



*Office of the President*  
**Dr. Antonio D. Tillis**

Dear UHD Faculty & Staff,

I hope this message finds you and your families in good health.

As I write this message, our University ... and our community ... face immense challenges as a result of the ongoing pandemic. This is a changing situation that requires strategic planning and decision making to ensure the success of our institution and more importantly, the safety of our faculty, staff and students.



I must commend all of you on your hard work throughout COVID-19. Your support of our students helped them face new challenges during the spring and summer sessions. Now, we must work to ensure their progress and safety this fall.

As your Interim President, I am working alongside UHD's leadership team to make sure all of you can continue to work and teach in a safe, productive environment. This message outlines where we are now and our plans for Fall 2020.

Presently, [UHD's Threat Level remains at Level 1-Red](#). Likewise, Harris County also is at Level 1-Red on its own [Threat Level system](#). While it is uncertain whether conditions will improve within the next two weeks, the University will start the fall semester at Level 1-Red. UHD will remain at "Red" status through at least Sept. 7.

The [UHD Threat Level Matrix](#) has been updated to include more details about the impact on campus and academic operations. Please take a moment to review it. Also, be sure to look over these important facts about the start of Fall 2020:

1. Classes that are currently scheduled for online delivery will not change in any way and will continue as planned.
2. Most classes that are scheduled in face-to-face, hybrid, or online interactive modalities will begin the semester online. The face-to-face aspects of these modalities will resume as scheduled once the campus returns to an "orange" threat level.
3. Faculty are expected to contact students via Gatormail by Aug. 17 to provide instructions on how they will be expected to participate in classes during scheduled meeting times. Additionally, faculty should provide updates using Blackboard as the start of the semester approaches.
4. The campus will remain closed (but accessible to faculty and staff with assistance from the UHD Police Department). Please note faculty and staff must both check in and check out through UHDPD when coming to campus.
5. Most staff members will continue to work remotely. Managers have identified staff who will work limited schedules on campus or in hybrid formats throughout this Level 1-Red period to accommodate delivery of core services. Managers have also identified staff who will transition from working remotely to working on campus full-time, or on a hybrid or rotating basis when the University shifts to Level 2-Orange and Level 3-Yellow. During the week of Aug. 10, Employment Services & Operations (ESO) will inform staff of their respective work locations (remote or on campus) during each color-based level as identified by their supervisor. These work locations are subject to change as conditions or circumstances change or necessity requires it.

Today, I issued a [message to students](#) restating much of this information, and next week, I will host a Virtual Town Hall to address Fall 2020 and the current state of the University. The event will be conducted on Zoom from 3 to 4 p.m., Aug. 13. Faculty and staff are encouraged to [RSVP](#) in advance of this event. Additional details on the Town Hall are forthcoming.

By the end of August, our institution will assess pandemic conditions in our region and I will provide an update regarding the campus threat level and next steps for the fall semester.

If Threat Levels in the city and county improve significantly between Aug. 24 and Sept. 7, faculty and staff will be notified regarding any changes to campus operations and course delivery. Our goal is to provide one week's notice prior to changing the threat level, to allow faculty, staff and students time to prepare for the change.

I am continuing to work with UHD's leadership team to monitor local and state conditions, including area school districts, to make decisions that support our academic mission ... and most importantly, the safety of the University Community.

I encourage you to visit UHD's [Coronavirus Website](#) for the latest updates related to the pandemic and please continue to direct questions to [coronavirus@uhd.edu](mailto:coronavirus@uhd.edu). Additional communications are available on the Coronavirus [Updates page](#) in UHD News. Faculty also can access UHD's [Keep on Teaching and Learning](#) site, which contains resources and information to support online instruction.

Your patience and flexibility are making a difference for our students during this challenging time. Thank you for your hard work and ongoing commitment to your university.

Stay healthy, Gators!

Dr. Antonio D. Tillis  
Interim President, University of Houston-Downtown