with the ends of education, focusing instead on the means: specifically, online instruction.

Reasonably enough, the students argued that many of their classes "do not properly translate to an online environment." They also noted correctly that many of their professors -- like myself -- have "little or no experience managing courses online." So the only just thing to do was to substitute pass-fail for regular grading, lest anyone's academic record suffer.

"It is much more fair to students that graduate schools and employers see 'P's on students' transcripts than potentially risking students getting grades well below their G.P.A.," the student petition argued, "potentially negating all the hard work they have done (and will do in the future), destroying their employment and graduate prospects."

I get it. For the past few years, our students have been reporting skyrocketing levels of stress and anxiety about their academic status and futures. Add coronavirus, and you have the makings of a collective emotional crisis. If pass-fail will help ward that off, I'm 100 percent in favor of it.

But I also hope we can use this moment to recapture some of the initial spirit of the pass-fail option. It came out of the campus protest movements of the 1960s, which were focused not just on civil rights and the war in Vietnam but also on transforming teaching and learning. According to critics like Mario Savio, leader of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, the university had become a "machine" that spit out workers instead of educating citizens.

So the students took it upon themselves to reform the university, demanding instruction that engaged their passions and interests. And they took aim at the grading system, which seemed designed to inhibit both.

"Learning at Yale is sometimes like being one of Skinner's rats," a Yale University undergraduate psychology student wrote in 1968, referring to the famed behaviorist B. F. Skinner. "Our reward is a grade. And the outcome is not surprising: frequent hostility toward the system."



So students pressed for the elimination of grades, which were replaced by written faculty evaluations at the University of California, Santa Cruz; [SUNY Westbury](#) and several other institutions. Most other universities continued to require grades but leavened them by allowing students to designate a minimum number of courses as pass-fail.

With the pass-fail option, an enthusiastic journalist wrote in 1967, students would be more likely to explore areas outside their academic comfort zones. "The physics major can take a poetry course," the journalist explained, "without the risk of marring his record with a low grade."

Over the next 10 years, most American colleges adopted pass-fail. But as the radical '60s morphed into the "Me Decade" of the '70s, something decidedly unradical happened: pass-fail became a way to game the system, not to change it. Students chose the option for classes with lots of work, or when they didn't want to work at all.

At Oregon State University, where a series of courses was designated pass-fail for everyone, a professor who taught one of them reported that two-thirds of the students came to class unprepared, and just over half submitted required work on time. He passed all of them, he regretfully recalled, which was "an insult to the conscientious student."

Other observers reported that career-oriented students were using pass-fail to boost their grades and job prospects, which took away from the exploration and joy that the option had sought to promote. "Students work hard, but there is a decline in serious intellectual focusing," the president of Sarah Lawrence College noted in 1977. "They are full of anxiety about getting a job, but there is no motivation that proceeds from within."

Since then, pass-fail has become a go-to move for the slothful and the anxious alike. In 2013, a study of eight public universities in one southern state found that growing numbers of both high- and low-achieving students used "academic forgiveness policies" -- withdrawing from classes without take a grade, repeating courses for a better one or selecting pass-fail -- to keep between a fifth and half of their coursework out of their GPAs.

And as of last week, over a dozen colleges had decided to expand their pass-fail options because of the coronavirus crisis. Citing "concerns about the shift to remote learning," Penn announced it would let students designate any course pass-fail. That's different from the students' original petition, to make all courses pass-fail, which was revised after some students complained that it would disadvantage people who were working toward a high grade.

And that speaks volumes about our academic culture, which values individual achievement -- and credentials -- above all. In the remainder of the term, as we squint into our laptops, let's see if we can rejuvenate the idea of learning as an end in itself rather than as a route to status and success. I don't know if that can happen online, to be honest, but we should try. Nobody's job prospects are going to change radically over the next eight weeks, anyway.

But maybe their approach to education will. The coronavirus has existential implications, of course, which could reorient us around shared moral questions rather than narrow personal ones. Why are we on earth? What's the best way to live when we all know we're going to die? And how can education prepare us for it?

Maybe, at this strange and scary moment, pass-fail can inspire us to frame new answers. It doesn't have to be just another way to get ahead. It can help us get outside our heads, too, and to imagine something bigger than ourselves.

Suffolk Closeup: Every crisis is an opportunity

By [Karl Grossman](#)

VOICES FROM AROUND the world — including one from a Suffolk County professor deeply involved in work at the United Nations — see the COVID-19 pandemic as a turning point.

Scott Carlin, Ph.D. of Hampton Bays is a representative to the UN Economic and Social Council. He was a planner of a UN conference last year for nongovernmental organizations to discuss and find solutions to challenges including climate change and building sustainable communities.

Professor Carlin taught at Southampton College for a dozen years and then, when Long Island University closed its Southampton campus in 2005, moved to LIU Post to teach, including courses on the environment and sustainability.

“COVID-19 creates a new context for speaking and acting with conscience,” he said. He speaks of how in this crisis “mutual aid initiatives will flourish as people create new pathways for sharing resources and inspiring others ... Selfless actions will shine.”

Indeed, the heroes in health care, the doctors, nurses, aides and others treating the ill, along with police officers, EMTs, and other first-responders on the frontlines, and the many other heroes in this calamity, risking their own lives, are people involved in selfless actions.

Professor Carlin sees the pandemic and response to it as “one human family and one Earth community” having “seized this moment to dramatically expand” commitments to, among other goals, biodiversity, clean water, education, economic and ecological democracy ... human rights, interdependence of all life, non-violence, public health, or, more simply, a world committed to sharing, caring and solidarity.”

Indian author Arundhati Roy is writing about the pandemic being a “portal,” a “gateway” to a new world. “Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew,” Ms. Roy wrote. “This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.”

She continued: “We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our ... dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through ... ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.”

We can hope somehow the pandemic might lead to a better world. More importantly, after all the deaths, the profound misery, we could and must work for a better world.

This pandemic has made clear the oneness of the peoples of the world. “Seen from space, the Earth has no borders. The spread of the coronavirus is showing us that what we share is much more powerful than what keeps us apart,” wrote former astronaut Scott Kelly in an OpEd piece in The New York Times. “All people are inescapably interconnected, and the more we can come together to solve our problems, the better off we will all be. One of the side effects of seeing Earth from the perspective of space is feeling more compassion for others.”

“I’ve seen humans work together to prevail over some of the toughest challenges imaginable,” wrote Mr. Kelly, who spent a year on the International Space Station, “and I know we can prevail over this one if we all do our part and work together as a team. Oh, and wash your hands — often.”

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is appealing to warring parties on Earth to pull back from hostilities, put aside mistrust and animosity, and silence the guns. “It is time,” Mr. Guterres said, “to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives.”

“The virus drastically demonstrates both the mutual global dependencies and the irresponsibility of military conflict,” said Susanne Grabenhorst, leader of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. War has “massively weakened” health systems “and made millions of people particularly vulnerable to the current pandemic.”

“There will be change,” said social critic, linguist, historian and MIT Professor Emeritus Noam Chomsky. “The question is: what kind of change?”

Dr. Chomsky was interviewed on a TV program produced by the Media Innovation Center where I teach at [SUNY/College at Old Westbury](#). His interviewer was Julie Goldsmith, a fine journalism student. The half-hour video can be viewed at youtube.com/watch?v=lciwaaFQqCk&feature=youtu.be

Professor Chomsky asks whether the pandemic will provide an opening for “more repression?” In the program he alleges a drive afoot of figures “working to institute the kind of change they want.” They’re “carefully constructing” a push “headed by the White House, encompassing the most reactionary states in the world.” Among the countries he singles out as planning to use the pandemic to foster authoritarian rule are Hungary, Italy and India.

“Will there be counter-pressure?” he asks. People need to understand that it is not enough to just show up on Election Day, Professor Chomsky said. They must be “all the time working, pressing, making changes — that’s the way things are done — and it has to be done on an international scale.”

WTJX to Premiere First Local Radio Talk Show: 'Analyze This'

Press release - April 25, 2020

The Virgin Islands Public Broadcasting System announces its first local radio talk show on its NPR member station, WTJX-FM, 93.1. "Analyze This" will be hosted by former senator and veteran broadcaster Neville James on weekdays, beginning April 27.

"Neville is one of the most analytical and politically astute minds in the Virgin Islands," said Tanya-Marie Singh, WTJX's CEO. "He has a flawless memory and an innate talent for breaking down and dissecting numbers and data."

Neville has his roots firmly in broadcasting, following in the footsteps of his dad, Randall 'Doc' James, who was a notable television and radio personality. Neville's start in radio came during his college years at **SUNY/Old Westbury**, and he was a regular voice on WSTX from 1996 to 2004. Singh recalls that she regularly listened to Neville when he hosted "De Word" on WSTX prior to his first senatorial bid.

She reminisced that he had a good radio presence and had inherited his father's infectious laugh. "I realized how much he grew as a broadcaster during the 2013 Preakness Stakes," Singh said. "He attended the second leg of the triple crown to see Virgin Islander Kevin Krigger ride Goldencents, and, while he was there, he sent daily updates for WTJX to post on its Facebook page. Additionally, WTJX was able to book him on ESPN radio as a precursor to the big race."

She said, "Neville knocked that interview out of the park; he was outstanding. I am excited to bring this thoughtful and provocative show, rooted in data, not hearsay, to our community."

"I'm looking forward to continuing my longstanding relationship with our local PBS station, WTJX, with its first ever radio talk show. Given the global reach of apps like TuneIn Radio, it requires me to 'come correct'," said "Analyze This" host Neville James.



former senator and veteran broadcaster Neville James

"'Analyze This' plays right into my strengths given my affinity for historical accuracy and breaking down the numbers. I'm confident we're going to meet our expectations and ultimately exceed them," James said.

"Analyze This" will begin on Monday, April 27, airing weekdays, from 8-10 a.m. The radio station doesn't have the best coverage on St. Croix yet because of an FCC moratorium on FM translators, which is needed for better coverage on St. Croix. WTJX encourages residents who are having issues receiving 93.1 FM to stream it on its website at www.wtjx.org or by utilizing one of the popular radio apps like TuneIn Radio or NextRadio. Listeners can also tell Alexa to play WTJX-FM.

"Analyze This" will be available on podcast and social media platforms in the near future.