

Dear UConn Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students:

Over the past 6 months, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of our lives. Throughout this period, our faculty, staff, and graduate students have worked themselves ragged to shift courses, programs, and services to remote delivery with remarkable swiftness. These efforts have been essential in preserving our academic mission and I am grateful for your work. At the same time, I recognize that so much disruption has taken a toll, which is compounded by personal effects that range from seeing loved ones succumb to this illness, to experiencing heightened discrimination, to managing additional caregiving responsibilities, and a host of other impacts.

As we prepare for a fall semester unlike any we have ever experienced, we are using a community-based approach that incorporates and benefits from our entire University's involvement. I am thankful to everyone who has raised suggestions, questions, and concerns, through town halls, emails, and other venues. To invite further feedback, the Provost's Office will host weekly Office Hours open to all faculty, staff, and students starting next week. More information on upcoming sessions can be found on the Provost's Office website, [provost.uconn.edu/](https://provost.uconn.edu/).

To facilitate our preparations, multiple re-opening planning groups are meeting across University operations, including a weekly academic planning group, [provost.uconn.edu/covid-19-fall-planning/](https://provost.uconn.edu/covid-19-fall-planning/). A recent outcome from that group includes an IdeasLab from InCHIP that has brought extensive feedback from students, faculty, and staff regarding proactive strategies we can put in place to support a safe reopening.

In addition to more formal working groups, I am also holding weekly meetings with deans as well as with the Senate Executive Committee. Additionally, our team is meeting regularly with academic advisors across our campuses as well as representatives from our unions, our cultural centers, and our incoming chief diversity officer. Across all of these efforts, UConn Health has played a crucial role in ensuring we are making decisions that are in line with best practices to promote a safe return.

Much is at stake, including the educational experience of our students and the health of our community. Moving forward will take care, thoughtfulness and courage to get it right and recalibrate as we learn what works and as conditions change. Your feedback is crucial to inform our plans, to let us know when we've hit the mark, and to let us know when we haven't. We will remain in close contact over the coming weeks and we will navigate these uncertain times best as a community, together.

Thank you,  
Carl

**Carl Lejuez**

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

## Updates for the Academic Community

- **Faculty town hall:** The University's series of town halls continues, with a faculty town hall planned for July 29, at 12:30 p.m. The town hall is hosted by President Katsouleas and will feature updates from several administrators on reopening plans across the University. The details for the town hall, including how to submit questions in advance, can be found here: <https://ait.uconn.edu/town-hall/>. The livestream will also be recorded and available to watch later.
- **Technology recommendations:** ITS has created a new webpage to share recommendations on equipment and internet access for continued remote working, instruction, and learning. Please visit <https://remotework.uconn.edu/> to review this resource.
- **Instructional modality changes:** We are leaving open the opportunity for instructors to change course modality until end of day Friday, July 24. One of our guiding principles has been to support instructors in choosing the modality that best fits with individual comfort level and course objectives. At the same time, we want to ensure that when continuing student registration reopens on July 27 any further changes to students' schedules will be minimal to provide them a stable picture of how their fall courses will be delivered.
- **Faculty overseas:** Any faculty who will be outside of the United States for the fall semester should make sure that they have the approval of their department head for remote working, should inform Global Affairs of their location, and may wish to independently seek advice of a CPA about any tax implications.
- **Course materials for UConn Bookstores:** The UConn Bookstores are missing a sizeable amount of information they need to make appropriate orders for the fall term. This can be attributed to the flux in course modalities for the coming semester, however, now that the term is quickly approaching, please be sure to provide the bookstore with the information they need to order course materials for our students. Faculty and administrators can use the online adoption portal Faculty Enlight: <https://www.facultyenlight.com/?storeNbr=8207>, or by emailing the information to David Yutzey at [david.yutzey@uconn.edu](mailto:david.yutzey@uconn.edu). Direct any questions to the General Manager, Len Oser at [leonard.oser@uconn.edu](mailto:leonard.oser@uconn.edu).
- **Vice Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs and Development:** We announced last week the three finalists for this position. More information on the finalists can be found on the Provost's Office website: <https://provost.uconn.edu/administrators-and-leadership/academic-leader-searches/>.
- **Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies:** We have launched our search to fill this newly configured position in our office. We are accepting applications for this position through Monday, July 27. You can learn more about the position on our site: <https://provost.uconn.edu/administrators-and-leadership/academic-leader-searches/>. Please feel free to reach out to the search committee, as well, if you are interested in the position personally or wish to recommend candidates.

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