



Dear UT Community,

As the fall semester approaches, I have a feeling of déjà vu, albeit an unwelcome one. I recall last summer and winter, as we prepared to start semesters in the face of a COVID-19 virus that has an uncanny ability to time increasing threats to coincide with the academic calendar. Given the trends we're all facing, I wanted to share with you how we're approaching our fall semester plans for in-person learning and research.

We are still planning for a full return this fall.

As I have said in previous messages, the residential college experience is a big part of what makes UT such a special place. Although we face rising case counts, the availability of vaccines and robust testing mean that our fall plans remain feasible. As such, we continue to plan for teaching, learning and research in person. In the coming days, you will be hearing more from campus leaders about steps we have taken or will be taking to help reduce spread among our community while still supporting a robust, in-person environment.

We are actively monitoring the situation.

As we have done since the beginning of the pandemic, the university continues to monitor conditions. We regularly meet to review data and guidance from health experts and to discuss scenarios and contingency plans that will enable us to pivot as needed. Throughout the pandemic, UT has demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Rest assured that isn't going to change now, and if we change policies, we will communicate that information to you first.

Vaccination remains our best tool to combat COVID-19.

We made it through the past school year in the face of the pandemic, largely by

using the tools of social distancing and masking. Today, we have a far more effective tool – vaccination. Vaccines not only help stop the spread; they have also proved incredibly effective in virtually eliminating the most serious COVID health risks for most people. Utilizing key building blocks developed here on campus, vaccines remain available and accessible to every member of our community. In fact, drop-in vaccinations are open to all people 12 years and older at UT Health Austin, the university’s clinical practice. If you haven’t gotten vaccinated yet, now would be the time.

In closing, I am struck that while in some ways we’ve been here before, we are at a different stage of the pandemic now. We have the important combination of multiple effective vaccines and last year’s learnings to help us get through the coming year safely, while also providing a fantastic experience for our students and producing more research, creativity and innovation.

I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again: Something special happens when we come together on the Forty Acres to work, study, debate, research and learn. I still believe we’re through the worst of this pandemic, and I’m truly excited for our return to campus this fall.

Hook 'em,



Jay Hartzell

President

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email : Webview : Our Approach for the Fall Semester

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