

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Michael V. Drake, MD
President



Dear Ohio State Community:

Good evening. Let me begin by reaffirming that Ohio State remains committed to action to ending [racial injustice](#) in this country and beyond, and we're working together every day to make this more true. This is not an easy or quick task, and it will take continual work. We may not be able to make everything right in short order, but we can make progress. The results depend on the quality of our collective effort.

COVID-19 transition planning

In the midst of this pandemic, we have continued to advance our mission. Our enrollment is among the highest ever for a summer term, and our students are engaged in learning remotely with the help of thousands of dedicated faculty and staff who have masterfully made the shift necessitated by the pandemic. Research continues across the enterprise, and our health care professionals and support staff remain on the front line of the fight against COVID-19.

We are pursuing a phased approach for a return to full on-campus operations for the autumn semester. The university's transition task force continues to

solidify details. It is important to note that these plans for a return to campus are provisional, and we will continue to re-evaluate based on evolving conditions, reports about the status of the pandemic, and recommendations and guidance from public health authorities and the scientific community. In the coming weeks, we will launch the Safe and Healthy Buckeyes website for our campuses and community members to stay current on updates and information. The site will include additional information on facilities readiness, transportation, hygiene and personal protection, mental health and wellness resources, housing and dining, recreational spaces and programs, and much more.

Below are several immediate updates.

Course planning for autumn semester

The university shared this week [course-planning expectations](#) for autumn with academic leaders and the wider community. Courses will be offered in several formats, including in-person, online or blended. As part of the effort to reduce density and maintain physical distancing, some in-person instruction will occur in non-traditional spaces in non-academic buildings.

Classes that bring together 100 or more people — including students, faculty and instructional assistants — will be conducted virtually or in a blended model that includes online lectures with in-person labs, studio sessions, recitation sections and other arrangements for smaller groups.

In collaboration with faculty, our deans, department chairs and school directors will determine the most appropriate mode of teaching for autumn courses. Unit schedulers will update all sections by July 1. The registrar's office will inform students about their course schedules at least a month before the autumn semester begins.

As a reminder, the academic calendar for autumn semester has been adjusted. The first day of classes is Aug. 25. The last day of in-person, on-campus instruction is Nov. 25. Instruction in the last week of the semester (Nov. 30-Dec. 4) and final exams (Dec. 7-11) will be online. To view the academic calendar, visit the [University Registrar webpage](#).

Off-cycle salary increase and hiring pauses extended

As part of the university response to the pandemic's impact on operations, the university implemented several steps to manage an estimated \$100 million in revenue losses during fiscal year 2020. Among the first steps included instituting a [hiring pause](#) through June 30 with exemptions for essential services and key faculty and research positions. We also instituted pauses in [off-cycle salary increases](#) through June 30. Both of these measures are being extended through Dec. 31 as we continue to address revenue loss and financial uncertainty.

We are extending the university state of emergency through Saturday, June 27, which enables us to utilize Disaster Leave ([Policy 6.28](#)) and is essential to providing the university with flexibility in making a variety of financial decisions over an extended period if necessary.

Travel restrictions and education abroad cancellations

Domestic and international travel restrictions, initially announced in March, have been extended until December 31, 2020. All previously approved travel prior to that date must be canceled. Exemption processes and elevated approvals related to travel restrictions are available under specific circumstances. For more, visit the [Business and Finance website](#).

The university has also taken the difficult step of canceling all education abroad programs for the autumn semester. We look forward to students returning to these important teaching-and-learning experiences once it is advisable to do so. We will continue to monitor guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Homeland Security and others.

In-person university events

As a reminder, all in-person university events remain canceled through July 6. As part of our phased return, Ohio State is convening a group through the transition task force to evaluate and make recommendations for in-person events beyond July 6. Further information and details are forthcoming.

Health reporting and COVID-19 testing program pilots

In autumn, a daily health check to report body temperature and health status will be required for all faculty, staff and students each day they intend to be on our campuses. This daily check will be reported through the Ohio State mobile app or compass.osu.edu. Accommodations are being made for employees who do not have daily access to a smartphone or computer. We are currently evaluating this health check process through a pilot program for a limited number of on-campus employees.

As shared, a pilot COVID-19 swab testing program also has been established for a limited number of employees who are already working on campus or will be returning this summer.

Each pilot will be used to inform decisions about the autumn semester while helping to support the safety of our community during the current phased return to full on-campus operations.

Limited visitation at university hospitals

The Wexner Medical Center announced this week limited visitation of patients staying in its hospitals. Each patient can have one visitor of their choice per day, as identified in the patient's electronic health record. All visitors to medical center hospitals have their temperatures checked and are provided a mask. Visitors must be free of COVID-19 symptoms and have no exposure history. Visitation is currently not permitted, with limited exceptions, in emergency departments or outpatient facilities. For more, visit the [medical center webpage](#).

Diploma mailing for spring commencement

The Office of Commencement and Special Events has been granted an exemption to return to campus to process and mail spring diplomas beginning next week. Diplomas will be mailed out as they are completed, so some students will receive their diplomas before others. We are hopeful that all diplomas will be mailed out within the week.

As always, my gratitude goes to each of you. Our greatest strength is our people, Together As Buckeyes.

Sincerely,

Michael V. Drake, MD

COVID-19 Resources

- [Information about coronavirus and the university's response](#)
- [Guidance for students, faculty and staff](#)

- [Resources for faculty](#)
- [Resources for COVID-19 research](#)
- [Resources for students](#)
- [Resources for staff](#)

Wellness Resources

- Faculty and staff can use the [Human Resources Keep Well website](#), the [Chief Wellness Officer Health and Wellness page](#) and [Your Plan For Health](#).
- Students can use the [Counseling and Consultation Service](#) (CCS) and the [Buckeye Peer Access Line](#) (PAL), which operates Monday through Thursday from 8 p.m. to midnight, and Friday from 2 to 6 p.m.
- CCS also provides guidance for [ways for faculty and staff to support students](#).
- The Ohio State: Wellness app is designed for students but offers tips and guidance useful for all members of our community. It is available for [Android](#) and [iOS](#) devices.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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The Ohio State University

