

RETURNING TO CAMPUS IN FALL 2020:

# Implementing Recommendations for a Safe Return

Safe Return Team

June 3, 2020

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## Summary

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The University of Colorado Denver is preparing for a safe and gradual return to campus in the next few months. Our goal is to ensure the safety of our campus while providing a wide variety of options for members of our community, especially the most vulnerable among us.

### The Three Elements of Our Safe Return Plan



#### Protecting Our Campus Community

The safety of our community is the most important aspect of our return plan. CU Denver is committed to being a public health-informed campus with established safety protocols that comply with federal, state, and local guidelines. We are working closely with our campus partners to ensure consistency across the Auraria campus.

We are establishing baseline health and safety protocols and procedures now, and we will slowly begin allowing the return of faculty and staff research and creative activities over the summer. For now, faculty and staff should continue to work from home, unless they are considered critical personnel or are part of an approved application to return to research and creative activities on campus. This will allow us to launch, evaluate, and improve basic safety protocols as we slowly scale up in preparation for the beginning of the fall semester. Some of the activities that we will be undertaking this summer include:

- Assessing building safety issues such as ventilation, traffic flow, revised building and room capacity, entry and exit points, and making improvements where needed
- Developing pre-return online safety trainings for faculty, staff, and students
- Developing daily health assessments required for entry to campus
- Implementing basic safety measures such as physical distancing, wearing masks, handwashing, and regular cleaning and disinfecting of spaces and surfaces

We are committed to closely monitoring federal, state, and local guidelines throughout the summer and fall, and adjusting our safety practices as needed.

## **Providing Flexible Ways of Learning**

One of CU Denver’s greatest strengths is the vibrant diversity of our students, staff, and faculty. We have always strived to provide multiple learning options to meet the wide variety of student needs, and COVID-19 provides an opportunity for us to take this approach to the next level.

For some types of classes, such as labs, studios, and performance classes, there is no substitute for in-person hands-on learning. We also know that some classes benefit from high levels of structure and student attention, including introductory English and math classes and so-called “gateway” courses. Finally, certain types of student groups benefit from in-person interaction, such as students new to CU Denver, international students, students in senior seminars and capstones, and University Honors and Leadership students. We will prioritize on-campus learning for these types of learning environments.

In order to follow public health and safety guidelines, we anticipate that the impact of COVID-19 will require us to limit the overall number of people on campus at any one time. We also understand that many students may have circumstances that prevent them from regularly coming to campus, or may not be able to return to campus at all. We must also be extremely mindful of the possibility that the severity of the pandemic may increase prior to the end of 2020 and be prepared to reduce the number of people on campus as needed.

Expanding the flexibility of our course offerings makes sense now. We will be offering more courses online and remotely, and in formats that may combine on-campus sessions with a variety of online and remote formats. Our faculty will identify the teaching approaches that best serve their students and courses and fit in with the safety requirements for the spaces on campus. Our goal is to offer multiple high-quality courses that allow all students to determine how to access their courses this fall, based on their own circumstances and comfort level. We are working hard to finalize course formats, locations, and scheduling decisions by early July, so students can adjust their own schedules if needed well before the start of the fall semester.

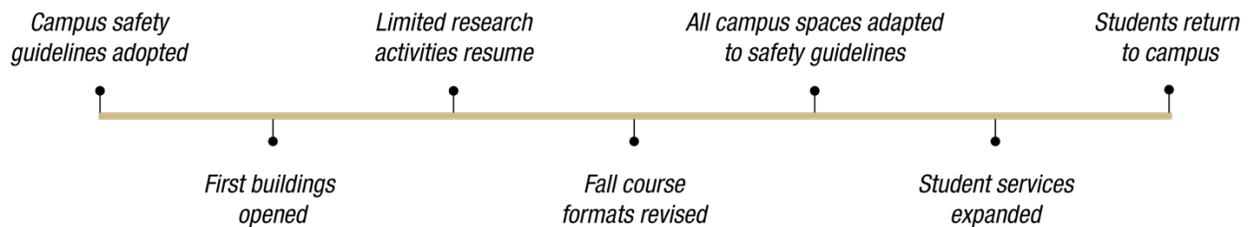
## **Promoting Student Success**

Finally, we are committed to proactively supporting student success as our students navigate these challenging times.

We know that many students are facing job loss or uncertainty, and we have decided that there will be no increase in tuition for the 2020-21 academic year. As we expand the ways in which we deliver classes, we will also be realigning student services to make sure all students have access to important offerings such as advising, tutoring, career services, and mental health counseling.

We will be providing protected spaces on campus for students who need to physically access CU Denver computers and internet services. Spaces such as the Auraria Library and the Rob and Lola Salazar Student Wellness Center will start opening in a limited way consistent with public health guidelines.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that we will be opening the Lynx Crossing residence hall this fall, with safety measures in place that allow students to live at Lynx Crossing while still adhering to physical distancing and room occupancy limits.



Of course, there are many unknowns, and we understand that we need to be ready to adapt if our circumstances change. Our Safe Return Implementation Plan is designed to allow the university to expand campus access if public health guidelines allow, or return to remote operations if the public health situation requires it. We will also be asking for input from faculty, staff, and students as our planning progresses over the summer.

The rest of this Implementation Plan provides more details about the work of the Safe Return Team. As more decisions are made, we will post them on the Safe Return website.

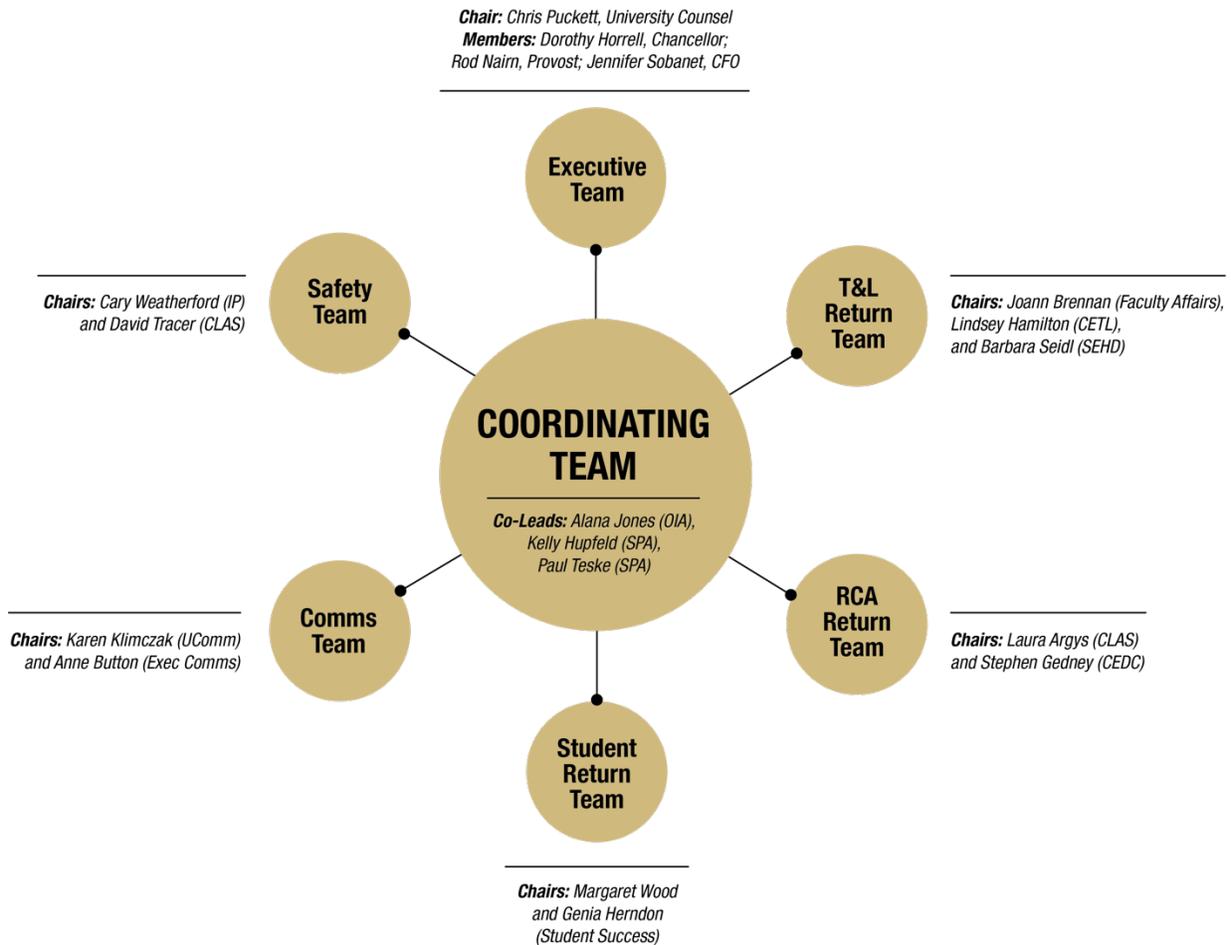
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# The Work of the Safe Return Team

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The Safe Return Team was formed after the Safe Return Planning Team issued recommendations on May 13 about CU Denver’s options for returning to campus. The Safe Return Planning Team process convened nearly one hundred CU Denver faculty members, staff members, administrators, and students in April and May as it considered how best CU Denver might prepare for fall 2020.

The Safe Return Team is comprised of similar broad-based representation from the CU Denver community. It includes a central Coordinating Team and six teams focused on specific areas for implementation.



Each school and college has a Safe Return Coordinator in charge of implementation for their school and college, with the help of a Research and Creative Activities Return Coordinator and Return Committee, a Teaching and Learning Return Coordinator, and a Student Return Coordinator. These school and college representatives are included on the appropriate Safe Return teams.

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# Implementing Overall Health and Safety Measures

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The Safety Team is in charge of implementing the health and safety procedures that will be in effect across the CU Denver campus. It will work closely with the other teams to ensure that appropriate health and safety measures are in place in returning classrooms, research labs, studio spaces, and university offices.

## 1 SETTING HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

The Safety Team will use the recommendations of the Planning Team to establish overall campus safety requirements, which will be consistent with federal and state public health guidelines and may evolve as those guidelines change. Under current circumstances, these health and safety requirements will be in effect for all CU Denver faculty, staff, and students on campus:



All faculty, staff, and students who may be returning to campus must take an online training on COVID-19 health and safety measures.



Anyone returning to campus must have a daily health screening.



People who have COVID-19 symptoms or who have been exposed to others with COVID-19 must stay home.



All persons on campus must maintain at least six feet of distance from others.



To protect others, all persons on campus must wear a face mask.



Frequent handwashing will be required.



Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of spaces and surfaces will be required.

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## 2 PREPARING BUILDINGS AND SPACES FOR RETURN TO CAMPUS

The Safety Team will plan the reopening of campus buildings and spaces to ensure all health and safety guidelines can be met. This work will include:

- Assessing all buildings scheduled for reopening for compliance with health and safety requirements
- Developing a building plan for each building that considers the intended uses of the building in providing for:
  - Approved entry and exit points
  - Traffic patterns
  - Room occupancy limits
  - Appropriate air circulation
- Making improvements to buildings as indicated by the building plan
- Consulting with academic and central support units on office safety and required improvements needed prior to return
- Ordering safety signage for reopening buildings and offices

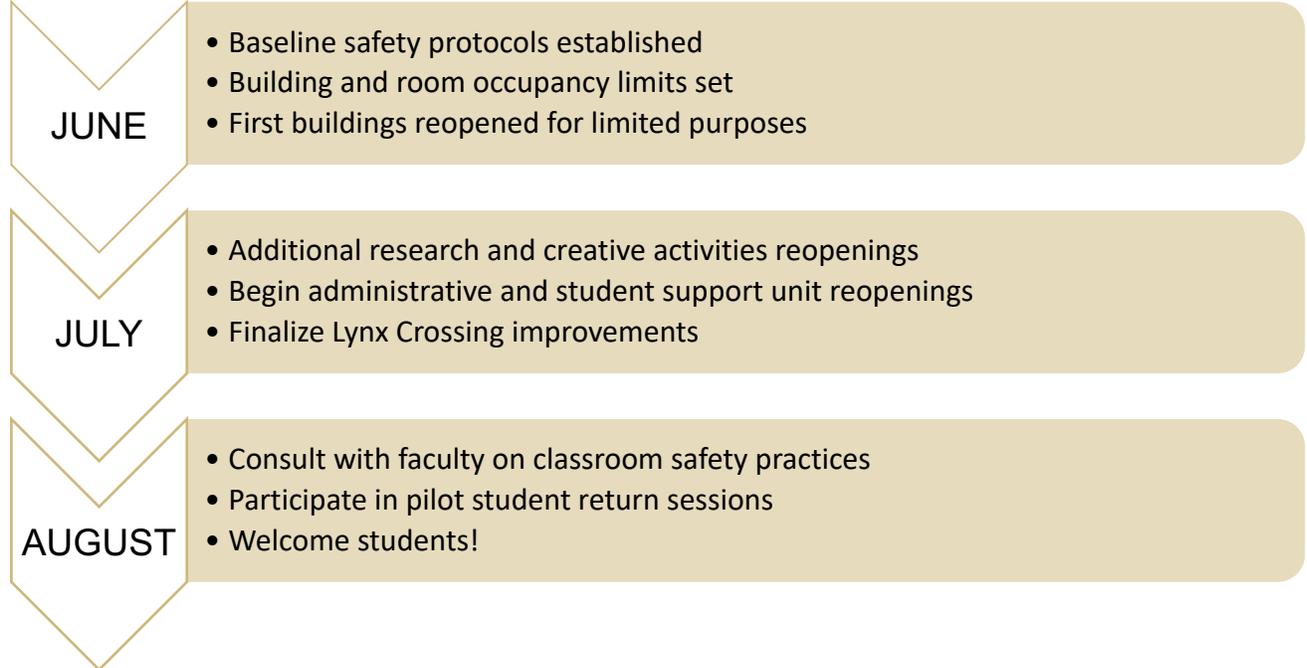
## 3 PREPARING PEOPLE FOR RETURN TO CAMPUS

The Safety Team will work closely with the Communications Team to make sure that CU Denver faculty, staff, and students understand the health and safety measures required on campus. This work will include:

- Developing an online safety training for all faculty, staff, and students returning to campus
- Launching a public health awareness campaign educating campus community members on the importance of taking steps to minimize COVID-19 transmission
- Posting traffic pattern signage and occupancy limits in buildings and classrooms
- Encouraging those returning to campus to bring their own masks and providing extra masks for those who need them

As student support and administrative offices make plans for how they will return to work, the Safety Team will consult with supervisors on office safety. These offices will be preparing unit plans over the summer showing how necessary on-campus work can be carried out in compliance with safety requirements. It is anticipated that many staff members will continue to work from home, and those who must work from home for health reasons will be accommodated.

## Safety Team Implementation Milestones



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# Implementing the Return of Research and Creative Activities

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The Research and Creative Activities (RCA) Return Team will oversee the process of a phased return of faculty and staff research and creative activities to campus over the summer. This process will occur through an application process that allows schools and colleges to determine priorities for return, as well as to develop and improve safety plans over time.

## 1 STARTING A LIMITED RETURN

Faculty and staff who want to return to research and creative activities on campus must fill out the RCA application on the Safe Return website, in the Faculty and Staff Resources section. The planned restart will begin with research and creative activities that can only progress if campus access is allowed. If the project involves a team, project leads should fill out an application on behalf of the team.

Departments and schools/colleges will then assign priority levels to the applications. The Campus RCA Return Committee will invite a limited number of applicants to return to campus based on priority determinations and space preparation. Applicants will be required to submit a more detailed safety plan prior to final approval for their return.

The Safe Return Planning Committee recommended that RCA projects more likely to be prioritized for earlier return include:

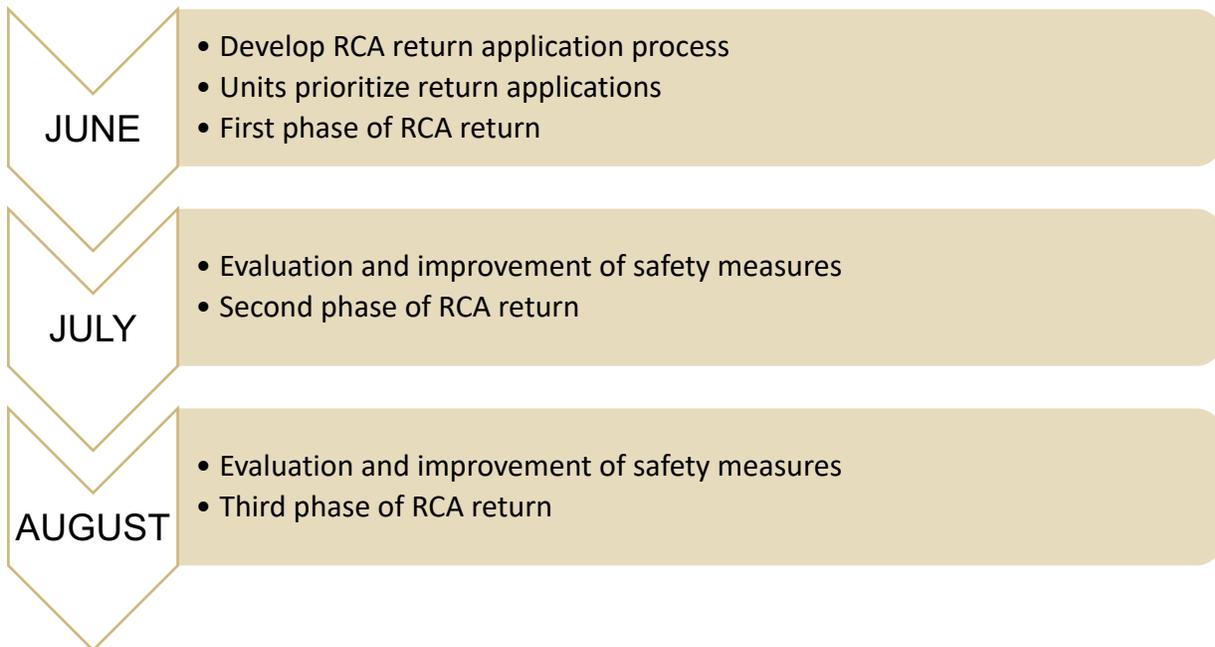
- Promising COVID-19 research and scholarly activity
- Time-critical research and creative activities
- Essential research that is critical to the clinical care and safety of patients/participants
- Those in which campus space/equipment is critical
- Those conducted by early-stage researchers
- Funded research with the following considerations:
  - Impending deadlines
  - Potential for loss of funding
  - Impact to sponsor, university, and/or community
  - Pursuit of opportunities for new or additional funding with time-critical deadlines
- Those conducted by students nearing graduation and needing to complete critical research or creative activities
- Those involving just one or two persons in a sizeable space
- Those that are more able to protect the health and safety of faculty, staff, students, and other participants
- Those that are able to demonstrate compliance with health and safety regulations and guidelines
- Those in which the cost of reducing research after it is started is relatively low (in case additional COVID-19 restrictions are imposed)

The first phase of return is estimated to allow about 10--15% of research and creative activities back on campus. The size of subsequent phases will be determined by public health guidance, but may involve the ability to reach 35-50% by the beginning of the fall semester.

## 2 EVALUATING AND IMPROVING SAFETY MEASURES

As RCA return applications are approved, school and college RCA Coordinators will be responsible for monitoring compliance with safety plans and general health and safety guidelines. The Safety Team and the RCA Return Team will share lessons learned about implementing safety guidelines and use this information to improve procedures and protocols.

### RCA Return Team Implementation Milestones



## Implementing Alternative Teaching and Learning Formats

The Teaching and Learning Return Team will prepare the campus for innovative options for course delivery in the fall 2020 semester. CU Denver is committed to delivering safe on-campus instruction for content that is best delivered in person and providing high-quality and engaging instruction in other formats in circumstances where student and faculty flexibility is paramount.

Courses at CU Denver in fall 2020 will fall into these four categories:

Course Format	Description	Example
<b>On-Campus</b>	Course is designed with the intention of being <b>taught primarily on-campus in pre-scheduled meeting patterns</b> , and may include other online/digital components.	Rafael's biology lab meets on-campus on Tuesday and Thursday. The instructor monitors the online discussion board for student questions, and gives quizzes online.  On campus classes may offer an option for students who cannot attend on campus to attend via Zoom or watch a recorded class session at their convenience.
<b>Hybrid</b>	Course is designed with the intention of being a <b>mix of pre-scheduled, live meeting patterns on campus and flexible-schedule learning in an online setting</b> .	Serena's class has weekly scheduled meetings that rotate between on campus and on Zoom. The class also has discussions, assignments, and other activities that can be accessed online at a time convenient to students.
<b>Remote</b>	Course is designed with the intention of <b>using Zoom for pre-scheduled, live meeting patterns</b> but may also include other online components. There is no on-campus instruction.	Michael's class meets on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10 a.m. via Zoom; additional learning activities are available online via the course Canvas shell.
<b>Online</b>	Course is designed primarily for <b>flexible-schedule learning in an online setting</b> . There is no on-campus instruction.	Ahmad's class does not have scheduled meeting times. Instead, students watch prerecorded lectures and engage in readings, discussions, and assignments online throughout the course of the semester. Ahmad's instructor opts to hold scheduled Zoom sessions for test reviews.

## 1 SURVEYING AND SUPPORTING FACULTY

CU Denver faculty are deeply committed to student success, and at the same time are experiencing their own stresses from the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty may be experiencing concerns about the health of loved one or their own health. Faculty who are parents are likely facing changes to their children's school schedules or child restrictions. We will be surveying our faculty at the beginning of the summer to determine their availability for on-campus instruction, their preferred course formats, and their experience with different types of course delivery techniques. Survey results will be used to create a menu of summer learning opportunities that faculty can take advantage of as they prepare for fall classes. The Teaching and Learning Return Team will also be preparing a toolkit that instructors can use to match their course's learning objectives with effective instructional techniques, regardless of the course delivery format.

## 2 PRIORITIZING ON-CAMPUS LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Faculty in the schools and colleges will immediately begin looking at courses scheduled for fall to determine which courses should be prioritized for on-campus learning. The Safe Return Planning Team recommended that schools and colleges consider prioritizing the following courses:

- Experiential learning, labs, studios, and performance classes that feature hands-on learning that is best conducted in the classroom
- First-Year Experience Courses (courses designed specifically for students new to the university)
- Senior seminars and capstones that feature group learning and typically have smaller enrollments
- Courses designed for international student cohorts and intended to feature the unique culture of higher education in the U.S.
- Challenging gateway courses where students benefit from increased attention and structure
- English and Math courses required by the CU Denver Core Curriculum
- Courses designed for University Honors and Leadership cohorts
- First-year graduate program courses in master's and doctoral programs

Each school and college will submit an application indicating the courses preferred for on-campus instruction, and CU Denver's Registrar and facilities personnel will work with the schools and colleges and the Auraria Higher Education Campus to find appropriate spaces. In many cases, courses currently scheduled on-campus should be able to continue at the same location and at the same times with appropriate safety modifications. In other cases, courses may need to be rescheduled and/or re-roomed to meet safety requirements.

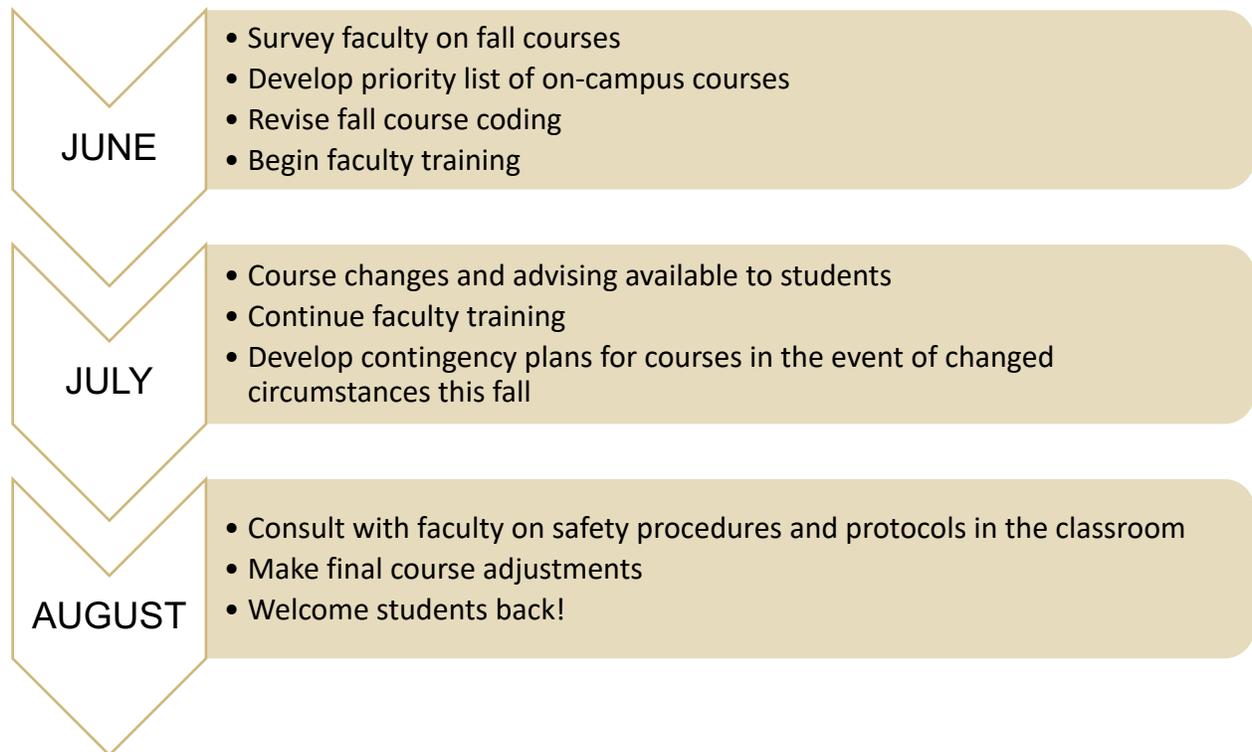
All courses offered on-campus in the fall will follow recommended safety protocols and procedures, and instructors will be prepared to offer continuity of instruction in the event that on-campus instruction becomes more restricted.

Courses previously scheduled on-campus that now need to be delivered via a remote or online format will be recoded in the course registration system. No changes are needed for courses already intended to be delivered online in fall.

### 3 COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS

We currently anticipate that this restructuring of fall courses will be completed by the end of June and that the new course information will be available to students at the beginning of July. Advisors will help students determine if any changes are needed to their fall schedules, either based on course changes or on the student’s own circumstances and comfort level with on-campus instruction. Advisors will also help students understand the benefits of each type of course format, so students can make the choices that are best for them.

#### Teaching and Learning Return Team Implementation Milestones



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# Preparing for the Return of Students

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The Student Return Team will be focused on the student experience as we prepare for the fall semester. This team will assess student needs, make sure that student support services are ready to meet the challenges of a changed learning environment, help educate students on new course formats and on-campus safety requirements, and prepare students for the logistics of the fall semester. The Student Return Team will also be involved in welcoming new residents to Lynx Crossing, CU Denver's residence hall.

## 1 SURVEY STUDENTS

Many CU Denver students are facing uncertain and stressful times. Some have lost their jobs; others are concerned about the health of their loved ones or their own health. Those who are parents are likely to be faced with changes to children's school schedules or child care restrictions. Many students rely on public transportation, which may not be fully available at the time classes start. We will be surveying our students so we can better understand the circumstances they are facing and make sure that our student support services are aligned with their needs.

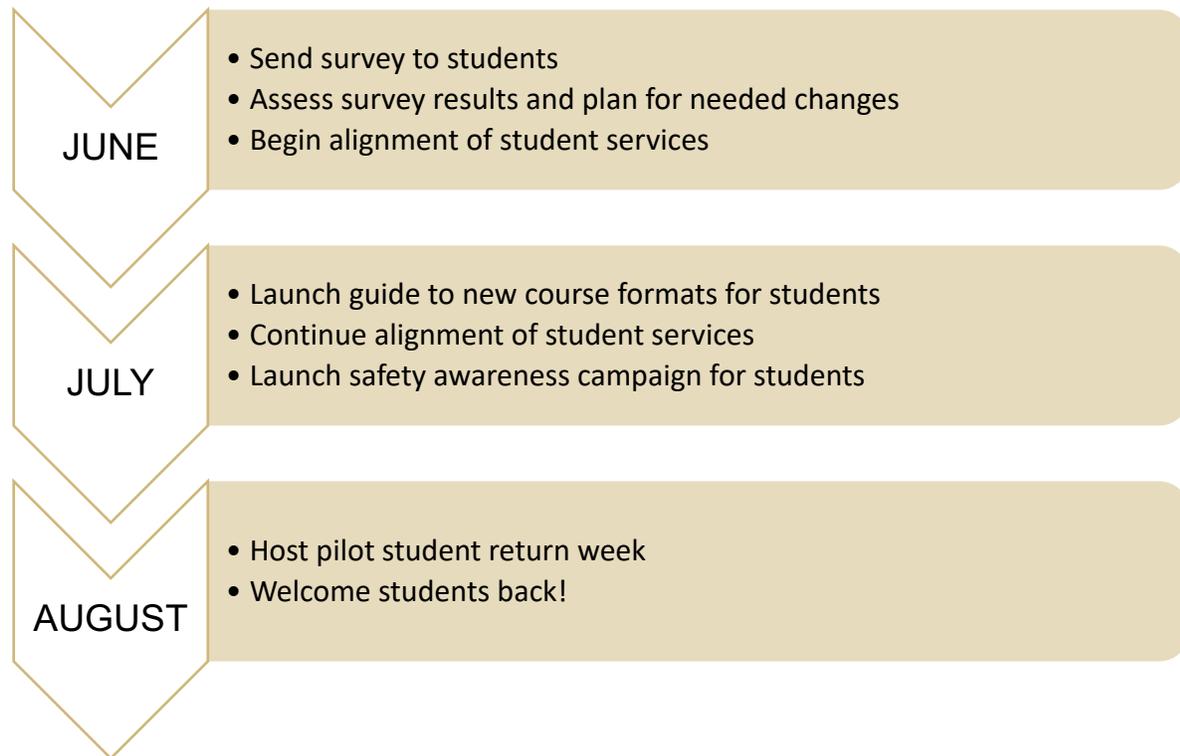
## 2 ALIGN STUDENT RESOURCES

Many of CU Denver's student support resources are primarily available on-campus. During the fall 2020 semester, support will be available for students who are taking classes remotely or online as well as students who are learning on campus. The Student Return Team will be working with student-facing units such as advising, tutoring, career services, and mental health counseling to secure virtual delivery of services for students who need them.

## 3 PILOT RETURN TO CAMPUS

Classes will be starting on August 17. The Student Return Team will lead the planning of a pilot return week, likely at the beginning of August, for students to be able to venture on campus and understand how the new safety requirements will affect them. This will give students taking on-campus and hybrid courses the opportunity to experience the new environment outside the stress of the first week of school, and will also give the university the opportunity to fine-tune safety procedures.

## Student Return Team Implementation Milestones



## Conclusion

As the saying goes, “In every crisis, there is opportunity.” For CU Denver, COVID-19 presents an opportunity for the university to become more flexible in how it meets the needs of its incredibly diverse student body. Our priority in fall 2020 is keeping our campus community safe. But another important priority is taking the lessons we have learned about flexible learning and carrying those forward to improve all aspects of the classes we offer our students.