

Q&A: Fall Student Life

UC San Diego's fall plan continues to evolve, informed by the university's [Return to Learn](#) program. We invited students, faculty and staff to submit their questions about what Triton Weeks of Welcome events are happening, how to get involved in student organizations and recreation activities, undergraduate research opportunities available and more.

To address these important topics, we spoke with Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Retention and Success Maruth Figueroa and Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Life Patricia Mahaffey.



Q. Are student organizations or sorority and fraternity life going to be active this fall?

Mahaffey: Yes, UC San Diego has about 600 student organizations that have been working diligently over the summer to pivot their activities and meetings to virtual format. We are even looking into planning a virtual fair to mimic tabling on Library Walk. New students will receive a “Get Involved” brochure with details about how to get connected to hundreds of student organizations. Also, students can [learn more about sorority and fraternity life online here](#).

Q. Will there be study areas available on campus?

Mahaffey: All of our decisions are based on the San Diego County public health orders. Currently, the Triton Lounge, a computer lab, is open in Price Center. Our focus is primarily on leveraging the campus's outdoor spaces, including the new patio outside the Dirty Birds restaurant, which will open this fall. There is also a patio on the east side of Tapioca Express (which will feature new fire pits and seating areas). Many of the restaurants in the Price Center and Student Center are open for take-out. We will be encouraging students to gather outside—with physical distancing and face coverings—in their study and social groups.

Q. What is planned for Welcome Week?

Mahaffey: This fall we will host [Triton Weeks of Welcome](#), also known as TWOW from Sept. 19 through Aug. 4. Chat rooms will be available that will resemble what our human kiosk program was last year. This will be a way for new and continuing students to jump into a remote space, ask a question and get an answer from a staff member.

On Sept. 25, a [free event series held on weekends called Triton Fest](#) will kick off virtually. Then on Sept. 29, the New Student Welcome Convocation will be held, the inaugural academic virtual event for the fall. All college orientations will happen online; more information is available on each college website.

Our [Virtual Student Union](#) is also a great place to learn about what's happening on campus. You can find activities related to being active, getting creative, promoting wellness as well as simply connecting socially. For example, you can find out about [undergraduate colleges virtual programming](#), [join an ESports team](#) through Recreation, or [tune into a virtual performance art event](#) through ArtPower.

Q. Will student success and academic programs offer remote advising?

Figuroa: Yes, all of our programs in Student Retention and Success are open virtually. For example, students can make a one-on-one virtual appointment with a [Student Success Coach](#). These professional staff members help students set goals, think about how to maximize their strengths and learn about resources available. Students can also speak with a peer coach, who is a current undergraduate student that is dedicated to supporting first-year students in their transition to UC San Diego. College academic advisors are also available to meet with students regarding general education requirements. Students can use the [Virtual Advising Center](#) to contact and communicate with their college's academic advisor.

The Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS) also offers remote career peer consultations. These are one-on-one meetings that students schedule with peer leaders to talk about resume building, internships, interview tactics and networking. These meetings are open to all students. Other opportunities include [peer coaching for transfer students](#) through the Triton Transfer Hub, as well as mentorship programs for students who are first-generation.

In addition, the Teaching + Learning Commons also provides a wide range of [live tutoring online](#), held in 30-minute sessions with one to two students. [Supplemental instruction and study groups](#) will also continue to be held remotely. All sessions are facilitated by peer student leaders who have already successfully completed these courses at UC San Diego or received community college credit for a similar course. Real-time [writing consultations](#) are also offered online for undergraduate and graduate students.

Q. Will athletic competition happen, and are there ways to get involved in intramurals or Recreation classes?

Mahaffey: Fall [sports competition will be postponed](#) through the end of the calendar year, as determined by the Big West Conference Board of Directors. However, Recreation has launched an online “[Playground](#)” where all campus community members can dance, meditate, compete in ESports, learn to draw and more through free virtual classes. In addition, tennis courts, fields and Triton Track & Field are now available to students and members from the same household for informal recreation only, and Canyonview Pool is open for lane reservations. [Learn more about the status of Recreation facilities here.](#)

Q. Will there be any small in-person events held?

Mahaffey: Currently, [no in-person events will happen on campus](#) through Dec. 31, 2020. We went from a very in-person centered world to suddenly a remote world, and in the end, I think we're going to land someplace in the middle. We are learning that there are a lot of benefits to the online environment for student engagement and interaction, but we also want to have that in-person world back in our lives again. We want to capitalize on both.

Q. Will there be an opportunity for students to work on campus or conduct faculty-mentored research?

Figueroa: Yes, [Academic Enrichment Programs](#) is currently offering one-on-one consultations to discuss research opportunities and how to get involved as well as scholarships and fellowships. In addition, students can complete a short [online course to learn more about undergraduate research](#) opportunities. Applications for the [Faculty Mentor Program](#) will open soon. This program offers students of all majors a chance to build valuable relationships with UC San Diego faculty, develop research skills and envision a future in graduate or professional school.

Q. Will the Basic Needs Center and Triton Food Pantry remain open?

Mahaffey: The [Basic Needs Hub](#) has been open throughout the pandemic, offering window services for both pantry items and personal hygiene. Additionally, we have opened a second pantry in the Grad and Family housing area. All current UC San Diego undergraduate and graduate students can utilize the service. The Triton Food Pantry has transitioned to a window-style, pick-up service until further notice; [appointments to pick up food can be made here.](#)

At the food pantry, a variety of dried goods, canned goods, and fresh produce are available to students. Items are assigned a point value and any registered student is able to pick up 10 points worth of food per week. A [mobile food pantry](#) has also been launched. Students can schedule a pick-up at a location nearest to them (La Jolla or Hillcrest) and receive a pre-packaged bag of food.

Q. Do you have suggestions on how new students can meet people?

Mahaffey: Yes, the same advice I would give to a student in a year that didn't have a pandemic. Get engaged, try new things, visit organizations and programs that seem of interest to you. Student organizations are all eagerly hoping new and continuing students will engage virtually and they have been planning a lot of fascinating programs.

Figueroa: I would encourage students to utilize virtual faculty office hours, attend student organization general body meetings remotely as well as connect with peers in their classes within the first few sessions. Also, social media is a great way to find out about what's happening and meet new people. We want to make sure that students have access to as many opportunities as they can, even when taking classes remotely.

*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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