

## Welcome to the Fall 2021 Semester!

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Dear Saint Louis University community,

Welcome to the start of a new academic year! I hope each of you had a restful summer, and got a chance to recharge. We are excited to have you back on campus for a semester that looks much closer to normal than Fall of 2020.

It is inspiring to be part of a community that so fully embraced our vaccine mandate. Over 96% of SLU students, faculty, and staff are vaccinated, and this allowed us to return to a much safer campus environment. I want to thank all the staff and faculty that have worked tirelessly over the last 18 months to get us through the worst parts of the pandemic. Their efforts supporting testing, contact tracing, vaccination clinics, and other public health precautions--not to mention teaching in a less-than-optimal environment--led to our success last academic year, and have made it possible to return campus to a more normal level this academic year.

I also want to acknowledge the challenges that the pandemic has brought us, and how these might impact our students and employees returning to campus. Re-entering an in-person experience at this scale can be daunting for some, and I encourage each of you to reach out for help and support should you (or others) need it. A variety of offices around campus (such as the Dean of Students Office and the University Counseling Center, to name a few) can provide [mental health support](#) for students, or connect students with offices that provide needed support. Additionally, our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for staff and faculty to connect with a counselor at any time, day or night. They can be reached at 1-800-859-9319.

I have said in many forums recently that we are not yet back to a semester that looks like Fall 2019, but we are in a far better place than Fall 2020. I don't know when we will get back to normal, and I don't know what normal will ultimately look like. However, it is comforting to be a part of this community as we navigate the path forward together.

I look forward to seeing all of you around campus this semester.

Sincerely,

Mike Lewis, Ph.D.  
Provost