Chancellors Update Regents on Strict Safe Return Plans[1]
[2]

A safe return to campus for fall semester is top of mind for nearly everyone at CU and it was top of the agenda at yesterday's Board of Regents meeting.

The chancellors of all four campuses updated the regents on the extensive plans and protocols in place to welcome students, faculty and staff back for what will be a very different fall semester due to the pandemic. Additionally, the chancellors addressed employee concerns, which include an increased need for childcare and scheduling flexibility.

Emphasizing health and safety, the detailed fall return plans are posted on the campus websites:
CU Boulder: https://www.colorado.edu/roadmap/[3] UCCS: https://returnto.uccs.edu/[4] CU Denver: https://www.ucdenver.edu/safe-return-to-campus-fall-2020[5] CU Anschutz: https://www.cuanschutz.edu/coronavirus/return-to-campus[6]
"I think it's important to note this isn't an exact science," Board of Regents Chair Glen Gallegos said. "I'm proud to be associated with such hardworking people who are working to open our university so that students can continue their education."

CU President Mark Kennedy echoed this sentiment. "People up and down the organization have invested great effort to make sure we're ready to come back for fall. There are a lot of extra expenses associated with these efforts that we are not passing onto our students," he said.

CU Boulder

Noting that plans for reopening CU Boulder "have continued to evolve as we've gained experience and capabilities," Chancellor Phil DiStefano kicked off the presentations joined by CU Boulder Associate Professor Matt McQueen, who serves as director of the Epidemiology Laboratory and is part of the team advising the chancellor on COVID-19 safety. Citing close collaboration with the greater Boulder community, McQueen outlined the four pillars on which the campus' fall plan is built: testing, response, environmental controls and behavior. First year students begin moving to campus next week and must provide proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test or undergo testing before moving in. "We know we'll have positive tests as we return to campus," DiStefano said. "In fact, because our testing capabilities exceed those of the community, we will be discovering asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic carriers. And that's a good thing because it will allow us to prevent the spread of disease."

DiStefano went on to cite the different factors he and other campus leaders will closely monitor – including infection rates, hospital capacities and campus density – to determine the best course of action as the semester unfolds. CU Boulder will make this data publicly available via a newly-developed dashboard on the campus website to foster transparency.

CU Denver

CU Denver Chancellor Michelle Marks noted that students have already begun returning to campus for the fall semester. "It's a different experience than we're used to, but it's still a very exciting time, especially for first-time undergraduates and graduate students who are starting new programs," she said. Acknowledging the challenges associated with directing behavior among CU Denver students – most of whom commute to campus – Marks described the public health reminders and notices that are posted on campus and will be regularly communicated to students. Additionally, students will undergo a rigorous check-in process facilitated by student ambassadors that includes daily health attestations. All CU Denver buildings will have single entry and exit points and masks will be required at all times. Efforts to de-densify the campus – Marks said no more than 500 CU Denver students are expected to be on campus at any given time this fall – include limiting the number of chairs and desks in classrooms, limiting occupancy in the Lynx Crossing residence hall to one student per room, and providing student services in-person as well as virtually.

Marks also cited plans to assist employees and students with school-aged children whose needs may include childcare, tutoring and other learning and developmental assistance.

UCCS

“Protect the Pride” is the public health campaign at UCCS, where fall classes begin on Aug. 24 and students start returning next week. “We’re actively promoting the three w’s: Wearing masks, washing hands and watching the distance,” UCCS Chancellor Venkat Reddy said. “My intention is to strictly enforce these protocols, but my hope is we don’t have to since we have a phenomenal sense of community and a lot of compassion for each other at UCCS.” Daily health surveys, masks and plexiglass barriers are some of the protective measures being taken, and scripts will be provided to faculty conducting classroom instruction to deal with potential public health guidance violations. Additionally, Reddy highlighted the campus’ partnership with an external vendor to assist with testing and contact tracing efforts. Like the other campuses, Reddy said UCCS leadership will closely monitor various sources of information – including federal, state and county mandates – should the need to develop contingency plans arise.

Reddy noted that employees who are concerned about returning to campus will be able to work with their supervisors and human resources staff to develop accommodations to the extent possible.

CU Anschutz

As the outlier of the campuses – researchers returned in mid-May and students started returning in June – CU Anschutz Medical Campus Chancellor Don Elliman noted that, like the other campuses, CU Anschutz has very strict protocols in place. “Two months into this, those protocols are largely being met. We’re seeing very good compliance with mask wearing, social distancing and the cleaning processes in place,” he said. Elliman went on to describe the campus’s internal testing and contact tracing capacity, which he anticipates increasing to up to 3,000 COVID-19 tests per week by Oct. 1 if necessary. Elliman said that since June 2, there have been 26 confirmed COVID-19 cases among faculty, students and staff but that none were believed to have been acquired on campus.

Elliman cited childcare as being a major issue campus-wide and said they’re exploring several solutions to be of more assistance to faculty, staff and students with school-aged children.

Regents Discuss, Reject Tuition Credits[7]

The CU Board of Regents voted against a resolution that would have provided a $1,000 credit on tuition for full-time students and a $500 credit on tuition for part-time students per semester for fiscal year 2020-21. It also would have resulted in more furloughs and layoffs to pay for the credit, university officials said. The resolution, presented by Regent Heidi Ganahl, lost in a five-four vote.

“We all recognize our families are hurting right now and our CU students and families are hurting,” Ganahl told the regents. “I’ve tried to come up with some potential solutions that will provide relief to families that are attending all of our campuses.”

Several of the regents who voted against the resolution said it was brought forward too hastily and that it was not fiscally prudent, given the uncertainty ahead with COVID-19 and campus reopenings.

To fund the tuition credit, Ganahl suggested the board dip into budget reserves. “I can’t think of a better reason to do it than to share the pain of our fellow students,” she said.

However, Todd Saliman, senior vice president of strategy, government relations and chief financial officer, said the cost of the resolution would be some $65 million per semester, or $130 million for the year. He also said reserves have been stressed by the response to COVID-19 and a dip in state funding.

“We think this type of budget impact will have a significant, negative effect on our ability to provide a quality academic experience, and it would also have a significant negative impact on staff and faculty morale because it would result in additional layoffs and furloughs,” Saliman said.

CU President Mark Kennedy and the chancellors also opposed the measure.

“When you combine our holding tuition flat again this year and the strong level of financial aid we provide, and the increased aid received by students in the Cares Act, inflation-adjusted, out of pocket costs for the last two years have decreased,” Kennedy said. “Students on average are paying less than they did two years ago.”

Kennedy said CU has already been making tough decisions, noting the budget took a $250 million hit, the campuses each took 10% budget cuts, the majority of CU’s workforce has taken pay cuts and furloughs, and 150 employees have been laid off.

Kennedy has also been working with the CU Foundation to provide a $5 million additional emergency financial aid to those students who face the greatest financial need. The money would be allocated to the campuses based on enrollment.

Voting in favor of the resolution were Regents Ganahl, John Carson, Sue Sharkey and Chance Hill. Chair Glen Gallegos and Regents Jack Kroll, Irene Griego, Jack Kroll and Linda Shoemaker opposed the resolution.

Board Given Update on Diversity Resolution[8]
[9]

The CU Board of Regents did not vote on a proposed resolution that had been referred to its Governance and University Affairs committees last month, noting that it was up to the committees to bring it to the full board. The proposed resolution, first brought forward by Regent Jack Kroll, called for CU to strengthen its commitment to diversity. Committee Chairs Sue Sharkey and Lesley Smith said the discussions had been fruitful and there had been great bipartisan collaboration.

President Mark Kennedy said many of the tenants of the resolution were in the diversity plan he and the chancellors presented to the board on Aug. 4.

Regent Chance Hill asked, if the resolution was in good shape, that it be voted on during the meeting. Regent Linda Shoemaker noted she did not care whether the resolution was ever voted on, she wanted to see the on-the-ground change that brings about diversity, equity and engagement. Chair Glen Gallegos said the resolution would not be voted on during the meeting.

The regent committees are considering the proposed resolution in relation to action steps Kennedy, campus chancellors and system Chief Diversity Officer Theodosia Cook detailed on Aug. 4[10]. Cook outlined additional advancements she seeks in the year ahead followed by the chancellors reporting on efforts underway on each campus. Kennedy emphasized that while progress in this area has been made, much more work remains. “We’re in this for the long haul and we are committed to success,” Kennedy said.

CU is Putting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Forefront[11]

[President Kennedy to Hold Virtual Town Hall for System Staff][12]
[13]

CU system staff are encouraged to email questions to officeofthepresident@cu.edu[14] in advance of CU President Mark Kennedy's town hall via Zoom, to be held 1-2 p.m. Monday, Aug. 17.

The town hall will comprise an overview of:
Goals for this year Diversity, equity and inclusion Plans for return to work Action items from the staff survey
Zoom link: **https://cusystem.zoom.us/j/99286032028**[15]

[Online Acceleration Committee pauses][16]
[17]

The Online Acceleration Committee (OAC) that is working to recommend a structure for CU's combined online offerings[18] for fall 2021 and beyond is pausing its work to take a deeper dive into the financial model. CU President Mark Kennedy and the four campus chancellors last week in an email told members of the OAC and its five working groups that they expect the pause to last up to six weeks.

Key findings from the recent update from the OAC's finance working group have shown that, as proposed, the financial model is not viable for the campuses or the system. The break-even point, depending on assumptions, was a minimum of six years out.

"A sustainable financial model provides the foundation for all other aspects of the initiative to flourish. We have to get it right," the president and chancellors wrote. "Finding the path to a viable model, which we continue to believe is possible, requires reexamining the underlying assumptions with fresh eyes."

The president and chancellors agreed to bring in external advisors who are deeply familiar with financing online efforts. An agreement is expected to be finalized this week. The OAC originally intended to make its structure recommendations in October. The email noted the pause should not significantly affect the target to launch the online initiative in fall 2021.

"One of the lessons learned from our Elevate project (systemwide HR platform upgrade) a few years back was that we need expertise at the table for key moments in large, systemwide initiatives, particularly projects that involve technology. This is one of those moments," the president and chancellors wrote.

EY-Parthenon, which did the first-phase assessment of CU's efforts and made operational recommendations in the current phase, will pause during the coming six weeks as well, and continue its work once their phase of the project resumes.

[Tenure List: August 2020][19]

The CU Board of Regents on Aug. 12 approved 10 appointments with tenure.

The breakdown by campus:
CU Boulder, 9 appointments with tenure. Click here [20]for the names. **UCCS**, one appointment with tenure[21].

Pac-12 Conference Postpones all Sports until Jan. 1, 2021[22]

Katie Gordon: Emotions of Returning to Campus[23]

What Makes an Excellent Online Educator? [24]

Podcast: CU Anschutz Experts Share Ups and Downs of Controlling a Pandemic [25]

UCCS Welcomes New Deans of College of Business and College of Letters, Arts and Sciences [26]

Page Leads Major Scientific Statement on Cannabis and Heart Health [27]

Buff Nation Mourns Passing of Superfan Betty Hoover [28]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/chancellors-update-regents-strict-safe-return-plans[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/bor_return2campus_feat.jpg[3] https://www.colorado.edu/roadmap/[4] https://returnto.uccs.edu/[5] https://www.ucdenver.edu/safe-return-to-campus-fall-2020[6] https://www.cuanschutz.edu/coronavirus/return-to-campus[7] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-discuss-reject-tuition-credits[8] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/board-given-update-diversity-resolution[9] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/group.jpg[10] https://president.cu.edu/statements/cus-commitment-advancing-diversity-equity-and-inclusion[11] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-putting-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-forefront[12] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/president-kennedy-hold-virtual-town-hall-system-staff[13] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/2020_email_townhall-hdr.jpg[14] mailto:officeofthepresident@cu.edu?subject=Question%20for%20Town%20Hall[15] https://cusystem.zoom.us/j/99286032028[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/online-acceleration-committee-pauses[17] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/onlineaccel_feat.jpg[18] https://www.cu.edu/all-four-cu-online/[19] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/tenure-list-august-2020[20] https://go.boarddocs.com/co/cu/Board.nsf/files/BRZR8K6CC298/$file/CUBoulder_PersonnelActions_ApptsWithTenure_Aug2020.pdf[21] https://go.boarddocs.com/co/cu/Board.nsf/files/BRCLHS53BAB9/$file/UCCS_PersonnelActions_ApptWithTenure_August2020.pdf[22] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/pac-12-conference-postpones-all-sports-until-jan-1-2021[23] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/katie-gordon-emotions-returning-campus[24] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/what-

makes-excellent-online-educator[25] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/podcast-cu-anschutz-experts-share-ups-and-downs-controlling-pandemic[26] https://connections.cu.edu/people/uccs-welcomes-new-deans-college-business-and-college-letters-arts-and-sciences[27] https://connections.cu.edu/people/page-leads-major-scientific-statement-cannabis-and-heart-health[28] https://connections.cu.edu/people/buff-nation-mourns-passing-superfan-betty-hoover