

**From:** [James Gaudino](#)  
**To:** [Linda Schactler](#)  
**Subject:** Wildfire and smoke update  
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Dear Colleagues,

As you know, wildfires have made this a difficult summer in the Pacific Northwest, particularly in central Washington. Fire has stopped traffic and colored the air gray. Smoke has kept us indoors and cancelled long-laid plans. The wildfires have displaced entire communities and shut down schools.

The safety of our students and employees is our highest concern and top responsibility in any emergency situation. After experiencing several summers defined by wildfire, sadly, CWU now is ready whenever wildfire strikes. Our experience and hard work will enable us to open our doors for fall quarter as scheduled.

An essential part of this readiness is managing days when the air quality is compromised. The State of Washington Department of Ecology monitors air quality through a tool that measures carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide, and particle pollution, both fine (PM 2.5) and larger (PM10), and places concentrations on a scale:

- 0-50                      Good
- 51-100                   Moderate
- 101-150                  Unhealthy for sensitive groups
- 151-200                  Unhealthy
- 201-300                  Very unhealthy
- 301-500                  Hazardous

When outside air quality on this scale registers as “unhealthy” or worse, we move events and change work and activity schedules, and we make N-95 face masks available all over campus.

CWU Environmental Health and Safety staff use the same scale when monitoring air quality inside and outside. They adjust ventilation systems accordingly to ensure good air quality in all of our buildings, especially when the air quality outside is unhealthy or worse. Their careful work is paying off. Thursday when the air quality outside was in the “very unhealthy” range, a sampling of air in our oldest and our un-airconditioned buildings showed air quality to be good: e.g. Barge Hall 14, Michaelsen/Randall 12, Sparks (residence) Hall 21. Staff will continue to monitor and maintain indoor air quality until the fire season ends.

Here are a few other notes about how we’re ensuring the success of our students and protecting our employees this fall.

**Student Success** - The Dean of Student Success has reminded students of the importance of maintaining attendance and has instructed students to notify faculty if they need to miss a class because of respiratory concerns.

**Employees** - When the air quality index is “unhealthy” or worse, employees who work

outside will wear masks and change them frequently. They'll have extended break time, and supervisors will, as needed, be able to flex work locations, hours and shifts, and check in with employees after each shift.

Many of our CWU staff are again working hand-in-hand with local emergency response agencies to meet the needs of communities and first responders, 24/7. I'm proud of and thankful for the work CWU employees are doing on campus and in the community. With your continued support and understanding, we will be ready to shepherd our students through this situation, and ensure that we all enjoy a safe and productive school year.

Sincerely,

Jim

James L. Gaudino, President