

From: Interim Dean Brad Horn

To: Spitzer Community

Date: 8/12/21

Re: Summer 2021 Update

Dear Friends,

I hope you are all well and enjoying the remaining part of the summer. Here is an update on the school, reopening, new initiatives, and leadership.

### **Reopening**

It has been a busy summer of preparing the building and coordinating with the college and university on our return this fall. Here are the latest College [reopening plan](#) and [CUNY guidance](#), which outline protocols we will be following for our return to campus. If you have not read these already, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with these sites, as all divisions on our campus are required to use them as a template. Staff and administration are scheduled to return to campus on Monday, August 16, and the fall semester will begin on Wednesday, August 25.

Chair Williamson has worked diligently to schedule classes and coordinate room assignments in compliance with the college's reopening plans. Course modalities (mostly hybrid, with some exceptions) are all finalized on CUNYfirst and mostly unchanged since registration opened in the spring. If not already listed on CUNYfirst, room assignments will be updated soon. The chair, the staff, and I feel confident that the necessary steps are being taken to prepare for a safe return to in-person and hybrid instruction this fall. Given that the status of the pandemic is evolving, and that each campus relies on the slow pace of CUNY Central and government agencies to update their plans, **it is important to remain flexible, patient, and understanding** throughout this process. As we get closer to the start of classes, please look out for communications from the Chair's Office with information about CCNY ID vaccination stickers, building hours, access, and other key information related to our return to campus.

Here are some important things to be mindful of:

**Masking Requirements:** Today, August 12<sup>th</sup>, the CUNY Chancellor issued a [mask mandate](#) stating the following: Everyone, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask inside all CUNY campuses and office buildings and wear a mask outdoors on campus when unable to maintain physical distance from others (for example, while attending a CUNY gathering). The only exception to wearing a mask inside is if a fully vaccinated person is in a classroom,

dorm room, office, or other enclosed space, or is at a workspace/desk and is socially distanced from any other occupied workspace/desk. Anyone who is not yet fully vaccinated must wear a mask indoors and outdoors at all times while on campus, including in enclosed spaces, except when eating (in which case they must maintain strict social distancing from other individuals). In summary, while many of our classrooms at SSA have the capacity to sustain social distancing, we should all anticipate wearing masks in all spaces within Spitzer this fall as an important safety protocol.

Reopening Vaccination Requirements – Faculty & Staff: Beginning on Monday, August 16, all faculty and staff entering all CUNY facilities will either have to be fully vaccinated (two weeks beyond the last vaccination shot) or have a negative COVID-19 test result from within the past seven days. Faculty and staff who are not vaccinated must schedule tests every seven days. A testing center is now available on campus where appointments can be made in advance. For more information about CUNY’s COVID-19 testing program, please see the [Testing FAQ](#). For a list of testing locations, visit [here](#).

Student Proof of Vaccination and New Deadline: Earlier this month, [CUNY extended the deadline](#) for students to provide proof of vaccination. In-person students need to share their proof of being fully vaccinated no later than September 14. In the interim, regular testing will be required, and unvaccinated students will be required to wear masks. Students seeking a vaccine exemption for religious or medical reasons must submit their request to our campus vaccination authority. Please see the [CUNY Student Vaccination](#) page for more information about this.

We receive update emails from the Chancellor each week, and will do our best to keep you informed as new information is communicated.

### **SSA Summer Update**

This summer, we have also been hard at work building upon initiatives from the spring and exploring new projects. I am excited to announce the launch of the *Faculty Technology Fellows* initiative, which aims to spotlight faculty incorporating new technologies within their research and pedagogy. Beginning in Fall 2021, fellows will be appointed by the dean in consultation with the chair, on a rotating basis, to encourage *all our faculty* to take special one-year roles to publicly share the work they are doing with new tools and equipment. Prof. Frank Melendez and Prof. Gordon Gebert are kicking off the Fall 2021 line-up by partnering to incorporate some of our new robotic tools into their respective classes. We look forward to learning from the work of their students!

The fall lecture series is shaping up, and we expect to have final dates and a poster out to the school within a few weeks. I want to thank Prof. Cesare Birignani and Prof. Vyjayanthi Rao for their hard work in developing the series. I also want to note two special events. Prof. Jerome Haferd is organizing a [Dark Matter University](#) event called *DMUxCCNY: Design Justice Teach-In*, and Venesa Alicea-Chuqui is working with the Architecture Alumni Group and our faculty on a special event to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of our Solar Roof Pod. Our gratitude goes to Jerome and Venesa. Stay tuned for dates and details in the coming weeks.

This summer, our faculty and staff met with RPNYC, the external DEI consultant who has partnered with us to help deepen our multicultural competencies and to guide meaningful conversations about equity at our school. Our next meeting will be an all-school session in the early fall dedicated to discussing our collective goals for the upcoming year. This will be an important opportunity for all voices to contribute to this vital discussion, so please look for event details in the coming weeks. In tandem with this, we will be following through with many of the JEDI committee recommendations I received last spring, including the development of communication agreements within studios and continuing the Hour SSA sessions.

Other ambitions for this year include exploring the adoption of a restorative justice model at Spitzer to address conflict and developing anti-racist pedagogy workshops. The latter will be coordinated by Marvin Cabrera, our inaugural Spitzer Mentor Fellow. I am also pleased to share that I have been meeting regularly with the Spitzer Changemaker Scholars, B Arch students Nicole Bass and Kedishia Joseph, whose agendas for implementing positive change at our school this fall are coming together remarkably. This year, Nicole, Kedishia, and Marvin will be calling upon our school community to collaborate on several important projects, so please give them your support!

### **Future Leadership**

Finally, as you know, the dean search launched in the spring, and the Dean Search Committee has been active through the summer. As part of our commitment to finding the right person, we have expanded the reach of our advertising and have encouraged the networking so crucial to identifying a good match. Our commitment to finding the right person means that the search will continue into the fall. I want to thank the committee for their dedication and time in seeing this important process through.

When I stepped out of sabbatical and into this role in December, my aim was to support the school during a challenging moment of transition. Now, as we shift into the next phase of both the dean search and our trajectory as a school, I am pleased to announce that Professor Marta Gutman will be officially taking over as Interim Dean on August 19. In addition to being an important voice in the curricular development of our school and an effective liaison between our division and college governance, and the Graduate Center, Professor Gutman has been a leader in the important work we have done to initiate conversations around DEI this past spring. She will continue to champion

that work going forward. Chair Williamson and I are bringing her up to speed on all critical matters related to reopening and school operations, and we have the utmost confidence in her leadership.

I want to thank President Boudreau and Provost Liss for their support, Chair Williamson for her partnership, generosity, and commitment to our school, and Camille Hall, Michael Miller, Hannah Borgeson and every member of our incredible staff who have been working overtime to get us through this difficult period and back to campus safely. While I will officially be returning to my sabbatical, I will remain connected throughout the reopening process, to ensure continuity and to lend my support. Additionally, we will be conducting a student town hall in the coming week to make sure there is clarity about the administrative transition and to address questions and concerns about the reopening process.

On a more personal note, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you. It has been an honor and a privilege to have served our school these nine months, and I am deeply encouraged by all that we accomplished in such a short time. While schools are driven by the ambitions of research, scholarship, and pedagogy, we are first and foremost a community of people – faculty, staff, and students – here to work together to lift each other up. Not one of us will be coming back the same person we were 18 months ago. For the process of healing to begin, and for the equity work we have initiated to produce meaningful change, we must strengthen our individual bonds with one another – in each committee and in each classroom, every day. I hope that in the time I served in this role, I was able to contribute even a small part to that effort.

My best wishes for an enjoyable rest of summer and a safe and healthy fall semester.

Thank you.

Warmly,



Brad