

Dear UVM Community,

I'm pleased to share that this afternoon, the University of Vermont Board of Trustees endorsed recommendations to support a safe return to on-campus operations. The recommendations were developed by the UVMStrong—Fall 2020 Advisory Committee and are part of the committee's first report, which can be found on the new [Fall 2020—Return to Campus](https://uvm.edu/returntocampus) website (uvm.edu/returntocampus).

The UVMStrong committee and associated work groups have been guided by three principles:

1. Protect the safety and wellbeing of all members of the UVM community
2. Preserve the quality of the academic experience
3. Provide a high-quality student experience

The committee's initial recommendations form a framework that will continue to be enhanced and fine-tuned throughout the summer.

Key strategies include:

- Health screenings, testing and contact tracing for employees and students. This will incorporate use of an app being developed by UVM's Enterprise Technology Services.
- Reduction of residence hall density, as well as identification of appropriate quarantine and isolation space for up to 50 students.
- Requirements for all employees and students to wear face coverings when outside their private workspaces or residence hall rooms.
- Creation of a UVM pledge related to health and safety requirements and known as the "Green and Golden Rule." The rule is being developed by the UVMStrong Student Experience planning team with input from the Student Government Association and Graduate Student Senate, as well as faculty and staff.
- Modification of the fall 2020 academic calendar to end in-person instruction by the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. The last week of classes and final exams will be conducted remotely.
- Development of a classroom space management plan assuring required physical distancing. This includes a combination of remote instruction and small-group in-person meetings for courses enrolling large classes.
- Implementation of strategies and policies to address the needs of faculty, staff and students who have underlying health issues. These include options, where necessary, for remote instruction and course reassignment.
- The suspension of university-sponsored travel except under special circumstances, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Provision of safety kits for faculty, staff and students, including supplies such as hand sanitizer and facial coverings.
- Transition to remote or virtual formats for large events attracting visitors from out-of-state, including Reunion and Alumni weekend, and Parent and Family Weekend.

Other strategies include the development of a risk metric system to allow for raising and lowering research activity, while avoiding a complete shutdown of all work. There also will be new frameworks and schedules for the cleaning and sanitation of buildings, common areas, and workspaces including an increase in custodial staff assigned to busy periods and high-traffic areas. In addition, weekly email communications will provide updates and promote health and safety measures, which will also be reflected on the Fall 2020—Return to Campus [website](#).

The UVMStrong committee has drawn heavily on the expertise of our faculty in public health and medicine. The committee also has worked closely with the Vermont Department of Health, and Governor Scott’s office, while connecting with Burlington’s Mayor Weinberger to ensure compliance with state and local regulations. The committee also coordinated with our higher education partners, especially those in the State of Vermont.

A series of Teams Live events will be held for the UVM community to share information and answer questions about Fall 2020 planning. Specific sessions are being organized for faculty, staff, current students and families, and new students and families, with the first events tentatively scheduled for June 22 and 23. More information will be shared in the coming days.

I greatly appreciate the work of the committee and the more than 50 faculty, staff, and students who participated in the four working groups and contributed to the development of this framework and the associated strategies. There is still much work to do—but I’m looking forward to our shared success as we rally together to reopen our beautiful campus.

Best wishes,

Suresh

Suresh Garimella
President
University of Vermont