



Ronald Mason, Jr., J.D.
President

December 16, 2020

Dear Firebirds,

First, I commend all of you for your patience and resilience in adapting to a mostly remote experience throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have all learned new ways of operating, and I am proud of the UDC community's ability to [R.I.S.E. – or Respond with Institutional Success and Excellence.](#)

It is now time to look ahead to Spring 2021. COVID-19 continues to be an immediate global threat, with infections rising across the United States and in many parts of the world. In the interest of the safety and health of the UDC community, we will maintain emergency remote operation for the Spring 2021 semester and follow the same protocol as Fall 2020. Below are guidelines and resources to help you plan for next semester. We have made every effort to provide the resources and support necessary for your success.

Essential workers and others who must be on campus from time to time are assured of a low health risk environment. It is important that all staff remain flexible in the event the University is required to reassign some staff to temporary details to support critical and essential functions. These temporary assignments ensure the University's operations are staffed continuously and positions and salaries are preserved in a time of economic uncertainty.

The University will be Administratively closed beginning December 28, 2020 and will reopen January 4, 2021. During this period, University checkpoints will be closed, and COVID-19 testing will not be performed. Only essential employees will be required to report to work as scheduled. Testing and checkpoint protocols will be discussed with essential employees who are scheduled to work during the closing. Individuals seeking testing should consult with their medical provider or visit one of the available District public test sites listed at coronavirus.dc.gov/testing.

We must all do our part to ensure that our students are well served, and our future is preserved. I hope to see you all in person some time very soon, but the health and wellbeing of the UDC community is my highest priority. I have the utmost faith in your talent, expertise, and ingenuity to ensure Firebird Nation will remain fully operational online in the spring just as in the fall.

ASPIRE. ACCOMPLISH. TAKE ON THE WORLD.

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SPRING 2021

- The Spring semester will begin January 4. The Office of the CAO, in consultation with a group of faculty volunteers, has planned the virtual 2021 Spring Academic Forum for January 4, which will include professional development workshops, presentations and learning roundtables. All full-time collective bargaining members are required to attend. The CAO's Office will share more information under separate memo.
- All work and instruction (where appropriate) will be online. All full-time faculty must be certified to teach online. The Center for the Advancement of Learning (CAL) has scheduled training sessions January 5-16 and February 8-18, 2021. Instructors can register for either session by [clicking https://forms.gle/9Thsfer2rmkALiuH9](https://forms.gle/9Thsfer2rmkALiuH9).
- Adjunct faculty who are certified to teach online will be given priority in hiring.
- Faculty and Staff requiring technical assistance, equipment, or upgrades, or who have connectivity challenges should advise their Deans/Supervisors by December 18, 2020. Students with similar challenges should call the Student Hot Line.

COVID-19 REMINDERS

As we plan for the spring semester, it is a good time to remind everyone in the University community about important COVID-19 requirements that are in place:

LOW-RISK LEARNING ZONES – [Low-Risk Learning Zones](#) have been established on campus in the RISE Center (4250 Connecticut) on the 6th floor. These spaces provide technology-supported academic learning and work pods for students and faculty who may be experiencing connectivity issues or who lack a computer or device to complete assignments, projects, or coursework or to prepare for major exams. To use a Low-Risk Learning Zone, you must [make a reservation](#) via the online reservation system.

ACCESSING CAMPUS – All students, staff and faculty that need to come to campus must obtain authorization through their Cabinet member via 25Live. Before coming to campus, individuals must complete an online health screening self-assessment through LiveSafe each day. Anyone identified as having a fever or displaying viral symptoms will be required to leave campus. Details can be found at udc.edu/Rise.

REPORTING COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES – All positive COVID-19 cases involving students, staff and faculty should be immediately reported to Risk Management at 202-424-0828 or University Health Services at 202-274-5030. Positive cases involving people who have been on campus and those who reside in the District will be reported to DC Health, who will perform a contact tracing investigation.

PROTECTIVE REQUIREMENTS – Everyone on campus is required to always wear face masks indoors and outdoors. Indoor group gatherings are currently limited by the District to no more than 10 people. Everyone should continue to maintain 6 ft' social distancing from others at all times and frequently wash their hands when in public.

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COVID-19 TESTING – Screening tests for COVID-19 are being performed on campus by University Health Services for “essential personnel” and other selected individuals. Tests are currently being scheduled each Monday through Wednesday, 10 am to 2 pm. Anyone who believes they have been in close contact with a positive COVID-19 individual can call 202-274-5030 to schedule a COVID-19 test.

TRAVEL ADVISORY – The current travel advisory issued by Mayor Bowser provides details for testing and preparation for travel. It is imperative that all UDC students, faculty and staff review the advisory and follow the steps outlined.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald Mason, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Ronald Mason, Jr.