

Sent on Friday, August 7, 2020



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Executive Vice President
and Provost

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Dear Ohio State Community:

On Sunday, we will celebrate the accomplishments of more than 1,700 graduates during our virtual summer commencement ceremony. On behalf of the entire Ohio State family, we congratulate these Buckeyes on their achievements and wish them the very best in their next chapters. You can share messages of congratulations on social media using #OSUGrad.

A pre-ceremony program featuring messages from students and university leaders will begin at 1:30 p.m., with the formal program beginning at 2 p.m. Both the pre-ceremony and ceremony will be [livestreamed](#) and broadcast statewide on The Ohio Channel. Former Ohio State, Olympic and NBA star [Michael Redd will be the speaker.](#)

Return-to-campus updates

As we have shared previously, the university will continue to monitor available data and evolving recommendations from health authorities and make improvements to our operations. We have a number of adjustments to share this week and will also be sending students an update early next week recapping all of the details shared to date about our return-to-campus plan. We are also extending the university state of emergency through Saturday, Aug. 15, enabling us to utilize Disaster Leave ([Policy 6.28](#)).

COVID-19 testing program expansion

We shared last week information about the university's comprehensive [testing program](#). We have commenced with the testing of a daily random sample of undergraduate students. Today we are announcing that Ohio State public health and medical experts are developing a method to implement a pool testing program, which will enable the university to significantly expand surveillance testing while continuing to preserve adequate testing capacity for symptomatic individuals at the university and in the broader community.

Sample pooling allows for more people to be tested quickly using fewer testing resources by testing multiple people at once. The samples collected from the pool of individuals are tested in a pool or “batch” using one test, rather than testing each individual sample. If the pool is positive, one or more of the individuals tested in that pool may be infected, and each of the samples in that pool are tested again individually. Because the samples are pooled, far fewer tests are run overall, meaning fewer testing supplies are used and more tests can be run at the same time. More details about the expanded pool testing program will be shared as they are available.

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. As shared previously, we are also developing a tool that will enable us to share aggregate information with the public in a way that protects individuals' medical and educational privacy.

Students, faculty and staff must follow testing, isolation and quarantine procedures as a condition of returning to campus.

Return-to-campus kits

As part of the safe return to campus plans, return-to-campus kits are being provided to students, faculty and staff at no cost before classes resume. The kits include one disposable mask, two reusable masks, a thermometer, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.

To date, more than 35,000 return-to-campus kits have been assembled with more than 17,000 delivered. Students living in residence halls will receive their kits when they move in. Our regional campuses also are receiving thousands of kits for students, faculty and staff.

For faculty and staff, return-to-campus kits are available through the university's eStores program. Departments can procure the kits for faculty and staff before they return to campus.

More information on kit distribution will be shared in the coming weeks.

Class sizes and reduced population density on campus

As we continue to do all that we can to protect our community, the university has a comprehensive plan for limiting population density across all campuses.

We are further limiting the size of in-person classes to no more than 50 students. Sections with more than 50 students will be making adjustments in course delivery among in-person, online and blended learning opportunities. Additional information will be shared with affected students as soon as possible.

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

As always, we encourage you to bookmark and regularly visit the [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes](#) website to view the most current recommendations and requirements.

Teaching resources and support

As faculty continue to prepare for the autumn semester, we have developed a new resource to address frequently asked questions by instructors. The new [Teaching](#) page on the university's Safe and Healthy Buckeyes website includes information about a variety of topics, including:

- What to include on syllabi
- Microphones in classrooms
- Assigned seating for students
- How to handle guests or hardcopy assignments
- What to do if a student doesn't follow safety measures

Online learning and pledge

Thanks to everyone who has stepped up and taken the online training and Together As Buckeyes Pledge. This is a critical part of our comprehensive plans for a safe and healthy return to campus this fall, and already more than

36,000 students, faculty and staff have taken the training and the pledge. Thank you.

We want to share that the university has adjusted the pledge to clarify that while the pledge states that Ohio State's values are fundamental guiding principles of the institution, there is no requirement for individual affirmation of those values in the pledge. No changes have been made to the health and safety expectations outlined in the pledge. By signing the pledge, an individual is agreeing to comply with these health and safety expectations. This change does not require those who have already completed the training and signed the pledge to take any further action. By Monday, Aug. 10, the pledge will be updated in the [BuckeyeLearn](#) transcripts of those who have not yet completed the pledge. Over the weekend while the update is taking place, there may be disruptions in access to the pledge.

As a reminder, completing the online training and pledge is required for all students, faculty and staff. 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.

Wexner Center for the Arts to re-open Tuesday, Aug. 11

Good news this week for all of us who love the arts. Today, the university [announced](#) that the Wexner Center for the Arts will begin welcoming visitors back Tuesday, Aug. 11. The Wex's galleries and store will be open Tuesday–Sunday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. (open until 7 p.m. on Thursday). Admission to the galleries will be timed and require a ticket. Face coverings will be required in all areas of the center. For the time being, all in-person films, performances and public programs are on hold. A virtual lineup of film streams, free

[interactive educational opportunities](#), free [performances](#) and [more](#) will continue throughout the fall.

As always, thank you for doing your part. Have a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. McPheron, PhD

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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, beginning Aug. 12, the [Buckeye Peer Access Line](#) (PAL), which will operate 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.



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