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Executive Vice President
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Dear Ohio State Community:

As we mark the final day of summer-term classes and also conclude this year's Faculty and Staff Appreciation Week, we want to reiterate our gratitude for your continued commitment to the university's mission during this time of great challenge and uncertainty.

Keeping our community safe and healthy remains a critical part of that mission. Today, we're sharing details about key components of a safe transition to on-campus operations: online training, the Together As Buckeyes Pledge and a testing strategy for autumn semester.

Additional updates include mask guidance, bus route changes to accommodate appropriate physical distancing, and the reopening of the Ohio Union and some dining and recreation facilities. Details about the daily health check requirement will be shared soon, including the start date and availability

of thermometers. We are also extending the university state of emergency through Saturday, Aug. 8, enabling us to utilize Disaster Leave ([Policy 6.28](#)).

Online training and pledge

As we told you last week, all students, faculty and staff are required to complete an online training course and the Together As Buckeyes Pledge. The 10-minute training is now available through [BuckeyeLearn](#), and the pledge must be signed upon completion of the course.

We are all in this Together As Buckeyes, and we all must play our part in fighting COVID-19. Taking the training and pledge as a community represents our shared commitment that we are united in our efforts to stay safe and healthy.

For those returning to any of our campuses, the training and pledge must be completed prior to your return. For those moving into a residence hall, the training and pledge must be completed before moving in. Those who have already been working on a campus, including faculty and staff in our hospitals and health care operations, have been implementing these measures and are examples for all Buckeyes. And, even though they've been on campus, they are also required to take the online training and sign the pledge as soon as possible, but no later than Aug. 25. For those not physically returning to a campus, the training and pledge need to be completed by the start of autumn semester on Aug. 25.

The training course covers expectations for daily health checks, personal protection such as face masks, hygiene, physical distancing, staying informed and more. The pledge acknowledges an understanding of and commitment to the behaviors described in the training.

Accountability measures are in place for those who do not complete the training and sign the pledge, or choose not to abide by required health and safety guidelines. These measures, as well as more details and FAQs, are available on the [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes](#) website.

COVID-19 testing program

As part of the university's plans to return to on-campus operations in autumn, we are implementing a testing program based on recommendations from our Safe Campus and Scientific Advisory Subgroup and guidance from federal, state and local health authorities.

Broadly, Ohio State's testing strategy will combine:

- Surveillance testing to monitor COVID-19 in random samples of asymptomatic undergraduate students
- Testing of symptomatic and exposed students, faculty and staff
- Voluntary asymptomatic testing for faculty, staff, graduate students and professional students
- Targeted testing should COVID-19 hotspots be identified
- A tool that will enable the university to share aggregate information with the public in a way that protects individuals' medical and educational privacy

Before autumn classes begin, a random sample of up to 6,500 undergraduate students will be identified for testing by Student Life Student Health Services. Students who test positive will be required to remain in isolation — at their homes if they have not yet moved into campus housing or, if they have, in on-campus isolation housing. Positive test results will be shared with the

appropriate health authority and the university's contact tracing team. Information about the contact tracing process will be shared in future updates.

The Office of Student Life will be contacting undergraduate students as they are selected for the surveillance testing program to provide details about the process.

The student sample testing results will be used to establish the baseline prevalence of positive cases on campus. This will be monitored and compared to results from ongoing student testing that will occur over the course of the semester. The prevalence data will inform any future actions we may need to take in helping to ensure the safety of the university community.

In addition to surveillance testing, students with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be referred to Student Life Student Health Services or an alternative health care provider for evaluation and testing. Faculty and staff members with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be referred for evaluation and testing through Wexner Medical Center testing facilities, their personal physicians or an alternative testing site. Again, positive test results will be forwarded to the appropriate health authority and referred for contact tracing through the university's contact tracing team.

Asymptomatic faculty and staff, graduate students and professional students may opt in to voluntary testing at a [Wexner Medical Center site](#). Finally, ongoing monitoring may identify hotspots where additional, targeted testing is warranted.

The university will cover the cost of asymptomatic testing.

While all elements of this testing strategy are important and we do not anticipate having to limit testing at this time, should capacity become limited

because of supply shortages, tests for symptomatic individuals will be prioritized. As always, the university will monitor closely and adapt our approach based on evolving information, guidance and scientific evidence.

Compliance with testing, isolation and quarantine procedures is expected as one of the conditions of returning to campus.

Mask guidance

The university has compiled additional guidance regarding alternative masks, cleaning cloth face coverings and respectful mask compliance on the [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes Personal Protection and Hygiene page](#).

CABS service changes

In alignment with recommendations from the Safe Campus and Scientific Advisory Subgroup, Campus Area Bus Service (CABS) continues to limit occupancy to support safety and physical distancing guidelines. This autumn, limited capacity requirements will result in reduced overall service as CABS must reallocate more buses to move people in smaller quantities. Beginning Aug. 24, the university will offer two bus routes during daytime hours: the Med Center Express and a new Buckeye Loop.

CABS will prioritize transporting individuals parking in the Buckeye Lot or West Campus Carmack Lots who are therefore unable to walk to class or work. Service around the academic core will not be offered during daytime hours but will resume after 7 p.m. via the East Residential and West Campus routes. We encourage students, faculty and staff to review [CABS service routes and times](#) and plan for longer wait times. [Paratransit services](#) will remain available. As a reminder, all CABS riders must wear a mask.

For more about transit options, visit the [Transportation and Traffic Management website](#).

Phased reopening of Student Life facilities

Beginning Aug. 10 and continuing through Aug. 24, some Student Life facilities will reopen. These include the Ohio Union, recreational facilities and dining services locations.

For a list of locations, reopening dates and hours of operation, visit the [Student Life website](#).

All facilities will be expected to follow face mask, physical distancing, occupancy and disinfecting guidelines. Appropriate signage will be in place.

The university will continue to operate with significantly reduced density in the on-campus workforce by continuing teleworking when possible.

Thank you, and we will share more next week.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. McPheron, PhD
Executive Vice President
and Provost

Harold L. Paz, MD, MS
Executive Vice President and
Chancellor for Health Affairs
CEO, Wexner Medical Center

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).
- 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.



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