



PROVOST AND SENIOR  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND  
STUDENT SUCCESS

Shuster Hall, Room 379  
250 Bedford Park Blvd West  
Bronx, NY 10468

Phone: 718-960-8222  
Fax: 718-960-8042  
www.lehman.edu

TO: Lehman College Community

FROM: Peter O. Nwosu   
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success

SUBJECT: Fall 2021 Reopening Plan: Provost's Message to Faculty

DATE: August 19, 2021

---

Dear Faculty—

Last week, President Delgado and Vice President Rotolo provided updates to the college on our reopening plan for Fall 2021, which begins on August 25. They also hosted another virtual [President's Live Briefing](#) to answer questions from the campus community. Those updates amplified messages from CUNY Central and addressed Lehman-specific concerns and questions as we plan our return to campus. There will be more of these updates and briefings as appropriate. This information will also be available online at [lehman.edu/returntocampus](http://lehman.edu/returntocampus). Today, I write to provide you with additional updates and expectations as we continue to plan for Fall 2021, still with a degree of uncertainty because of various unknowns about COVID-19. In the event that there is a resurgence of COVID-19 that would impact campus operations, we will respond accordingly based on policies and guidelines from the system office.

### **Instructional modality**

We continue to update our course delivery modalities, which were finalized in May, in collaboration with our school deans, department chairs, and the registrar. As of August 16, 2021, 44% of our courses are in-person and hybrid, while 56% are fully online. We will continue to make adjustments to our fall schedule until the fall term enrollment period is completed to respond to the needs of our students, instructional capacity, and to our commitment to meeting our fall enrollment goals. I have provided guidance to our deans on how best to make these adjustments.

Regarding the wearing of masks, the Chancellor recently [announced](#) a new temporary mask policy that went into effect as of Monday, August 16<sup>th</sup>. Regardless of vaccination status, everyone on campus must:

- Wear a [face mask](#) inside all CUNY campuses and office buildings. This includes while working in a non-enclosed space such as a cubicle or other open seating, regardless of physical distance from others.
- Wear a mask outdoors on campus when unable to maintain physical distance from others.

The only exceptions to wearing a mask inside are:

- If a fully vaccinated person is alone in an enclosed space such as an office, conference room, or dorm room.
- In a classroom, if a vaccinated professor is teaching a class and is able to keep social distance from everyone else in the class, he or she may choose not to wear a mask.
- Briefly while eating or drinking, provided social distancing is maintained.

Please take these few days prior to the start of the academic year to encourage students to be ready for the semester and to be aware of the steps they need to take to be fully vaccinated or COVID tested if they are taking in-person classes as well as other College resources available to them. The Chancellor will be issuing an email over the course of the next two days to students CUNY-wide providing them with important information about masking protocols, testing protocols and how FDA approval of the vaccine may have an impact on those students who remain unvaccinated but take in-person classes. Again, the latest information will be posted to [lehman.edu/returntocampus](http://lehman.edu/returntocampus).

## **Desktop computers**

We anticipate that there may be desktop computer issues since most have not been used since we left the campus many months ago. When faculty and staff turn on their desktop computer the first time, the computer may download patches and updates and this may take some time to process. If you have any such issues, please call IT at 718-960-1111. Please consider bringing your laptop, if you have one, on the first day back in the office.

## **Faculty Professional Development**

Over the course of the summer, we provided several professional development opportunities through our Office of Online Education to support faculty to become effective online instructors. This includes the in-house workshops and webinars on Blackboard basics and effective online and hybrid teaching provided by the office, the HyFlex training provided through CUNY Central, and the *Effective Online Teaching Practices*, a 25-week, 25-module course, offered fully online asynchronously through the Association for College and University Educators (ACUE).

The ACUE training, which began in September 2020, is a grant-funded initiative from a proposal submitted by the Provost's Office to CUNY and the National Association of System Heads. The training was designed to scale instructional excellence for student success by strengthening faculty expertise. Twenty-nine faculty who completed the training at the end of July each received \$1,000 and a certificate upon completing the course. The summer professional development opportunities complement similar opportunities that the Provost's Office has provided to faculty since March 2020 when the College pivoted to fully online teaching and learning. We will continue to expand these opportunities in virtual, hybrid, or in-person formats during the fall semester. Through our Office of Online Education, we will also continue to provide workshops for new and continuing students on how to navigate the online learning environment during the fall semester. We encourage faculty and students to use the following links [lehman.edu/returntocampus](http://lehman.edu/returntocampus) on our reopening plan webpage to access relevant resources to support teaching and learning.

## **HyFlex Classes**

We recognize that a number of faculty teaching via hybrid modality plan for minimal in-person presence on campus. Lehman is one of 14 CUNY Colleges that will implement HyFlex instructional modality beginning this fall. Of the 135 faculty participating, 22 are from Lehman. Vice President for Information Technology Ron Bergmann and Director of Online Education Olena Zhadko are leading this effort for Lehman. They have engaged campus stakeholders (deans, department chairs, faculty, and staff) to identify 42 classrooms that are being reconfigured for HyFlex in the fall semester. As you may know, the CUNY Board or Trustees has approved Lehman for the tech upgrade of 172 classrooms and four lecture halls. We hope to have two model classrooms that will be developed as demonstration sites during the fall semester for your review and feedback.

Through the Division of Information Technology and the Office of Online Education, we are also providing faculty with the training, tools and templates that will help them assess learning in a HyFlex environment. Lehman partnered with the School of Professional Studies and other CUNY Colleges to create the HyFlex Seminar, a professional development opportunity that engages participating faculty in exploring pedagogical and technological design choices; selecting a HyFlex model and creating a course plan; practicing teaching a Hyflex session; establishing a plan to support and guide students; and generating feedback that will contribute to promising practices for HyFlex teaching and learning for the University.

Through this collaborative work, CUNY has agreed on a working definition for HyFlex as follows: "A HyFlex course gives students the ability to choose to attend class sessions either face-to-face or online (e.g., synchronous, asynchronous). The number of modalities available to students will vary from course to course. Students can move among available modalities from class session to session at their discretion." Currently, the University Registrar is working on the architecture to tag courses in CUNYFirst with a HyFlex course attribute. In addition to the searchable course attribute, a CUNYFirst course note will share the working HyFlex definition, highlight the flexibility of HyFlex courses, and encourage students to contact faculty for more information about their specific course. Students have the option to choose, from section-to-section, which modality they wish to engage in. As we continue to plan for HyFlex instructional modality, please note that HyFlex courses should not be taught in any other classroom except in rooms configured with the baseline HyFlex technology.

## Classroom/Building Safety Protocols

As you know, the Vice President for Administration and Finance Rene Rotolo and her team have spent the last several months working on safety protocols for our classrooms and buildings. In addition to these protocols, I want to inform faculty of the following additional points and requirements when in the classrooms:

- Students may not enter the building until approximately 5-10 minutes before class begins. This will enable students to exit the building before the next class enters, limiting density in the hallways.
- Students will not be permitted to remain in the hallways before or after class. Students must exit the building after their classes end.
- To decrease density in the hallways and stairwells, the College has designated certain stairways as “Up” and others as “Down.” The College expects all faculty and students to adhere to these parameters.
- Bathrooms will be designated as single occupancy or multiple but will have reduced occupancy based upon reduced density. There will be signage to let faculty and students know the occupancy of each space. In the bathrooms, hand blowers should not be used, rather faculty and students should use hand towels.
- The Facilities office has been locating portable HEPA filters which have been placed in various classrooms on campus. These units are sized for the specific purpose/room where they are located and we ask that they should not be removed from the location where they are placed. For any additional information regarding how to use the equipment, please contact Facilities - email [Robin.Auchincloss@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:Robin.Auchincloss@lehman.cuny.edu)
- Please email the Director of Campus Planning & Facilities, Robin Auchincloss with concerns or needs. [Robin.Auchincloss@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:Robin.Auchincloss@lehman.cuny.edu) and at any time, feel free to directly email VP Rotolo at [rene.rotolo@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:rene.rotolo@lehman.cuny.edu) with any questions, concerns or issues.

## Shared Spaces

Our reopening plan requires that single occupancy rooms that serve as shared office/shared spaces (e.g. where multiple faculty, not just adjuncts, share an office or space, not be shared- which means that there needs to be staggered occupancy (i.e. sign-ups for the spaces). I appreciate that some faculty who are teaching entirely online may *want* access to their space; however, in an effort to minimize density on campus this semester, we recommend that the shared offices be utilized only by the faculty who will be teaching via in-person or hybrid modality. In the event that a faculty teaching fully online plans to access the shared space, we ask that the faculty contact Facilities. Email [Robin.Auchincloss@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:Robin.Auchincloss@lehman.cuny.edu) to make arrangements.

## Mandatory Testing, Flexible Work Guidelines, and Remote Work Request

We ask all faculty and staff to upload their vaccination or testing information in CUNYfirst to have access to the College. (For a guide to submitting your information to CUNYfirst, please visit [here](#) or [watch this video](#).)

CUNY has informed us that the only employees exempt from mandatory COVID-19 testing are those who upload vaccination verification in CUNYfirst and those who have a 100% Remote Work Agreement. If a faculty is teaching 100% remote for the fall semester but has not reported this in the Vaccination Verification system, the faculty member will receive a message from CUNY that they are in the mandatory COVID-19 testing pool. In addition, employees who have a 100% Remote Work Agreement have to upload proof of vaccination when the remote work agreement expires otherwise their names will be added to the testing pool. A faculty member teaching 100% remote may choose to upload other proof of teaching remotely such as *an online course syllabus or assignment confirmation* in CUNYfirst *for the purpose of being excluded from the testing pool*. Thus, all full-time and part-time faculty who are teaching entirely online for the fall semester are advised to upload a [100% Remote Work Agreement](#) to the CUNYfirst Vaccination Verification site or upload other proof that they are teaching 100% remotely for the fall semester. For additional information, visit [CUNY's Return to Work FAQs](#) or if you have additional questions regarding vaccination and testing, please contact VP Dawn Morgan at [DAWN.EWING-MORGAN@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:DAWN.EWING-MORGAN@lehman.cuny.edu). Also, all faculty should have entered their vaccination information or requested an exemption on the CUNYfirst vaccination site. When you come to campus, please bring your physical or digital (Lehman 360) ID card. All who enter the campus will be asked to swipe-in. Since there may be lines at the beginning of the semester, we are asking students, faculty, and staff to arrive earlier than usual as we adapt to the new procedures.

**Conclusion**

These are particularly challenging and stressful times and I encourage the campus community to treat each other with respect. This is a once in a lifetime virus and we have had no playbook to follow because the virus keeps changing form, the rules keep changing, and we keep making necessary adjustments as we learn more. I join President Delgado in expressing deep appreciation to every member of the campus community for the work that has been going on in the last several months to prepare for Fall 2021. It does take a village, and our deans, chairs, faculty, staff, labor, administration, and CUNY Central have worked hard to get us here. Much work remains and we will continue to provide updates to the campus community as we learn new information.

Thank you and remain well and stay safe.