



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

UHD President, Loren J. Blanchard

Dear UHD Faculty and Staff,

As the summer marches forward, so does the University of Houston-Downtown. You'll remember that we embarked on a partial return to campus at the start of June. That initiative has been met with success as it provided a lifeline to critical on-campus operations and offered significant strides toward our University's mission.

On Monday, July 12, we'll continue that momentum as we enter [Step 4 – Green in our COVID-19 Response Matrix](#). As such, UHD faculty and staff will resume their pre-COVID on-campus work schedules.



UHD will transition back to class schedules that will include traditional face-to-face classes along with the regular complement of hybrid, online and online interactive classes historically offered during a fall semester. It is expected that approximately 60 percent of classes at UHD will be offered face-to-face, with the remaining 40 percent offered in various hybrid, online and online interactive modalities. COVID-19 related limitations on classroom capacity will be lifted for the Fall 2021 semester, which will result in a higher number of students in classrooms.

During this return to campus, thoughts about safety are sure to arise. While UHD will no longer require social distancing, the University still encourages everyone to pay attention to their safety and practice personal accountability in safeguarding their well-being. Although masks are not required, our campus remains a mask-friendly environment, and we will respect people's choices whether or not to wear one. Further, UHD encourages faculty, staff and students who have not yet done so to seek vaccinations for COVID-19 as a precautionary measure. In an effort to make immunizations accessible, UHD will partner with H-E-B on August 26 as part of the Welcome Week activities to provide coronavirus vaccinations. Expect to hear more information about this opportunity soon.

I know faculty and staff will have more questions than I am addressing in this message regarding these next few weeks, and leaders from across UHD are prepared to provide guidance. We held a town hall in June which addressed some of the changes, and you may [watch a recording of the event](#) to familiarize yourself with some of the changes already in place. Even since then, UHD's protocols have evolved, and I invite you to join a [Return To Campus Town Hall](#) on Thursday, July 8 from 2 – 3:15 p.m. when we can hold a discussion about what to expect and the latest developments.

As a reminder, if you are feeling unwell and have any concerns about your health related to COVID-19, the [Curative kiosk located beside the Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center](#) provides testing free of charge to the university community as well as the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To utilize the services, [sign up for appointments](#) through the Curative portal and check-in online before the visit.

All of these plans guarantee that our most important stakeholders – our students – will have a rich, immersive academic and student life experience this fall. These opportunities to return to the traditional operations so often associated with our institution reinforce the academic success, persistence and degree attainment of our students.

I hope your summer is off to an enjoyable and productive start, and as we draw closer to July 12, we look forward to your return to campus so that we can set the stage for a most successful new academic year.

Sincerely,

Loren J. Blanchard, Ph.D.
President, University of Houston-Downtown