



Bruce A. McPheron, PhD
Executive Vice President
and Provost

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Executive Vice President and
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Dear Ohio State Community:

Good afternoon. Several updates are included below on the university's response to COVID-19 and provisional plans related to the autumn semester.

Please take a moment to read a [message to our international students and the broader community](#). This responds to federal guidance issued this week with the potential to create barriers to education for these students. The university disagrees with this federal guidance, and we are working to ensure that international students on Ohio State's campuses this autumn can successfully complete their academic work.

In this challenge and others, we remain Together As Buckeyes.

Face masks requirement

Face masks are an important tool in helping to protect our colleagues, classmates and broader community from the further spread of COVID-19. Masks must be worn in indoor settings, including, but not limited to, classrooms, common areas, conference rooms, shared office spaces, hallways, buses and shared vehicles on all Ohio State campuses. Masks must also be worn in outdoor spaces where individuals cannot maintain appropriate physical distancing.

This measure aligns with a similar requirement enacted by the city of Columbus and the state of Ohio for Franklin County. No matter where you are, whether you're at Stone Laboratory, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center or the Lima campus, Buckeyes need to wear a mask when in public to protect themselves, each other and our community. The university will continue to update and share guidance in accordance with the work of our COVID-19 Transition Task Force and input from city, state and federal officials.

Face masks will be part of the return-to-campus kits provided to students, faculty and staff in August before classes resume. The kits will include one disposable mask, two reusable masks, a thermometer, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.

Events

Virtual events should continue to be conducted when feasible as the health and safety of our community remain our top priority. If an event must take place in person, appropriate measures, such as physical distancing, must be preserved. All events must include registration or attendee lists that include participant contact information to facilitate contact tracing if needed.

Events at Ohio State may be held at a limited number of venues, provided the events comply with building reopening requirements and all rules mandated by the university, and state and local governments. All events must adhere to these requirements as a basis for minimal acceptable practices, understanding that individual units or facilities may issue additional guidelines for permissible events. Guidance on events is as follows:

- University-sponsored events should be limited to fewer than 100 total individuals and must be approved by the sponsor's vice president or dean.
- Any university-sponsored event with 100 or more individuals must be approved by President's Cabinet.
- Events sponsored by groups not affiliated with the university may take place in approved venues and must follow all university, state and local guidelines.
- Athletic events are not included in the 100 total individual threshold. Discussions remain underway about Ohio State athletics events for autumn, and an announcement will be made in the coming weeks. This week, the Big Ten Conference [announced](#) that it will move to a conference-only schedule for fall sports.
- Information about schedules and formats for Welcome Week events will be updated at welcomeweek.osu.edu.

Venues now permitted to hold events are: Blackwell/Pfahl Hall, the Club, Covelli Center, Fawcett Center, Nationwide & Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center, Ohio Stadium Club and small meeting spaces, outdoor athletics facilities, Schottenstein Center, Wexner Center for the Arts and Wooster Conference Centers. Our COVID-19 Transition Task Force, including its events group, will continue to review these facilities and consider the opening of additional event spaces. Facilities on regional campuses and other university-owned

properties will be evaluated by a vice president or dean to determine readiness and appropriate dates to open.

More information about COVID-19 and the university's response can be found on the [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes website](#).

As a reminder, all non-essential Ohio State employees are to continue teleworking and remain off campus at this time unless part of an exempted operation or function. Summer-term classes will continue to be virtual only. Also, the university state of emergency is extended through July 18, enabling Ohio State to utilize Disaster Leave ([Policy 6.28](#)).

Recreational sports

Student Life Recreational Sports is preparing to offer recreational spaces for use in autumn semester. In addition to all available federal, state, local and university guidelines, Student Life Recreational Sports will also follow the guidance of national sports governing bodies to ensure physical distancing practices and other safety protocols are in place. Additional information is available on the [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes website](#).

Preparing courses and classrooms

The Office of Academic Affairs, University Registrar and Office of Distance Education and eLearning are working collaboratively to implement decisions on how courses will be taught (in-person, online or blended) this autumn and to ensure classrooms allow for appropriate physical distancing. Please be aware that the Student Information System shows changes in real time as we work through the course plans submitted by academic programs. The University Registrar will notify students when this process has been

completed. Until that time, all changes in the system should be viewed as preliminary.

Yesterday, Governor DeWine introduced [guidelines](#) and best practices for higher education and also announced additional CARES Act funding for Ohio colleges and universities. As we continue our phased return to on-campus operations, this guidance and additional funding will help further support the academic and professional success of our students, faculty and staff.

We will continue to share updates with you and look forward to welcoming Dr. Kristina M. Johnson to her role as the 16th president of Ohio State. Her first day with us will now be Aug. 24 to coincide with the start of autumn semester classes on the following day.

Finally this week, our congratulations go to our former president Michael V. Drake, who has been selected to serve as president of the University of California system. We wish Michael and Brenda the very best, and they will always be part of our Buckeye community.

Thank you for your collective efforts to lift us all. Have a safe and healthy weekend.

Sincerely,

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COVID-19 Resources

- [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes information and guidance](#)
- [Information about coronavirus and the university's response](#)
- [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.

