



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**GUND INSTITUTE**  
FOR ENVIRONMENT

## Return to Farrell Hall Update #1

July 17, 2020

Dear Farrell Hall residents,

UVM will be open for on-campus work and instruction in Fall 2020, and so will Farrell Hall. I'm sure you are wondering how we will open and operate our new space, so I want to give you an update and ask for input (see survey link below).

Bottom line: UVM will keep Farrell closed until mid-August, and we currently **plan to re-occupy it August 24.**

Our overall goal is to provide a productive place to work, facilitate enriching collaborations, and advance the Gund Institute's mission while keeping our community healthy. In other words, we aim to keep being who we are and doing what we do, but in creative new ways to keep ourselves and others safe.

Vermont's and UVM's rules are still evolving, so we will be working all summer to develop and refine our plans. But they are likely to involve many of the following elements:

1. It will always be OK to work from home. For those who want to continue doing so, we will work hard to engage and support you in Institute culture and activities.
2. We will limit the total number of people in the building at one time and reduce seating density. We intend to have only one person per office at a time (perhaps two in the largest rooms).
3. Depending on how many people want to work in Farrell (again, see survey link below), we may establish two consistent "shifts" of people, who alternate working at Farrell for a week and at home for a week. This system reduces density, eases contact tracing, and reduces transmission.
4. We will close, restrict, or carefully manage the use of public spaces. These include the coffee nook, the lunch area upstairs, lobby tables, the copy room, the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor kitchen, and bathrooms.
5. We will likely keep only the first-floor conference room open for meetings, with clear guidelines for use and sanitizing. Other conference rooms may be repurposed into offices to further reduce density.

6. Everyone will be required to check in with Nora upon arrival each day, and to wear a mask in hallways and public spaces. Visitors to Farrell Hall will be discouraged, and will have to stay in particular parts of the building.
7. We are working with UVM Facilities to ensure that Farrell's HVAC system provides safe air circulation. So far I'm impressed and encouraged, and I'm grateful that we've recently moved to a modern building!

I know, this sounds like a different Farrell Hall, but like everyone we need to make adjustments to keep ourselves safe. We will be revisiting these measures continuously and revising them as we can. I really hope our community rallies to develop new and innovative ways to build community under these new circumstances.

On that note, we are already **making several investments to improve interactions** at the Gund Institute during the pandemic.

- We will put several nice picnic tables outside to facilitate outdoor meetings.
- We are hoping to renovate the upstairs kitchen to make it more open and safer to share.
- We're investing in new technology in our conference rooms to better enable remote participation in meetings and talks.

We plan to continue a full schedule of Gund Teas, which will likely be virtual. We're also planning several [MacMillan Scholars in Residence](#), through our new virtual option. (Reminder, please continue to nominate great Tea speakers by contacting Nora.)

**We need your input to finalize our plans.** So please fill out this brief and important [survey](#) about your working plans for the Fall (max: 2 minutes). The survey also provides space to contribute any questions, reactions, or creative ideas of your own. You can always email Nora too, who's coordinating these changes.

We've also set up [a website to house updated information](#) on Gund's COVID-19 plans. Please monitor that, as well as [UVM's](#) return-to-campus website, as our move-in date gets closer.

Thanks everyone, and I hope all are healthy and enjoying some summer.

**Taylor Ricketts**

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