



UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER —

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CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

August 14, 2020

Dear UDC Faculty and Staff Colleagues:

I am thrilled to send a "welcome back" message to you as we gear up for an exciting yet unconventional opening to a new academic year. On June 26, President Mason shared his first communique (#1) on the Re-Opening for Fall 2020. His note provides a good foundation for what you can expect over the next several months.

My purpose in my communication is to provide several updates and to lay out our path forward within Academic Affairs. As you prepare your own reconnection to campus, I imagine you're feeling a mix of emotions — excitement, perhaps a little anxiety, as well as a need for clarity about what the virtual campus experience will be like this fall. I believe you will find answers to most of your questions as we roll out detailed information over the next several weeks.

As the University's Chief Academic Officer, I have been busy with overseeing academic policies, faculty development and culture, academic facilities and budget, scholarly engagement and community outreach. But above all, my office has been responsible for working with Deans, Chairs, committees, and faculty to provide a high-quality and relevant academic experience for our undergraduate and graduate students across all colleges, schools, and units supporting the academic and research enterprises.

The COVID-19 pandemic that struck last spring was a challenge like nothing we have ever faced before, requiring us to close campus and pivot to remote instruction in just a few days. While we are still dealing with the effects and impacts of the pandemic, the University leadership has been figuring out how to re-open safe campuses with healthy, low-risk teaching and learning spaces for approved hybrid and in-person classes. We have decided on a set of strict protocols following guidance from the District government and DC Public Health.

Through my office, we have designed several changes to provide students and faculty with an engaging and safe academic experience. The myUDC portal and CAO websites will undergo redesigns as we launch the new year. Upon completion, both sites will be a resource for information and updates. In the interim, I encourage you to be on the lookout for the unveiling of the University's UDC RISE website—it will serve as the official hub for "Re-Open" information. Also, you should frequently access myUDC portal for general information and announcements regarding protocols and updates.

Academic Calendar: FALL 2020

A revised Academic Calendar for the fall 2020 semester is available below (and on the UDC website). We have made informed adjustments to the overall calendar to keep students and faculty away from campus, where possible, by minimizing their travel to reduce their risk of exposure and potential virus surge in our communities.

The University will be very much in a situational telework posture for fall 2020. Only classes that have been approved to meet in a hybrid or in-person format will be conducted on campus. Faculty who are not assigned to teach these sections—and academic support staffers who have not been pre-approved to work on-campus via a Unit Staffing Plan—will not be permitted on campus without requesting the online 25Live reservations protocol. The Office of the CAO must approve all faculty and academic support staffers who request to access campus. Any employee who violates University employment policies and the established protocols for accessing campus will be subject to disciplinary action.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR/FALL SEMESTER 2020	
Continuing Students Online Registration for Fall 2020	April 1 – September 4, 2020
Tuition Installment Plan Enrollment Period for Continuing Students for Fall 2020	April 1 – October 4, 2020
Advisement/Registration for New, Readmitted, Special & Transfer Students	July 1 – September 4, 2020
LAW SCHOOL CLASSES BEGIN ONLINE	August 17, 2020
FALL ACADEMIC FORUM: Professional Development Days VIRTUAL	August 17 – 18, 2020
COLLEGES & SCHOOLS Professional Development Day VIRTUAL	August 19, 2020
MBA/MPA CLASSES BEGIN ONLINE	August 24, 2020
Fall 2020 Firebirds Fresh Start (Reconnecting, Advising, Mentoring, One-Stop-Shop)	August 24 – September 4
CAS GRADUATE EDUCATION CLASSES BEGIN ONLINE/CC Educ & Bus ACCEL ONLINE	August 31, 2020
Labor Day (University Closed)	September 7, 2020
CLASSES BEGIN	September 8, 2020
PSM CLASSES BEGIN ONLINE	September 8, 2020
Late registration and Add/Drop (Online) (Late Fee Imposed)	September 8 – 14, 2020
Attendance Verification Reports Due (Online)	September 8 – 21, 2020
Deadline Date to Submit Change of Major Forms to Registrar's Office	September 14, 2020
Withdrawal Deadline for 100% Refund (Tuition Only)	September 20, 2020
FALL OPENING CONVOCATION VIRTUAL	September 17, 2020
Last Day to Apply for Fall 2020 Degree	October 2, 2020
Columbus Day (University Closed)	October 12, 2020
CLASSES RESUME	October 13, 2020
MID-TERM EXAM WEEK	Oct 13 – 19, 2020
Last day to Enter Mid-Term Grades Online	October 22, 2020
UDC Super Center Voter Polling Site (Student Center): No Classes on Campus (Remote)	October 27-November 3, 2020
Last day to Withdraw from Classes with "W" grade	November 2, 2020
Continuing Students Advisement for Spring 2021	November 3 – December 11, 2020
Continuing Students Online Registration for Spring 2021	November 3, 2020 – January 10, 2021
Tuition Installment Plan Enrollment Period for Continuing Students Spring 2021	November 3, 2020 – January 21, 2021

Veterans Day (University Closed)	November 11, 2020
CLASSES RESUME	November 12, 2020
Last Day for Deans to Submit Degree Completers' Clearance Forms to the Office of the Registrar	November 13, 2020
THANKSGIVING Day Observance (University Closed)	November 26– 28, 2020
CLASSES RESUME	November 30, 2020
LAST DAY STUDENTS CAN SUBMIT WORK (INCOMPLETE/IN-PROGRESS)/SPR & SUM 2020	November 30, 2020
Last Day of Classes and Last Day to Affect a Total Withdrawal	December 8, 2020
FACULTY DEADLINE SUBMITTING INCOMPLETE/IN-PROGRESS GRADE CHANGES TO REGISTRAR/SPR & SUM 2020	December 9, 2020
FINAL EXAMS Open for Degree Completers	December 9, 2020
Reading Day	December 9, 2020
Common Exams (English)	December 10, 2020
Final Examination Period for Non-Completers	December 11-17, 2020
Degree Completers Grades Due (Online) by Close of Business	December 14, 2020
COMMENCEMENT (tentative for: Spring, Summer, Fall Completers)	December 16, 2020
Final Grades Due for Non-Completers (Online)	December 18, 2020
Fall Semester Ends	December 18, 2020
Christmas Day (University Closed)	December 25, 2020

Planning for spring 2021 will begin in late mid-to-late September. I will reconvene a consolidated academic workgroup from two previous task forces (Master Academic Course Scheduling Task Force and Focus Forward Task Force) that were established in AY 2019-2020. The consolidated academic workgroup will review and recommend modifications to the spring course schedule and academic calendar based on what we learn from our current posture and new information provided by the District government and DC Public Health.

Safety on Campus

As President Mason mentioned in his update on June 26, much has been done to ensure the health and safety of our campus community as we look toward re-opening campus. And safety in our classrooms is of utmost importance.

One of the primary goals is to reduce classroom traffic and density as advised by our healthcare professionals and partners. To accommodate for social distancing in studios, labs, clinics, and highly specialized research spaces, we have limited the number of students by creating staggered schedules, built in appropriate time blocks to allow for sanitization between sections, and instituted a campus reservation and health pre-screen questionnaire. More information about the online 25Live reservation protocol and the health pre-screen questionnaire is forthcoming.

We have moved most of our courses to emergency remote instruction and a mix of hybrid and in-person instruction. At the same time, we have restricted our physical operations to three instructional sites: Buildings 32/42 and 44 (Van Ness), 801 N. Capitol, and Old Congress Heights. We are transforming the 6th-floor of Building 4250 to a low-risk, healthy, and safe learning commons for students and instructors. We hope to introduce this new teaching and learning space in the next few weeks. To support the research and teaching needs of our faculty and students, the Van Ness Library will be operating on an abbreviated schedule (Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) beginning September 8. The Van Ness Library space will be limited to 32% capacity, which equals 16 public workstations and 18 study

carrels. Anyone who needs to request the use of the Library must do so through the online 25Live reservation protocol.

All students and employees will be required to wear masks. Other personal protective equipment (PPE) will be in place. Cleaning supplies, such as sanitizers and wipes, also will be available throughout the open buildings. High-touch areas in all campus buildings will be cleaned by contracted professionals as well as wiped and disinfected using products approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Instructional and Academic Support Services

I am sure many of you are wondering where and how your classes will be delivered. By August 24, if not sooner, we will release a finalized course schedule for Fall 2020 that will include each course. My office has worked with academic leaders across the campus to make determinations on the classroom location, the days, and times the course will be offered, as well as the mode of delivery.

In addition to ensuring the health and safety of campus community members, our goal is to provide a reasonable mix of instructional modes. Once the final schedule is announced, students should review their schedule online and contact their academic adviser if they have any questions.

Even with these changes in place, I can assure you that all UDC students will receive the quality instruction they have come to expect – and deserve – regardless of delivery mode. Unlike the scenario we faced in the Spring 2020 semester, we will have more faculty who have been trained to teach and deliver remote, online, and hybrid courses.

This summer, the Center for the Advancement of Learning (CAL) offered training and support for faculty and instructors to be online teaching certified (OTC) as well as trained some faculty to build courses for entirely online and hybrid delivery. From August 20 through September 3, Dr. DeMartino and her team will continue to train and support faculty who have not completed the OTC. As of August 13, I am pleased to share the impressive data regarding our teaching faculty (Instructors of Record) for fall 2020:

Total Number of OTC+ Certifications as of 8/13	611
Total Instructors of Record (IoR) for Fall 2020	501
Number IoR Fall 2020 Already OTC Certified	398
Number IOR Enrolled for August 20 OTC training	103
Percentage of IoR Certified for Fall 2020 as of 8/13	79.44%
GOAL: Percentage of IoR Certified as of 9/3	100%

Finally, the University will continue to provide academic support services virtually, including academic advising, tutoring, and success coaching. To further reduce density on campus, faculty and instructors will be strongly encouraged to hold office hours online.

Communicating with Students: Synchronous vs. Asynchronous OR Remote vs. Online Learning

Fall 2020 semester will be classified as Emergency Remote Instruction (ERI) due to the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. UDC recognizes the differences between remote instruction/teaching and online

learning experiences. However, sometimes this has not been communicated clearly between and among faculty as well as students we teach.

Well-planned online learning experiences are meaningfully different from courses offered online in response to a crisis or disaster. In contrast to experiences that are planned from the beginning and designed to be online, ERI is a temporary shift of instruction to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances. It involves using a mixture of remote teaching solutions for instruction that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as a blended or hybrid course. Our fall 2020 mixture will be mostly remote or virtual (synchronous) instruction. It will also include some in-person or blended/hybrid learning for labs, studios, health-related clinics, highly specialized research, and other learning experiences that cannot be completed in a remote instruction setting.

Part of the reason for this shift is likely vernacular; if our teams and offices are "working remotely," then our students are "learning remotely." But this language shift serves another critical purpose; it helps communicate that what we have been doing since this crisis began is not "online learning." What we have been doing, and what we will be doing again this fall, is maintaining academic continuity through the end of an instructional period so that students can progress towards earning their degrees and certificates.

During Fall 2020, UDC will offer a total of 1,504 sections for academic credit (this does not include Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education). Approximately 87% (or 1320 sections) will be emergency remote instruction; 6% (or 92 sections) will be blended/hybrid specialty labs and clinics; 5% (or 74 sections) will be online-approved; and, 2% (or 18 sections) will be highly specialized research.

Course Type	Description	Count	Percentage
BHY/SPECLABCLIN	Blended/ Hybrid /Specialty	92	6%
ERI	Emergency Remote Instruction (would have been face-to-face)	1320	87%
OL	Online (courses built and approved for online)	74	5%
RSHC	Highly Specialized Research	18	2%
Grand Total		1504	100%

To reduce confusion with explaining synchronous vs. asynchronous or remote vs. online learning, I recommend you borrow from the language I share below:

- **synchronous/remote** (*learning in real-time*)
 - ✓ Students enrolled in a remote class will meet **with their professors** online via the Blackboard Collaborate web conference platform at scheduled times with set deadlines and due dates. Students will access learning materials, assignments, and participate in discussions via Blackboard.
- **blended/hybrid** (*online and in-person*)
 - ✓ Students taking a hybrid class will engage in a combination of online/remote and face-to-face instruction. Students will complete their work assignments, discussions, research, and projects online at a flexible pace with the benefit of some scheduled face-to-face class time with professors and fellow students.

- **asynchronous/online** (learning on your own time)
 - ✓ Students taking an online class can access course content 24-hours a day, **progress independently**, and have discussions with their instructors and fellow learners using Blackboard. Deadlines and due dates will be set for assignments, tests, projects, and the likes.

Extramurally Funded Research and Lab Spaces

In June, we began re-opening our research labs with strict PPE requirements and social distancing protocols in place. The current priority is research that is externally funded, and that involves graduate students who need to conduct research to continue their academic progression. It is anticipated that this activity will continue to ramp up during the fall. Still, all research that can be conducted remotely should continue in that mode – including human subject research.

No in-person human subjects research can begin until approved by the Department/Division Chair (or Director) and Academic Dean. Faculty with full board and expedited research studies are encouraged to amend their IRB protocols to include the option of conducting research remotely through such methods as video conferencing, phone interviews, electronic surveys, and electronic consent.

University travel overall will be very limited, but priority will be given to externally funded research travel within the current guidelines and parameters mandated by the District government.

Policies and Personal Accountability

As stated earlier, students, employees, and visitors will be required to wear masks on campus and to social distance according to public health and University guidelines. Students who fail to follow the safety protocols established by the University could be asked to leave the classroom and possibly face additional student conduct sanctions. Employees who fail to follow protocol also could be subject to disciplinary action.

Fall Academic Forum: Faculty Professional Development Days (8/17 & 18/20)

I look forward to the annual **Fall Academic Forum** (*Professional Development Days*), which is required for all contract/union faculty. I also am excited about the **New Faculty Academy** (NFA) for newly hired tenure-track/tenure-stream faculty. Both events will be held virtually this year. An email message with instructions and an electronic invitation will be sent in advance of the meetings.

- **Fall Academic Forum** is the official welcome and return of faculty to UDC. Information and university-wide presentations are shared about several academic initiatives that are ongoing or new. The CAO provides an extensive overview of faculty evaluation and promotion and tenure schedules and deadlines, as stipulated in the new *8th Master Agreement*. I will also share academic updates and new efforts underway impacting the academic and research enterprises. It is an opportunity for President Mason to share remarks for the start of our new year, a welcome message from the Faculty Senate, and a time to welcome continuing and new faculty and share critical issues regarding faculty professional development. Fall Academic Forum is the kick-off before classes begin and the prelude to the Fall Opening Convocation. (*See attached Preview Schedule*)
- The **New Faculty Academy (NFA)** is a year-long commitment for new faculty who are hired in tenure-track/tenure-stream positions for the new year. This monthly workshop is an opportunity for faculty to connect across disciplines and meet key academic administrators and student development professionals. **This year's NFA will take place on Friday, August 14.**

Planning for a Safe Re-Opening

The success of our fall re-opening will ultimately rely on our entire campus community, taking responsibility for the safety and well-being of ourselves and each other. While none of us can predict what may happen in the future, by listening to the advice of our healthcare professionals and by taking all necessary precautions, we will have a much better chance of ensuring a successful start – and finish – to the 2020-21 school year.

To facilitate the sharing of ideas, my office has created the cao@udc.edu email address where the UDC community can communicate your ideas, suggestions, and dreams for the future of our academic community. My promise to you is that we will always read and thoughtfully examine your feedback. Continue to stay safe and well this summer.

I look forward to celebrating the myriad accomplishments of our faculty over the past year, recognizing new colleagues who are joining our learning community for the first time in a very different onboarding situation, sharing updates on where we are as a University, and seeing you virtually at the Fall Academic Forum!

On behalf of the entire Academic Leadership Team at UDC, sincerely, I am

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence T. Potter, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lawrence T. Potter, Jr., Ph.D.