



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

July 10, 2020

Dear CUNY community,

I know the last four months have been challenging, unsettling and heartbreaking in so many ways. I wish I could know what the future will bring, and say with clarity what the upcoming months will look like. I can't, but regardless of what the Fall looks like, CUNY will be ready for our students in August.

Last night the CUNY Board of Trustees approved a resolution that gives us the most flexibility in making decisions and planning what the Fall semester will look like once New York City enters Phase 4, which signals the start of the reopening for CUNY.

We are preparing for a range of scenarios that combine in-person, virtual and hybrid instructional modalities. Thanks to the diligent work of so many in our system, 48 percent of the Fall 2020 courses that are open for student registration are already scheduled for hybrid or online delivery. We hope to increase this percentage in the weeks ahead in preparation for the start of the semester. I want to acknowledge and thank everyone across our university who has committed endless hours to getting the work done during these extraordinary times.

We are also getting ready to deliver a range of in-person courses and services, provided they meet New York State and University guidelines for re-opening and assuming that New York City enters Phase 4 over the next few weeks, as is the plan.

Those courses are likely to include, among others, those dependent on science labs and professional equipment, theater, performing and studio arts and clinical placements. We seek to physically reopen to the extent possible on-campus student services such as food pantries, child care and counseling centers, computer labs and library services.

We are also devising plans to help our international students in response to the [misguided policy](#) announced by Washington earlier this week. The resolution approved by the Board last night also helps us in this matter by providing maximum latitude to offer them some degree of in-person instruction. We will leave no stone unturned to make sure our international students are able to stay and continue their studies at CUNY.

All these future decisions will be guided, first and foremost, by our obligation to protect the health and safety of all students, faculty and staff, along with our commitment to facilitate the maintenance of academic momentum for students. At the same time, we are extending a degree of flexibility to each college to develop plans tailored to the needs of its campus community.

Each CUNY campus has formed a Reopening Committee to develop personalized plans, following guidelines from CUNY Central that are consistent with Governor Cuomo's Phase 4 blueprint for higher education institutions and subject to final approval from the Office of the Chief Operating Officer.

We have seen other universities announce they will return with in-person instruction for the Fall term only to backtrack and reverse course because of a surge in coronavirus cases, contributing to an already disruptive and confusing climate. We want to avoid these kinds of interruptions.

As we have moved through the early stages of this unprecedented crisis and worked to sustain the day-to-day operations of the nation's largest urban university system, our community has experienced plenty of heartache. To honor our talented and cherished faculty, staff and students, as well as retirees and alumni who lost their lives to the coronavirus, we have created an "[In Memoriam](#)" page on CUNY's website. We invite you to leave sympathy messages to celebrate and commemorate their lives and contributions.

When it is safe to do so, we will further commemorate their lives with an in-person memorial event. I look forward to that day, as well as to the beginning of the Fall semester — in less than seven weeks — and a point in the future when we will all be able to meet and reflect on the challenges we have overcome and the goals we have accomplished together during this period of adjustment.

I will be in touch with additional details in the near future. In the meantime, please continue to visit cuny.edu/coronavirus. As always, be safe, be well and please be sure to take care of one another.

Sincerely,

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