

From: Suresh V. Garimella
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021
Subject: Message to UVM Students – Welcome Back!



The University
of Vermont

UVM FORWARD

AUGUST 25, 2021

Dear Students,

As we welcome you back to UVM, we are pleased to report that we expect to have the largest first-year class ever! These talented new Catamounts come from more corners of the country than any previous class. Our commitment to student access and affordability remains strong with tuition frozen at the same amount for a third consecutive year. Classes are in-person and there are many opportunities for students to explore their academic passions with faculty, professional advisors and peers.

The response of our students to UVM's vaccine requirement has also been exceptional. Last week, we reached our goal of 100% of the undergraduate student population vaccinated or granted an approved exemption. And we are working with a small number of graduate students and non-degree students to finalize their compliance. Currently, the overall vaccination rate for all students is 99.6%, with just over 1% of students who have received an approved exemption for medical or religious reasons. We have also shared the [expectation](#) with faculty and staff that they be vaccinated, and VT Department of Health data suggest that over 90% of our faculty and staff are vaccinated. Your commitment to your own health and wellbeing and that of the other members of the UVM community is outstanding. Thank you!

Importantly, though, the vaccines do not prevent us from contracting COVID-19. Vaccines do, however, dramatically reduce symptoms and severity of illness. We will likely see COVID-19 cases this fall among our students, faculty and staff, especially at the start of the semester. Students will arrive from across the US and around the world. That is why UVM has asked students to take a pre-arrival test, and then all students will be tested as they arrive ([on "Day Zero"](#)), before their first day of class.

We will continue to offer testing free of charge on campus at the Davis Center throughout the semester. Testing Center hours and other helpful information is available [here](#). To avail of free covid testing, it is required that you [schedule the test using the CoVerified](#) app. Students with approved exemptions are required to test every seven days.

At this time, we are confident that UVM's very high rate of vaccinations requires no additional restrictions for our campus beyond the requirement that everyone be masked while indoors except when students are in their own residence hall rooms. There are no restrictions on the number of people present at indoor or

outdoor activities; programs and events will occur as scheduled; and we can once again cheer for our Catamount athletes at games and matches!

As we return to a more traditional campus experience, we offer some advice as there remains uncertainty about COVID-19:

- While you are not required to wear masks outdoors, you may consider doing so in crowded areas.
- Masks are not required indoors at restaurants and other businesses in the Burlington area, but consider wearing a mask.
- Think before attending gatherings where you don't know if everyone is vaccinated.
- Before traveling this fall, consider how essential your trip is, especially if you are traveling to areas with higher rates of COVID-19.
- Get a COVID-19 test to make sure you are not putting others at risk.

As always, you have the most power to limit your risk and to keep yourself healthy—all of UVM is counting on everyone to do.

The past 18 months have been challenging, yet our students, faculty and staff have been resilient, engaged and committed to our success as a community. We are excited to welcome you back, and confident that your personal commitment and dedication to keeping our Catamount family safe will be sustained and enhanced this fall. We are **One UVM!**

Suresh V. Garimella, President
Patricia A. Prelock, Provost & Senior Vice President



The University of Vermont
194 South Prospect Street | Burlington, Vermont 05401 | (802) 656-3131