



## Fall Semester

Last week, we kicked off the fall semester here at CSU. While fall semester normally brings excitement, energy, and optimism, this semester has been a little different. The current COVID environment has our fall semester looking anything but normal.

Over the summer, many of our teams worked diligently with campus partners to ensure we could welcome back our students to Ft. Collins and in-person learning. In fact, we believe we are one of the top land-grant institutions in delivery of in-person or hybrid instruction. You can read about some of the efforts that our teams played a prominent role in this [SOURCE Article](#).

During this first week of classes, I've had the opportunity to get out on campus and see first-hand how our strategies are working. I'm happy to report that I've been very impressed with what I've seen so far. We have buildings with new entry/exit paths, students returning to campus, and familiar coffee shops adjusting to new business workflows.

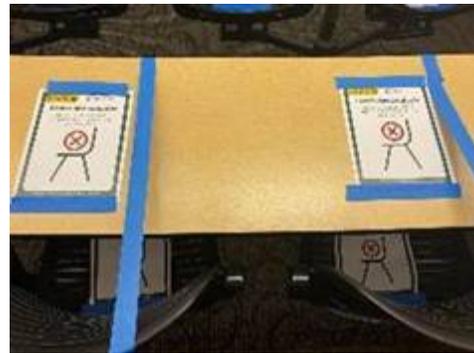
About two-thirds of CSU classes have an in-person component, thanks to dedicated teamwork

27 Aug. 2020  
By Jeff Doherty





One class that Jamie McCue and I visited, Intro to Environmental Issues, transformed the classroom of 105 seats into a 54-student hybrid course where 18 students were in-person and 36 joined via Zoom. It was amazing to watch Prof. Addy Elliott engage with her in-person and online students seamlessly all while wearing a face shield, organizing a seating chart, and taking time at the beginning and end of class to have students wipe down their areas with disinfectant wipes.



We've also seen other faculty members be creative as they take their classes outside as a way to reduce COVID risk. In each that we saw, students and faculty were wearing face coverings, maintaining social distancing, and following guidelines.



Some additional positive data points that we are starting to see are:

- Enrollment numbers are currently down -3.6%. We were projecting to be down -8% in undergrad and -5% in graduate. CSU Online is reporting being +8% from this time last year.
- We administered 4,900 COVID tests the week before classes began. We saw only 5 positive results from this round of testing and 4 were asymptomatic students. We are also doing early detection on wastewater in facilities on campus.
- Our campus has some of the [world's best researchers](#) advising us on how to adapt to the COVID crisis including testing.

Now, we don't want to paint an unrealistic picture. We know that we aren't out of the woods yet. We've all seen many stories of college campuses across the country dealing with various serious COVID outbreaks that are altering their planning efforts.

It's impossible to say with certainty that we know what lies ahead. We continue to be at the mercy of the virus, and it will dictate our future directions as it has on many other campuses across the nation.

What we can do though, is to continue to think strategically, work closely with our campus

partners, spend time analyzing future scenarios, and adjust our course depending on those scenarios. Through all of this, we continue to encourage everyone to extend grace and patience to those around us.

It's through this hard work and effort that I hope you join me in finding a new kind of excitement, energy, and optimism for our fall semester... albeit a bit different than normal.

Take care of yourselves and be well,

-Brandon

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Brandon'. The signature is stylized, with a large, bold 'B' and a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.