Dear Admitted Students,

Welcome to UCI Law! We’re writing to update you on UCI Law’s planning for J.D. courses in the fall 2021 semester.

As Vice Dean Whytock announced during Admitted Students Week, UCI Law is planning for in-person instruction in fall 2021. This is consistent with the University of California’s system-wide and UCI’s campus-wide plans for in-person instruction starting in fall 2021.

Our plans—like all law schools’ plans—necessarily depend on the public health situation at the start of the fall semester, and are therefore subject to change. In particular, our plans assume high vaccination rates and relaxation of the capacity limits and physical distancing requirements that so far have limited the ability of law schools to offer in-person instruction during the pandemic.

Based on recent trends, we expect those assumptions to be met. The public health situation in California has been improving. Earlier this month, Orange County’s color-coded risk level moved from the Red Tier (Substantial Risk) to the Orange Tier (Moderate Risk), and the California government recently announced the state’s plans to “fully open” by June 15. In addition, every Californian 16 and up is now eligible for vaccination. The White House announced last week that by April 19, 90% of adults in the U.S. will be eligible for vaccination and 90% will have a vaccination site within 5 miles of where they live. We will have backup plans to help ensure the continuity of your legal education even if the public health situation does not allow fully in-person instruction. Those backup plans may include mixed-mode, hybrid, or remote instruction to the extent needed to comply with official public health guidance.

May I participate remotely in in-person courses?

Once the UCI campus returns to in-person instruction, we do not expect an ongoing option to participate remotely. We anticipate that UCI will be expecting all students to come to campus to attend any in-person components of their courses. UCI has indicated that it is developing an exception process and corresponding accommodations for students who are required to participate remotely for certain health reasons. We will share updates about possible accommodations as we receive them.

Should I live on or near the UCI campus?

Given the University of California’s plans for primarily in-person instruction, we believe it is advisable to secure housing on or near campus. On the one hand, we acknowledge there is some risk that after moving to campus, the public health situation may deteriorate, forcing UCI to curtail in-person instruction. On the other hand, without planning ahead, there is a risk of being unable to find affordable housing within commuting distance of the UCI campus before the start of the fall 2021 semester. We therefore encourage you not to delay exploring housing options near campus.

We also encourage you to consider taking advantage of the UCI Student Housing guarantee for new graduate students. Living on campus, you will be closer not only to the School of Law, but also to classmates, campus amenities like the Anteater Recreation Center, and extracurricular activities. All of
this suggests that campus housing may be a good choice for many UCI Law students. **If you are interested in student housing, be sure to meet the deadlines that UCI Student Housing has provided on their website.** Bear in mind that the graduate housing guarantee is only available for students moving in at the beginning of the fall semester.

If after reviewing UCI Student Housing’s website you still have questions, please contact Dean Cristina Gapasin Tortal (cgapasin@law.uci.edu).

*What public health measures will be in effect on the UCI campus in fall 2021?*

Public health measures are determined by the State of California, Orange County, the University of California, and UCI public health officials. Although fall 2021 measures have not yet been announced, we think it is likely that some current measures may remain in effect, such as face coverings, daily symptom checks, and asymptomatic testing. We expect campus officials to announce updated public health measures by the end of the summer.

*How can I obtain my COVID-19 vaccine?*

We urge you to carefully [read the April 14 vaccine update](mailto:send to UCI students by Dr. Willie L. Banks (UCI’s Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs) and Dr. Albert Chang (Medical Director of UCI’s Student Health Center).

**The update strongly encourages UCI students to get vaccinated.** It also provides information about state and national resources for finding clinics, pharmacies and other distribution sites that offer COVID-19 vaccines, and links to FAQs about the vaccine. As UCI Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Hal Stern has put it: “**The more of us who are vaccinated, the quicker the campus can safely return to an in person environment.**”

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We hope this update answers some of your questions. We acknowledge that many questions remain and that there will continue to be uncertainties about what public health conditions will exist when the fall semester begins. As the semester approaches, we will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates.

We are so proud of how the UCI Law community has navigated the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We wish you the very best for the summer, and hope to welcome you to UCI Law in person this fall!

L. Song Richardson
Dean

Christopher A. Whytock
Vice Dean