



**Auraria Campuses Fall 2021 CEO letter**

# **Auraria Campus Envisions Full Operations For Fall 2021**

Dear Auraria Campus Community,

Our lives were upended by the COVID pandemic almost exactly 12 months ago, and since that time all of us have shown perseverance in changing the ways we learn, teach, and work.

Throughout the pandemic, we have committed to giving our Auraria community the most timely information in a transparent fashion, so you can adequately plan. In that spirit, today we are sharing our vision for the Fall 2021 semester, understanding we are still six months away and nothing is certain in these COVID times.

**We are committed to starting the fall semester on campus and with full operations** to the extent possible in an effort to maximize the student experience and student success while remaining safe. Guided by science and a commitment to equity, we are optimistic this can happen for three reasons:

- 1) the projected availability of the vaccine, for which we continue to advocate,
- 2) our extensive mitigation strategies, and
- 3) the creativity and resolve of our community.

## **Safety protocols to continue**

We know that in-person learning is best for many students and for certain subjects, and we are committed to offering a rich and engaging educational experience that is largely on campus and complemented by digital and hybrid experiences. With that said, this fall won't look exactly like past fall semesters because impacts from COVID-19 will still be with us. We'll continue to provide testing to monitor for any emerging transmission and adhere to public health guidelines.

Our highest priorities are, and must continue to be, to keep our campus community safe by following the latest science and public health guidance and supporting our students, many of whom are seeking an in-person learning experience. Evidence has shown that transmission of COVID is not happening in college classrooms and that testing and safety measures work. Vaccines are also crucial to these efforts, and we are relying on you to get vaccinated to make this vision a reality.

Despite some initial supply delays, we are hopeful that our [vaccination site at the Fifth Street Garage](#) will be operational in the weeks ahead. We will follow the state's [priority guidelines](#) for vaccine distribution and we anticipate that by this summer all students, faculty and staff within the Auraria community will be eligible for the vaccine. Our nation's infectious disease experts have become more optimistic on vaccination timelines and believe ["anybody and everybody"](#) will be able to get the COVID vaccine by this summer.

## **In-person learning improves equity**

The pandemic's mental health impact has been significant, and isolation has prevented some opportunities to foster the profound learning experiences that are a hallmark of higher education. For

us, optimizing the campus experience is also an equity issue. We know that the pandemic has disproportionately affected low-income and underrepresented communities—across work and wage loss, health impacts, and bigger disruptions to their education. Without an increase in in-person classes, this equity gap will continue to widen.

Moving ahead, we must be comfortable with some degree of uncertainty. We can't stand by until we have all the answers because returning to broader in-person learning requires months of planning. We have a vision, but that could change depending on any number of factors, and we will be ready if that happens.

We understand you have many questions on how this will impact you. We will continue to engage and inform the campus community frequently over the next several weeks and months as planning accelerates and vaccine distribution plans are solidified. We are in this together, and we need your support, participation, and creative ideas to make our return to in-person operations a success and advance us well into the future.

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