

UC SANTA BARBARA

[engr-staff] [all-staff] [coe-notify] A message before our return to campus

1 message

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Fri, Jan 28, 2022 at 11:06 AM



UC SANTA BARBARA College of Engineering

A message from Tresa Pollock, Interim Dean of the College of Engineering

Dear Members of the College of Engineering (COE) Community,

I hope this message finds you safe and healthy as we approach the end of the first month of the new year and quarter. In just a matter of days, our labs, classrooms, hallways, and offices will once again be filled with activity. Before all in-person teaching resumes, I wanted to commend you for your resilience and flexibility, while encouraging you to stay the course.

Our COE Covid journey has likely made us all fluctuate between hopeful, anxious, and frustrated. But I can assure you that the decision to return to in-person teaching, which was explained last Friday in a [message from Chancellor Yang](#) and again earlier this week in [a letter from the campus's COVID-19 Response Team](#), was not made in haste.

Thanks to the many proactive safety measures already in place, our campus may be one of the safest places in the county. Prior to fall, the campus ensured that the ventilation in all buildings met or exceeded state requirements. That, combined with masking and social distancing policies, led to zero cases of in-class transmission of COVID throughout the fall quarter, meaning that even if someone showed up to class with COVID, which happened nearly ninety times, the protections in place prevented it from spreading to others during class. Chemical engineering professor Todd Squires, an expert in fluid dynamics, developed a classroom COVID transmission model to assess transmission risks in all classrooms, confirming an extremely low risk of classroom transmission in the fall. Updated modeling indicates a similarly low rate of possible transmission in classrooms and offices for the rest of the quarter. To learn more about the modeling, please [click here](#).

In addition, more than 98 percent of UCSB students and nearly 95 percent of employees are fully vaccinated, and the campus is requiring all returning students to receive their booster shots by January 31. Appointments to receive them at Embarcadero Hall in Isla Vista can still be scheduled [here](#).

According to the university's [COVID-19 dashboard](#), more than 60,000 tests have been administered through the on-campus testing program since September 2021, including more than 19,000 this month alone. The weekly positivity rate is trending downward, dropping more than forty percent over the past three weeks. Of course, there will still be disruptions due to the fact that infections are still occurring throughout the county and Isla Vista, but the number of positive cases is trending in the right direction on campus, as it is

across the county.

The Academic Senate sent **a message to faculty Wednesday** that included information arranged as FAQ. New information, regarding hybrid course allowances and remote instruction for caregivers of small children, are marked in red in their message.

COE leadership will continue to be flexible with staff work schedules, maintaining the arrangements made for the fall quarter, at least through the end of winter quarter. However, please be aware that we must be able to provide all essential services associated with a full population of students and faculty being on campus.

Lastly, I encourage you to continue what you have been doing — following university guidelines, wearing masks, testing, and demonstrating mutual respect and compassion for others on campus. Let's stay the course by ensuring that each of us is doing our part to keep our community as safe as possible.

To end with some good news, I've also included several stories to showcase some of the recent awards and recognitions that our faculty have received.

Stay well, and I look forward to seeing you soon again on campus.



**Tresa Pollock, Interim Dean and Alcoa Professor of Materials
UC Santa Barbara College of Engineering**



**Kyle Lewis Appointed Felipe Chair
in Technology Management**

Christian Felipe established the chair in 2014 with a \$1 million endowment to Technology Management.



**John Bowers Elected AAAS
Fellow**

Bowers was one of six UCSB faculty elected in 2021 by the world's largest general scientific society.



**The Search for Exotic
Superconductors**

John Harter's CAREER project could have far-reaching consequences for quantum technology development.



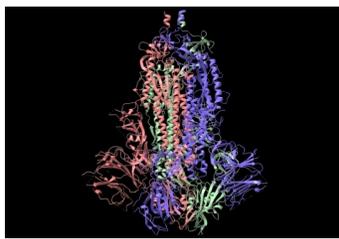
The Sodium Solution

A recipient of the NSF's Early CAREER award, Raphaële Clément will investigate new materials for sodium-ion batteries.



A Source of Friction

Materials assistant professor Angela Pitenis received an NSF Early CAREER award to study friction between soft materials.



Seeing is Believing

Support from the Beckman Foundation will allow scientists to open complex windows into complex soft and biological materials.



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