



Office of the President
Dr. Antonio D. Tillis

Good day, Gators!

I hope all of you had a relaxing and safe holiday and are prepared to put the final touches on the fall semester.

Finals are around the corner, and not long after that, we will celebrate our graduates during [Virtual Commencement](#) on December 19. Then, we will receive another well-deserved break for the winter holidays.

With the holidays in mind, I am instructing that offices, departments and divisions refrain from hosting in-person celebrations on campus. I realize this is a first for all of us because we traditionally appreciate the camaraderie of our colleagues and look forward to winding down the year with spirited get-togethers. I, too, looked forward to fun fellowship with Cabinet colleagues and others during this time. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is still upon us, and at this time, public health officials are strongly discouraging in-person gatherings, which we are supporting.



Many of you already have anticipated this and are already planning virtual celebrations. I fully support that. Use the tools at our disposal (Zoom, Teams and other platforms) to safely celebrate the season with your co-workers. Also, please continue to diligently practice those habits that have been recommended throughout the year—wearing a mask in public, washing your hands regularly and distancing.

As you’re well aware, COVID levels in our state have intensified. Our COVID-19 Task Force and UHD Leadership team are monitoring the situation and will continue to make decisions that support your safety and the mission of our University.

UHD is presently at Step 2-Orange according to its Response Matrix. The University is scheduled to open for the spring semester at Step 3-Yellow; however, we will continue to assess COVID-19 levels within our community to determine if we need to change course.

I realize that 2020 has presented an unrelenting sense of uncertainty, but as a community we have worked through many challenges. We will continue to do so in 2021 and no doubt emerge a more resilient University.

Thank you all for your hard work this fall. Let’s conclude the fall semester as we started it ... with a commitment to both safety and success.

Sincerely,

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