

Q&A: Campus Safety with Vice Chancellor Gary Matthews

UC San Diego's fall plan is continually evolving, informed by the university's [Return to Learn](#) program. We invited students, faculty and staff to submit their questions about what personal protective equipment will be available, how classrooms and other spaces are being sanitized, ways that water and ventilation systems are being upgraded, and more.

To address several of these important topics, we spoke with Gary Matthews, Vice Chancellor of Resource Management and Planning.

Q. What should all faculty, staff and students know about campus safety guidelines?

A. All UC San Diego faculty, staff and students who are planning to come on campus must complete a daily [COVID-19 symptom and exposure screening](#). In addition, everyone must wear a mask at all times when outdoors as well as indoors, with the exception of when an individual is in their residence, alone in a private office, or when eating or drinking in a break space with proper physical distancing. This guidance is available on the [Campus Safety website](#).

The campus community will see signs across campus to help understand physical distancing guidelines as well. A distance of six feet must be maintained; where possible, seating locations are being repositioned to accommodate this. There may only be one person in an elevator at a time. We are also placing more signage at the perimeter of the campus to ensure everyone who arrives will learn about these campus safety guidelines.

[Learn more about campus safety requirements.](#)



Q. How will physical distancing be implemented in classrooms?

A. We are working very closely with Academic Affairs and the Registrar's Office, and they have given us a list of classrooms that they intend to use during the fall quarter. With that, we have been able to identify room capacities; each will have no more than 50 people. Classroom seating distances will be identified, providing appropriate physical spacing for the given room, with a minimum of six feet around each seat.

In those classrooms and lecture halls that only have one entrance, we are going to ask people to wait until the classroom is empty before they enter. We are working with Academic Affairs on protocols for effectively entering and exiting classrooms.

Q. How will classrooms be disinfected?

A. Facilities Management has been working closely with other large educational and research facilities to ensure we are using the latest cleaning technologies that will provide the most efficient and effective cleaning and disinfecting possible within our campus learning spaces, including classrooms, lecture halls, and auditoriums, among others. We have purchased electric disinfectant sprayers that will allow quick and thorough disinfecting of these spaces between regular daily cleanings. These daily cleanings involve a deep cleaning of the entire space, including disinfecting of all touch points, including chairs, desktops, podiums, doors and handles and other frequently touched fixtures. Disinfecting wipes will also be provided in all classrooms and lecture halls along with hand sanitizing dispensers at all building entrances.

Q. Will there be an option to hold classes outside?

A. Yes, we've begun to identify locations that could serve as outdoor classroom and study space. The more we learn about the SARS-CoV-2 virus, we find that transmission can happen through aerosols, which are less of a problem outdoors. We've begun to coordinate with IT services to assess the Wi-Fi capabilities to make sure there is connectivity. We are also looking at electrical requirements as well as tent and shade structures to further support a high level of comfort and accessibility.

Q. How are ventilation and water systems being cleaned and upgraded?

A. Facilities Management has a comprehensive preventative maintenance program to ensure our buildings' air handling systems are cleaned, disinfected and well maintained. About 90% of campus heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in core funded buildings have been upgraded to MERV 14 or higher filters, which essentially mimics a hospital environment. The remaining 10% of buildings that are too small to fit the larger MERV 14 filters are typically equipped with MERV 8 or 11 filters.

We have also removed after-hours and nighttime schedules on HVAC systems to ensure maximum fresh air circulation 24/7. And whereas many modern buildings use a combination of outside fresh air and recycled indoor air, we are no longer doing that—all buildings will have 100% outside fresh air. Fan speeds have been increased to ensure continued fresh air circulation throughout all our facilities. Machine rooms are also disinfected to ensure a sanitary environment for circulating air.

Facilities Management also has a comprehensive water treatment program to ensure our plumbing and water in all of our closed loop systems is sanitized, cleaned and treated regularly. Our basins and sinks have all been sanitized and will continue to be sanitized as we go forward. Our team is frequently flushing domestic water systems. Water fountains are currently banned from use.

Q. What new sanitizing protocols have you developed for the campus?

A. Facilities Management has increased daily cleaning services, and is working to establish a dedicated sanitation team that will increase this frequency to twice daily. Current efforts include providing:

- Sanitizing stations at all entrances and exits to major buildings.
- Daily disinfection of all building common surfaces and area touch points such as entrance doors and handles, lobby and interior elevator buttons, water fountains and more. COVID-19 Disinfection Guidance can be found [here](#).
- Daily restroom sanitation for all campus core buildings, continuing to service high volume restrooms more frequently. Restroom capacity will be limited by the number of sinks. Restroom doors will be left open, where possible, throughout the day.
- In the process of installing hands-free access doors at building main entry points; researching options for foot and forearm door openers and retrofitting all remaining exterior Big Belly trash and recycling containers to include foot operated opening devices.
- Protective barriers in all campus shuttles, as well as regular cleaning of shuttle surfaces, parking pay stations and elevator controls.

In addition, an in-house COVID-19 cleaning team provides rapid response disinfectant cleaning for campus areas where an individual has reported symptoms or has tested positive and has been working on-site within the last 72 hours. The rapid response program is focused on research and academic buildings, including faculty and administrative offices. Residence halls, student centers and recreation areas all have their own approaches. [Sanitation services can be requested here](#).

Q. How can the campus community access personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks?

A. UC San Diego's Emergency Operations Center, in collaboration with Procurement and Facilities Management, will provide a one-time "Welcome Kit" to all returning departments so that they are able to meet the required sanitation and health protocols. The kits include operational PPE for research

units, an allotment of reusable face masks and hand sanitizer for all returning employees, as well as self-cleaning supplies to enable those returning to clean their workspaces on a daily basis. [A one-time initial supply kit can be requested here.](#)

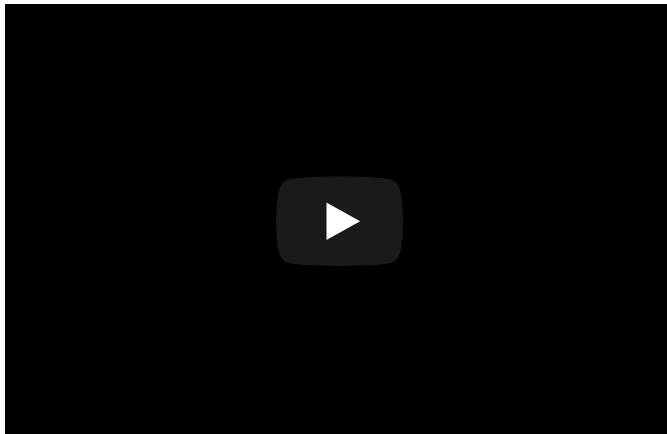
Throughout the year, community service officers, residential security officers and campus police officers will have masks available for faculty, staff and students if they need them. There will also be masks available for purchase at the UC San Diego Bookstore.

Q. How can the campus community do their part to promote safety?

A. We are asking for community support in promoting safety because it has to be a community effort. We have established mechanisms for faculty, staff and students to report violations—particularly recurring—of masking and physical distancing rules on campus. This can be done anonymously and confidentially. If you see something, you should say something. Reports can be made to EH&S at (858) 534-3660 or online at the [Safety Concerns page](#). Noncompliance can also be reported anonymously via the UC Whistleblower Hotline at (800) 403-4744 or on the [University of California Whistleblower Hotline page](#).

Our goal is to educate rather than enforce. Those who repeatedly do not comply with campus safety protocols may be referred to Student Conduct, Academic Personnel or Human Resources and potentially face disciplinary action. However, this is the absolute last resort. Whether they are coming to campus or visiting another location in the city, these new habits should become routine behaviors at any location. UC San Diego will remain safe if everyone supports the guidelines.

Have more questions? We invite the campus community to [submit your inquiries online](#). A new Q&A with a Return to Learn expert will be published each Thursday in This Week @ UC San Diego for the next several weeks.



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