



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Office of the President™

April 29, 2020

Dear Texas Tech University Community,

We have now been away from our campus for more than a month, working and learning remotely while we focus on the health and safety of all members of our community. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered much of our daily lives, yet I continue to witness acts of great compassion and generosity throughout our University community and our hometown. Along with our fellow Texas Tech University System institutions, we have answered the call to serve our community and state through the increased testing capabilities of our campus labs, providing PPE and emergency housing assistance to frontline healthcare workers, and serving as members of local and state task forces.

You may have seen the [recent announcement that Texas Tech University graduates](#) are among the most sought after in the country, according to a national survey of corporate recruiters. This poll of corporate recruiters ranked Texas Tech ninth in the nation and first in the state of Texas with the best-trained, educated, and able-to-succeed graduates, citing their preparedness and work ethic. This speaks to the quality and the culture of a Texas Tech University educational experience that reflects the personal connections between our students, faculty, and staff. What has traditionally distinguished Texas Tech graduates cannot be replaced by remote learning.

So, today, I want to inform you that we intend to safely resume in-person teaching, learning, and residential life for the fall 2020 semester using a phased return approach. This decision is predicated on the fact that COVID-19 cases in the City of Lubbock continue to decline and that health officials advise us that it is possible to implement a return-to-campus process in a manner that protects the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff.

We need to recognize that campus life will be different when we return in the fall. Over the last few weeks, we have been closely monitoring the national landscape while several groups have been developing and analyzing various scenarios to bring our students, faculty, and staff back to campus. Social distancing and safety protocols will be critical as we return to our classrooms, labs, and residence halls. Our plans will also include recommendations regarding the use of protective masks, testing and contact-tracing, and other tools. We are developing several ways to reduce the density of groups in our student facilities, large lecture-based classrooms, and our popular campus areas. These same plans extend to special events, including athletics.

We will need to be flexible in considering the special circumstances of various units on campus, recognizing that strategies for fall instruction will involve a blend of online and face-to-face classes for some students. We will also take extra precautions to protect the most vulnerable among us, especially those with ailments that heighten the risks of the most severe COVID-19 cases. There will be inconveniences, but they will be necessary for us to get back to our campus, colleagues, and friends in a safe and responsible way.

Though the Texas Tech University System remains in [Phase IV, Closed Campus Operational Phase](#) through May, Texas Tech University will be announcing plans for a phased return to campus in the coming weeks for some faculty and staff. For instance, we are developing plans for a return to an on-campus research presence as soon as we can assure the safe operation of both building support services and critical research support services. As previously announced Summer Session I will be fully online, but if conditions permit, we may provide some face-to-face instruction in Summer II. We will make a final decision on Summer II instruction by late May. The phased return to campus during the summer months will allow us the opportunity to test the protocols and policies that will guide the re-opening of campus in the fall.

I know many of you will have questions about the logistics of how a return to campus will ensure, to the greatest extent possible, a safe environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors on our campus. As we continue to work through this planning, we will provide additional communications with more details in a timely manner.

As I have said many times, I am incredibly proud of our Texas Tech family. Your hard work and diligence over the last several weeks will help make our safe return to campus possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lawrence Schovanec". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lawrence Schovanec
President
Texas Tech University