

**From:** [Summers, Greg](#)  
**Subject:** Academic Affairs Update, 06-11-20 (Fall Course Planning)  
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Colleagues,

As you saw from the chancellor's message yesterday, the university has made several decisions that will shape our continued planning for the upcoming academic year. Decisions related to instruction were based primarily on recommendations from our planning workgroups as well as guidance from UW System and local health officials. I'm writing today with additional details

I am certain the plan outlined below will not please everyone. However, these decisions represent the best efforts of the many people involved to help us fulfill our teaching and learning mission while at the same time balancing the risks involved. The safety of students, faculty, and staff members must take priority, which necessitates an abundance of caution.

- The fall semester will begin as scheduled on September 2. Classes will be taught through a mixture of in-person, hybrid, and online formats, with as much face-to-face learning as health and safety guidelines allow.
- As noted before, all in-person experiences will need to have asynchronous online alternatives for students.
  - This is necessary because on-campus residency requirements will be waived for any student who feels uncomfortable living on campus, and some may prefer distance learning.
  - In addition, students and instructors may need to quarantine during the semester, and we will need distance learning if they are unable to attend classes in person.
- All teaching and learning will move online after Thanksgiving and through Winterim.
  - Physical distancing will be difficult in the residence halls, and we know that Thanksgiving is a major travel holiday. This strategy will help to lower the associated risks.
  - In addition, given that flu season usually begins in late December through January, extending online delivery through Winterim seems prudent.
- The classroom environment will require numerous adjustments:
  - Maintaining the recommended 6 feet of physical distancing will significantly limit classroom capacity. Our colleagues in Facilities are mapping all instructional spaces using 9-foot circles (which allow 6 feet of spacing between average sized humans).
  - Given these constraints, the university will have surprisingly few classrooms that can hold more than 15 students. As a result, the DUC and other non-academic buildings will be offline for outside events for the year to allow the use of these

spaces for academic instruction.

- Face coverings will be required of all faculty, staff, and students in classrooms and other buildings. (The residence halls will be excepted.)
- Assigned seats in classrooms will be mandatory, to facilitate contact tracing.
- Cleaning supplies will be placed in each classroom for incoming students and instructors to clean spaces and equipment.
- Students, faculty, and staff will be expected to fill out a daily symptom tracker, and procedures will be in place to follow-up on positive responses.

As you might imagine, a great deal of work remains to adjust our Fall Timetable to these constraints. All classes with enrollments of 50 students or more will be moved online, but we will need help in maximizing the in-person teaching we can do in the remaining courses. We are considering several strategies, including dividing classes into smaller cohorts so that each group can have one in-person class per week and shifting some courses to evening timeslots. Although we will do our best to consider department and faculty preferences in these decisions, limitations of space and the need for consistency will inevitably constrain the available options.

Our workgroups and deans have already provided information on which courses and learning experiences should be prioritized for in-person teaching and classroom capacity. Later today, we will send a more detailed request for assistance to the deans and department chairs. Please provide whatever help they need in responding to this request.

I know that many questions and concerns remain, and this update only scratches the surface. Our hope is to finalize our fall instructional plans by June 22. In the meantime, please let me know if there are questions I can help to answer immediately.

Thanks very much.

Greg

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