

From: [Office of the Provost](#)
To: [KU Lawrence All Staff, Faculty and Affiliates](#)
Subject: A Message to Staff: How We are Preparing for Fall
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Faculty may also find helpful information in this message to staff.

A Message to Staff: How We are Preparing for Fall

Dear Staff,

Thank you for your patience and hard work during this time of rapidly changing and unprecedented circumstances.

The Public Health Planning team continues to meet daily to review conditions, identify emerging issues, address challenges and advise leadership. In addition, two new groups are now meeting to ensure we have greater voice from a variety of stakeholders across campus, as well as input from top medical resources.

Despite all the uncertainties we face, it's clear that fall semester 2020 will not look anything like fall 2019. We are coping with the impact of COVID and learning more about steps we can take to help reduce the risk of transmission. At the same time, we are also working to ensure our students continue to identify KU as a highly desirable option for their learning, and that they are able to continue their education in a mode that works for them.

As the Chancellor and I have stated before, **staff members who can work from home should continue to work from home**. Although some student-facing positions and other service roles may require an on-campus presence, many of you can effectively work in a remote environment. Your supervisor will let you know if your position requires your presence on campus and will also let you know about any precautionary modifications to work spaces and schedules in your unit. Human Resource Management and Facilities Services will work with you and your supervisor to address your safety concerns. Several unit leaders also are developing a variety of strategies to ensure KU delivers services to students wherever they may be, while also creatively limiting the on-campus presence of staff. If you have questions about how this may affect you, please reach out to your Vice Provost or Dean.

Those who are called back to campus should know the [Protect KU Plan](#) has many elements that are designed to reduce the risk of spreading infection. The plan is a combination of actions being taken on campus and actions we need everyone on campus to take to help protect you and other members of the KU community. A few of the efforts are:

- **Daily use of the CVKey app** – The [smartphone app](#) is a means to conduct a symptom self-assessment that will offer access to campus buildings among those who report being symptom-free. The app does not share any personal data. Individuals who do not use the app will need to fill out a paper form every time they enter a campus building to show they are monitoring their personal health regularly. And if any one of us is feeling unwell, we should not come on campus.
- **The [interim pandemic mask/face covering policy](#)** – Science is showing us that wearing cloth or surgical masks properly over one’s mouth and nose helps protect those near us from the spread of respiratory infection. There were many helpful comments on the proposed policy, which will help shape the final policy to be shared soon. We also are working on ideas to remove both politics and stigma from wearing masks. Our procurement office has placed orders for thousands of cloth masks to ensure every student, staff and faculty member has access to reusable masks if they are on campus. Extras will be available in the event a member of the KU community forgets and leaves their mask at home.
- **Ready access to hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes** in offices, conference rooms and classrooms – These are simple but effective measures in killing the virus.
- **Physical distancing and de-densifying** – Facilities Services staff are working to reconfigure spaces and install signs to support physical distancing. Unit leaders are evaluating and strategically limiting on-campus, in-person service hours for a variety of student-facing offices and promoting virtual service delivery and appointments as much as possible. De-densifying will further support our ability to maintain appropriate physical distancing and reduce risk for those who must be on campus for work or study.
- **Reconfigured [academic calendar](#)** – Because travel is linked to one of the main modes of COVID-19 transmission, it will be important to continue limiting travel. A more compact academic calendar that reduces travel opportunities for students should lead to more on-campus students remaining in place throughout the semester.

These are simply a few of the solutions we have developed so far to help us protect KU and our people. [Teams across campus](#) are working on numerous other projects – [including testing](#) – and ideas to address the many concerns raised by this pandemic. As these efforts take greater shape, we will share the developments. Please let me know what your concerns and ideas are by sending an email to provost@ku.edu.

I know you are tired of waiting for a resolution to the pandemic. We continue to be in a rapidly changing environment that in many respects is controlled by entities and others outside our sphere of influence. What we can say with certainty right now is there are hundreds of KU staff and faculty who are working long hours to make sure KU is ready for you and for all the other staff, students and faculty this fall. They, as do I, care deeply about the health and wellbeing of all members of the KU community.

Respectfully,

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Barbara A. Bichelmeyer
Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

