

August 6, 2020

# UConn PROVOST'S MESSAGE

Dear UConn Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students:

In just a few more weeks, we start a fall semester that looks different from any other year. Much of our instruction will take place through virtual and remote means; however, about 30% of fall semester classes will be conducted in person.

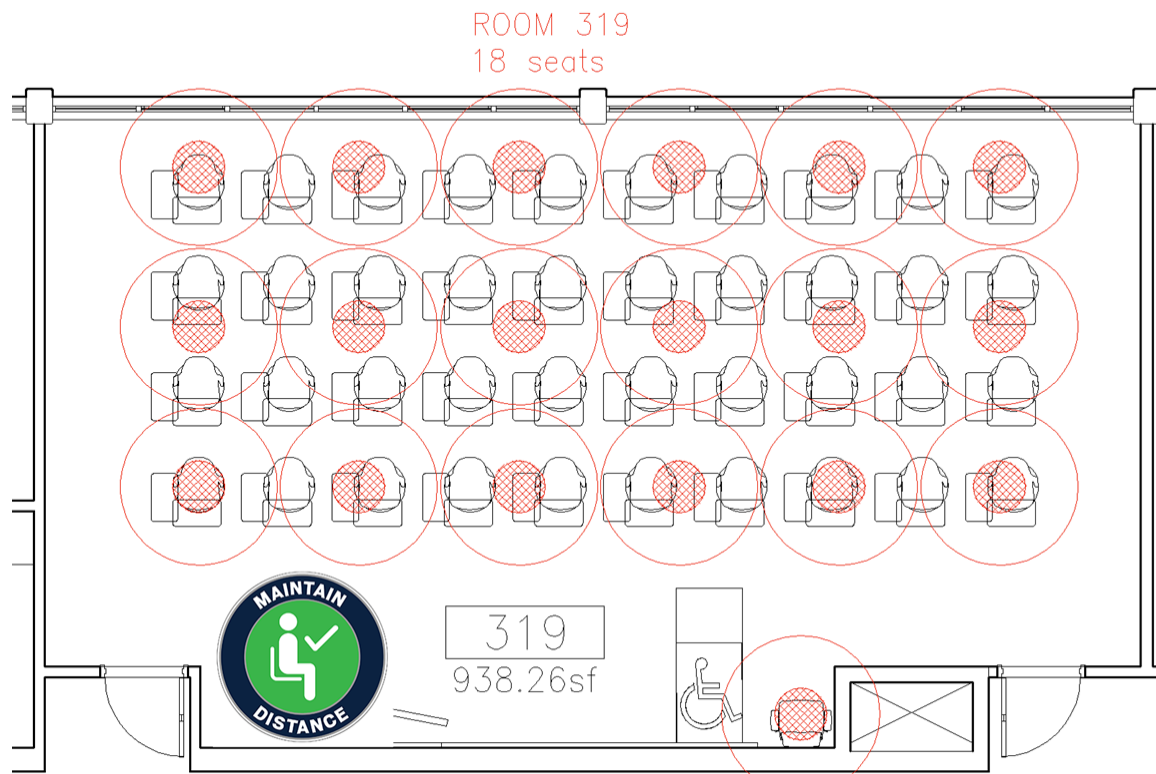
For our instructors, students, and staff who will be on our campuses when we reopen, I want to assure you that individuals and teams across the University have been working tirelessly to create as safe an environment as possible. This has involved several offices, including Facilities Operations, Student Affairs, UConn Health, Student Health and Wellness, University Communications, Human Resources, Dining Services, Residential Life, Public Safety, University Planning, Design and Construction, and dean and department offices.

Our re-entry into the fall starts with a commitment to the safety of ourselves and our colleagues. The University has created the [UConn Promise](#), which promotes behaviors among our community members to maintain a safe and respectful environment. The UConn Promise includes committing to public health measures such as wearing masks, as well as encouraging Huskies to look out for one another, especially as COVID-19 has been coupled with heightened discrimination for some of our faculty, staff, and students. We started by asking our undergraduate students to make this promise. We now ask all faculty, staff, and graduate students to review the promise and make a commitment to follow these guidelines to promote the well-being of our community.

The other key safety factor concerns the physical spaces we will share on our campuses. I want to give you a view into what several aspects of the UConn in-person experience will look like in Storrs and all the regional campuses.



Before even stepping inside any building, you will see a [sign](#) enforcing mask usage, hygiene and social distancing protocols, and symptom checking. Once in any building, you will find multiple hand sanitizer dispensers in hallways, with prominent signage to alert Facilities staff when refills are needed. [Additional signage](#) will be posted throughout buildings with guidance on social distancing, hygiene, and other public health protocols.



In each classroom, the seating layout has been analyzed and rearranged for social distancing. Layouts for classrooms, teaching labs, and other facilities are available to view and download at this [Sharepoint site](#) from University Space Planning and Management. In some cases, the new layouts have reduced classroom capacity by up to 80%. In each room, green stickers will be affixed at seats to show where students can sit. It is important that students and instructors follow these guides to maintain safe distancing in the classroom.



High-touch surfaces such as door handles, railings, and bathroom surfaces will be cleaned regularly throughout the day. Classrooms will be cleaned twice daily, and cleaning supplies will be available in each room for faculty and students to clean shared equipment and seating upon entry and exit to classrooms. High-traffic entry and exit points will be marked as “enter only” and “exit only” to minimize close physical contact. Plexiglass shields have been installed in high-traffic areas, such as dining halls and service counters—both as part of the plan put together by Facilities Operations as well as by request from staff working in those spaces.

We have created an FAQ as a resource to find these details and others relevant to academic scenarios at <https://provost.uconn.edu/covid-19-fall-planning/covid-19-faqs-for-instruction/>. Most of these are based on questions we have received from faculty, staff, and students, so please continue to share those with us. We will add to this list regularly.

Our preparations for the fall semester are focused on creating distance and, at the same time, grounded in community. I am encouraged by the care everyone has shown under exceptional circumstances to create an environment for our students, faculty, and staff that puts well-being first. This is in addition to the work I’ve seen so many of you doing to ensure an exceptional academic experience for students, as you prepare for different modes of instruction, advise students for the fall, and retool programs and processes for remote operations or limited in-person settings. Your efforts are appreciated at every level.

Thank you,  
Carl

**Carl Lejuez**  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

### Updates for the Academic Community

- **Town hall materials:** Several university administrators participated in a faculty town hall last week. A video recording, as well as slides from the provost’s presentation, can be viewed on our site, <https://provost.uconn.edu/communications/provosts-messages/>.
- **Reopening plan:** At each phase of reopening, the University must prepare and submit our plan to the state. The fall reopening plan is available to view at <https://reopen.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3065/2020/08/UConn-Reopen->

[Phase-3-Fall-2020-Final.pdf](#).

- **Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies:** We have extended our search to fill this newly configured position in our office. We are accepting applications for this position through Monday, August 10. You can learn more about the position on our site at <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.
- **New dean of law:** We are pleased to welcome Eboni S. Nelson as the new dean of the School of Law. You can learn more about Dean Nelson through this Q&A, <https://www.law.uconn.edu/about/press-room/uconn-law-welcomes-dean-eboni-nelson>.
- **Office Hours with Provost's Office Leadership:** The Provost's Office is hosting weekly Office Hours open to all faculty, staff, and students. More information on upcoming sessions can be found on the Provost's Office website, [provost.uconn.edu/](https://provost.uconn.edu/).
- **CETL resources for fall teaching preparation:** The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has shared curated resources for faculty and graduate student instructors as they continue preparations for their fall courses. The resource guide is available on our site at <https://provost.uconn.edu/communications/informational-memos/>.

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