

*This message is being sent on behalf of UW-Eau Claire, UW-River Falls and UW-Stout.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Friday, June 5, 2020**

**UW-Eau Claire, UW-River Falls, UW-Stout welcome students back to campus for fall semester**

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, UW-River Falls and UW-Stout announced they will welcome students to campus for the fall semester.

All three universities, which completed their respective spring semesters using alternative delivery methods due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are putting comprehensive safety plans in place to allow faculty, staff and students to return to campus.

The leadership teams from the universities collaborated and shared expertise to create plans that address the dynamic situation brought on by the global pandemic.

“In-person engagement is crucial to a transformative educational experience, and we are pleased our comprehensive planning efforts will enable us to welcome students back to campus this fall,” UW-Eau Claire Chancellor James Schmidt said. “The safety of our faculty, staff and students at UW-Eau Claire is our No. 1 priority, and UW-Stout and UW-River Falls have the same goals for their campuses.

“Working together, with a common goal to support higher education and our communities in western Wisconsin, allowed us to focus and deliver strong safety plans for each campus in a short period of time.”

All three campuses will implement health and safety measures that include physical distancing and the use of masks.

“As Wisconsin’s polytechnic university, it is tremendously important to us that our students are able to be on campus this fall and to ensure applied learning opportunities continue regardless of instructional delivery method,” said UW-Stout Chancellor Katherine Frank. “Much of our learning is hands-on, and includes the use of laboratories, studios, and related facilities. We have worked for months to plan for our fall opening to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and visitors while remaining true to our mission.”

At UW-Stout, density studies have been completed for all classrooms, laboratories and studio spaces to ensure students and instructors can maintain safe physical distancing. Plans are being put in place for additional equipment and technology in learning spaces to support effective and safe instruction. UW-Stout students will experience a combination of face to face, hybrid and online learning in the fall.

“UW-River Falls prides itself on student engagement and experiential learning, so we are prioritizing delivery of in-person instruction to the extent possible, while ensuring we mitigate risks to our students, employees and community,” said UW-River Falls Chancellor Dean Van Galen. “We are grateful for our strong relationship with our Public Health directors and are closely following their guidance regarding all measures being taken.”

UW-River Falls has a strong history of effective engagement of students in its academic programs and will continue this commitment in fall 2020. Classes will be delivered via a mix of in-person, alternative or online delivery, and blended modes. The method of instruction for each class will be determined based on instructor input on course content to ensure meaningful student experiences as well as factors of health risks and space availability. Students on campus can expect to see changes such as revised classroom occupancy limits; increased cleaning, sanitation and hygiene protocols; and communications regarding best practices and expectations.

All three campuses are consulting with local health officials to establish plans for testing symptomatic students and using long-established contact-tracing protocols in place for managing communicable diseases. Testing and tracing protocols will continue to be refined during the summer in consultation with health partners and the UW System.

University housing will be available to students at all three campuses. UW-Eau Claire and UW-River Falls begin classes Sept. 2 and UW-Stout's classes begin Sept. 9.

