



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 14, 2020

News Release

UW System announces students will return to campus in fall

Plan Ahead Team framework recommendations provide guidance to universities

MADISON, Wis.—The University of Wisconsin System will welcome students back to campus for the fall 2020 semester, UW System President Ray Cross and Regent President Andrew S. Petersen announced today.

The announcement comes as universities continue planning for the 2020-21 academic year.

“We are preparing an environment that reduces risk so that students, faculty, and staff can return to campus in person this fall,” Cross said. “We know the on-campus experience is what our students want. At the same time, we must all recognize that our universities will be different this fall than what we’re used to and there will be campus-based decisions on how to best address particular issues. But students will be back on campus this fall.”

“Our UW System universities are vitally important to our students and our communities,” Petersen said. “The Board of Regents has engaged on this issue in our meetings, and I am confident in our prudent, thoughtful approach to providing educational services this fall.”

The UW System also unveiled a series of recommendations from its Plan Ahead Team and its subteams related to the 2020-21 academic year. The recommendations from the subteams focusing on Fall 2020, Public Health, Personal Protective Equipment, and Facilities Modifications were developed with input from employee experts from across the 13-institution System. The recommendations do not include testing and tracing, a subject still under study.

Institutions are using the recommendations as guidelines for developing their own plans for the 2020-21 academic year. The Plan Ahead Team will continue to develop guidance for campuses, and the recommendations released today may change as conditions change. The recommendations reflect a point in time.

“Preparing for an in-person return to campus this fall is a tremendous undertaking, and I thank my UW System and campus colleagues, our chancellors, and the Plan Ahead Team for all of their work,” Cross said. “I especially thank our faculty and students, who made the transition to alternative instruction so meaningful. We appreciate their flexibility and understanding as we approach the fall semester.”

The recommendations include:

FALL 2020

- Maximize face-to-face instruction.
 - Identify courses that can only be taught face-to-face (for example, some lab and clinical courses) for priority access to classroom space.
 - Consider moving courses with an enrollment of approximately 50 or more fully online.
- Develop attendance policies that encourage sick students to stay home.
- Optimize classroom usage through evening and weekend classes.
- Continue at-home work opportunities and alternatives for at-risk populations.

- Identify dining and residence hall modifications.
- Determine isolation and quarantine capabilities.
- Create guidance on safe behavior in residence halls.
- Inventory technology needs with an emphasis on equity.
- Develop a plan for phased return to research activity.
- Inventory student services needs.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- Maintain social distancing.
- Emphasize staying home if sick, hand and respiratory hygiene, and wearing a mask, especially indoors.
- Consider ending in-person classes at Thanksgiving.
- Coordinate contact tracing with state and local health officials.
- Train faculty and staff on mental health issues related to the pandemic.
- Develop mental health programming.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Recommend or require face coverings.
- Provide education on the use and care of PPE.

FACILITIES MODIFICATIONS

- Create guidelines for classroom occupancy.
- Create guidelines for residence hall operations including cleaning, front desk operations, and common spaces.
- Create guidelines on workspaces, common spaces, ingress and egress.

– END –

The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 170,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. Nearly 90 percent of in-state UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System universities also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Mark Pitsch

UW System

608-265-3419

mpitsch@uwsa.edu

universityrelations@uwsa.edu