May 23, 2021

To: Jason Stajich, Chair of the Riverside Division

From: Ken Baerenklau, Associate Provost
        Co-Lead of the Instructional Continuity Workgroup

Re: Remote Options in Fall 2021

Dear Professor Stajich and Members of the Executive Council:

The Instructional Continuity Workgroup (ICW) (members listed below) has deliberated over how to extend flexibility to both instructors and students who may find themselves in challenging situations in the Fall that would make it difficult for them to return to in-person teaching and learning. While both instructors and students have access to disability-related accommodation processes, we also have been concerned about individuals who would not be eligible for such accommodations but who would benefit from a more flexible transition period in the Fall. Our hope was that cases involving instructors who would find it difficult to return to in-person teaching could be addressed during the course scheduling process when departments were given "targets" for in-person instruction and department chairs had flexibility to assign remote instruction based on their assessment of departmental and instructor needs.

The workgroup also is concerned about students who would find it difficult to return to in-person learning in the Fall. Our deliberations about student access to instruction were informed both by our February student survey, in which around 20% of the approximately 4000 respondents said that returning to campus in the Fall would be difficult for them, and by questions and concerns expressed directly to workgroup members. Members brought these issues to the workgroup and framed them as questions such as:

- What should we tell students who are still feeling the impacts of the pandemic and are asking about instructional flexibility in the Fall?
- Who will make decisions about whether and how to provide flexibility?
- What specific steps/actions are needed to enable/implement this flexibility, and who will be responsible for taking these steps?

Workgroup members also were aware, from our February faculty survey, that many instructors were strongly opposed to extending the requirement in the 2020-21 Instructional Continuity Plan that all in-person instruction must have a remote option.[1] Additionally, members felt that it would not be appropriate to have such a requirement if we were returning to more "normal" campus operations due to concerns about academic freedom. However, we also knew that some faculty want to offer remote options for students, so a voluntary approach seemed best. This was communicated to department chairs and program directors in the Fall quarter scheduling guidance distributed on March 5.

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[1] For clarity, a remote option does not necessarily mean synchronous dual-mode instruction where some students attend in-person and others attend remotely. Remote options also include recording and posting lectures and other approaches that instructors might create. Page 6 of the Instructional Continuity Plan has other examples.

Workgroup members then raised the question of what should we tell students and how will students know if an instructor is willing to provide a remote option. Members were sensitive to both student and faculty points of view on this question, and wanted to find a balance between keeping students informed without creating an undue burden for faculty. The approach we started to implement involved: (1) emphasizing to students that remote options are not guaranteed and also a last resort for students facing exceptionally challenging circumstances such as economic hardship, family caregiver responsibilities, or visa processing delays; (2) emphasizing to faculty that it is their decision whether to offer a remote option; (3) utilizing the "Scheduling Notes" in Banner to document faculty decisions about offering remote options and to help preclude student requests in cases where it is already known that a remote option will not be made available; and (4) creating an intake survey for student remote option requests that would be managed by the Provost's Office – the survey would serve as a buffer between students and faculty, and the requests would be aggregated and organized by course, and shared with chairs and instructors periodically during the summer to help inform decisions. One important goal of this approach was to avoid the situation of students directly emailing instructors, which could put instructors in the position of having to adjudicate on potentially large numbers of individual student requests.

The ICW learned last week that members of CNAS Faculty Executive Committee and at least some department chairs in CNAS are strongly opposed to this approach, and feel that the plan warranted formal Senate consultation which did not happen before implementation began. So far, we have not heard similar views expressed from other colleges/schools. In addition, we know that some faculty in CNAS and in other colleges/schools are supportive of remote options.

Given the strong and divergent views of the faculty and the explicit request for this plan to be evaluated through a formal shared governance process, the ICW is turning to the Executive Council for direction on the issue of remote option policy and process for the Fall quarter. If the Senate rejects the proposed approach, we hope that an alternative approach can be provided that specifically addresses the three bulleted questions above.

Thank you very much for your partnership in navigating this unprecedented return to campus.

Instructional Continuity Workgroup Members

- Elizabeth Watkins, Provost/EVC and Professor of History (Lead, as of May 2021)
- Tom Smith, Interim Provost/EVC and Professor of Education (Lead, through April 2021)
- Ken Baerenklau, Associate Provost and Professor of Public Policy (Co-Lead)
- Shaun Bowler, Dean of the Graduate Division and Professor of Political Science
- Josh Bright, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer
- Jennifer Brown, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education and Professor of Public Policy
- Michelle Butler, Interim Director, CNAS Undergraduate Academic Advising Center
- Bracken Dailey, Registrar
- Richard Edwards, Director of the Exploration Center for Innovative Teaching & Engagement (XCITE)
- Emily Engelschall, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services
- Israel Fletes, Director of Academic Technology

- Janice Henry, CHASS Enrollment Management Support Supervisor
- Luis Huerta, President of the Associated Students of UCR
- Robin Meribeth Hungerford, Director, Residential Dining & Hospitality Services
- Rebecca Hutchins, Associate Chief Information Officer
- Samantha Jobelius-Morrison, Student Affairs Manager, Graduate School of Education
- Tiffany Kwok, Research Safety Programs Manager, Environmental Health & Safety
- Jamie Loryn Lopez, Counsel, Office of Campus Counsel
- Amanda Lucia, Chair of the Graduate Council and Associate Professor of Religious Studies
- Christopher Lynch, Dean of the Bourns College of Engineering and Professor of Mechanical Engineering
- Christine Mata, Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students
- Julia McLean, Communications and Special Projects Analyst
- Elizabeth Morrison-Banks, Associate Dean for Medical Education and Clinical Professor of Neuroscience
- Dan Ozer, Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology
- Jason Stajich, Chair of the Academic Senate and Professor of Microbiology and Plant Pathology
- Stefano Vidussi, Chair of the Committee on Educational Policy and Professor of Mathematics
- William Wang, Undergraduate Student
- John Warren, Director of News & Information
- Christiane Weirauch, Vice Chair of the Academic Senate and Professor of Entomology (member through April 2021)
- Brigham Willis, Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education and Professor of Pediatrics
- Nichi Yes, President of the Graduate Student Association and PhD Student in History

General Issues brought up by Executive Council and requests for more information before consultation can efficiently proceed. Some of the answers to these questions are known to the Instructional Continuity Working Group but are not part of the current request document which consultation will be based on. It seems clear from EC discussions that information routed to committees will need additional context.

Logistics and Principles

1. What are we trying to achieve with this remote option? Can you provide context on what we are trying to mitigate in terms of losing students.

    a. **Response**: We are trying to extend access to students who will face substantial barriers to returning to campus in the Fall for in-person instruction. Our February student survey surfaced these concerns, and members of our committee have expressed a desire to address them. Examples include international students facing visa processing delays, pandemic-induced economic hardship (e.g. a student with a location-dependent job that now helps to support family members who remain unemployed), and new caregiver responsibilities that have arisen due to the pandemic. Because Fall quarter is a transitional period for campus, we are looking for ways to offer additional flexibility to these students so they can still access instruction and continue to make progress toward their degrees.

2. Is there a target goal for number remote class options and distribution across programs?

    a. **Response:** No, there are no targets for remote options. Instead of having a distribution across programs (as we did for fully remote classes), faculty would address remote option requests on a case-by-case basis. We hope and expect that we can keep the requests relatively small in number through appropriate messaging to students.

3. What is the deadline for this consultative response?

    a. **Response:** Ideally, as soon as possible. Fall registration is open and students are choosing courses now. The instructional delivery modes available for their courses have implications for their living arrangements and employment opportunities. Given the concerns noted above, we would like students to be informed of their course options to the greatest extent possible when they register. We may miss opportunities to help students if they register before we have a remote option plan and process in place.

4. When would dept chairs and faculty be made aware of the demand in their courses?

    a. **Response:** We can provide ongoing updates throughout summer on a regular basis. Biweekly might be appropriate.

Communication
1. What have students already been told - What do students understand about remote options at this point?

    - **Response:** We have not communicated anything directly to students. However, advisors were made aware of the intake form for student requests when we sent our original message to chairs on May 10. So far, the form is still online because

we don't have an alternative plan yet, so removing the form would leave advisors with no answer for students who might ask. Some advisors have made students aware of the form, but to a very limited extent. After 12 days of registration, we have received 7 requests from 4 students.

2. What is the route students gain information about whether they can get a remote option for course(s). Student Advisors? Emails?
   - **Response:** We propose that if faculty have already made their choice, then the appropriate scheduling staff can add a brief note to the "Scheduling Notes" in Banner stating that a remote option will or will not be available. Other faculty can do this later in the summer as they make decisions. As noted above, the earlier that faculty can make this decision, the more helpful it will be to students. Alternatively, if a faculty member wants to help a small number of students who have made compelling cases but does not want to make a remote option available to everyone, then the faculty member could contact students individually using the email addresses they would receive with the student requests.

3. What are their expectations for students to these requests. Are they given the expectation that ANY class can be requested? Are they given the expectation that their remote request will certainly be fulfilled?
   - **Response:** Unless the "Scheduling Notes" are used to indicate that no remote option is available, then students likely would assume they can request it. Students are told NOT to expect that their request will be fulfilled. They are told that a request is NOT a guarantee and that departments will consider multiple factors when making these decisions. The final decision rests with the faculty member. There are differing views about this messaging – there are some concerns about creating expectations that won't/can't be fulfilled, and other concerns about sending an overly negative message to students when we know that some faculty (and in some cases entire programs) want to be flexible.

Resources

1. Is there info on the timeline for confirmation of room completion?
   a. **Response**: ITS expects that all 110 general assignment classrooms will be upgraded by Fall, but it is difficult to guarantee this because any construction project, no matter how small, can run into unexpected delays. Currently the project is on schedule. It is worth emphasizing that not all remote options require the enhanced technology. As mentioned in the May 23 memo, the Instructional Continuity Plan (page 6) elaborates on other approaches. From Fall 2020 through Summer 2021, we will have offered around 140 in-person classes. In each case, the instructor developed a remote option for students who didn't attend in-person and few (if any) of their approaches utilized the type of technology that is now being installed. Also, note that the technology will make some types of remote options much easier for faculty who choose to offer them, but it is not being installed solely because of a desire to provide remote options in the Fall. Although there are significant benefits from completing these overdue

upgrades before this particular Fall quarter, there also are long-term benefits for faculty who choose to utilize this technology in their teaching. More information about the technology is available [here](#).

2. Please clarify the role of the Technology TAs supporting the technology.
    a. **Response:** See below, adapted from the position description for the TAs:

Instructional Continuity Consultant - Position Overview and Description:

While UCR will have most of its courses returning to in-person classrooms, the continuity of instruction mission will require continuing support for certain remote courses, as well as other courses that will serve students both in person and remotely in the same course.

To meet the unique teaching challenges of the Fall 2021 Quarter, XCITE (Exploration Center for Innovative Teaching and Engagement) will be recruiting, hiring, and training a newly created 50% TAship called Instructional Continuity Consultants.

Instructional Continuity Consultant - Job Responsibilities:

As an Instructional Continuity Consultant, you will be assigned to a department and work with different instructors in a variety of instructional continuity support roles.

Anticipated roles include but are not limited to:
Assisting faculty members and other TAs with their Fall 2021 instruction needs, including in-person and on-campus remote instruction
Ensuring the quality of instruction for remote-only students
Providing guidance and assistance on best practices for remote teaching and various technology-enhanced approaches to departments, faculty, and other TAs
Attending meetings and discussion related to instructional continuity support

XCITE will provide training, support, and supervision for Instructional Continuity Consultants.

While the position will involve using certain technologies such as Canvas, Zoom, YuJa, or the monitoring and utilization of video/audio equipment in live classrooms, Information Technology Solutions (ITS) will be responsible for the proper functioning and operation of classroom technologies.

You will be expected to support more than one course as part of this position.

I was able to gather information from the websites of other campuses - but a question coming up is how does UCR's approach compare to other campuses?

> **Response:** This is good information below. One ICW member said that they are aware of similar efforts to be flexible on other UC campuses but we had not reviewed any detailed information. The ICW would be interested to hear any/all recommendations from the Senate -- whether novel or borrowed from other campuses.

UCB

https://sa.berkeley.edu/covid19/fall-2021-faqs
I'm an international student. Can I still take my classes remotely?
We know that some international students may not be able to attend in-person classes in the fall because of their inability to obtain a visa and/or enter the United States. While we are advocating for the removal of government restrictions that apply to international students, you may, in the interim, still enroll in fall courses from abroad. The majority of classes will be

offered in-person, but classes of 200 or more will be remote. Some courses will also be provided asynchronously, but in-person classes that are offered asynchronously may still require in-person attendance at the final exam. International students are encouraged to consult with their department and college as well as the Berkeley International Office to evaluate their options if they are unable to come to the United States due to travel restrictions. International students should view the latest COVID-19 updates from the Berkeley International Office (BIO) and contact BIO for additional information.

UCSD https://aps.ucsd.edu/faculty-resources/covid-19/faq.html#Fall-2021-Instruction

How will a course's modality be determined for Fall 2021?

In Fall 2021, most courses will be held only in the in-person modality. In some cases, an academic program may determine that specific remote sections will be offered to support international students whose arrival is delayed by visa or travel restrictions, or accommodate specific faculty needs. However, not every course will be offered remotely or in hybrid form. The UC San Diego advising community has collaboratively identified a list of courses that would have the most impact on the population of affected students and will share this information with academic units as a planning resource.

Will a faculty member teaching in-person in Fall 2021 be expected to also provide complete remote instruction as well?

No. While a subset of courses will have remote or hybrid offerings in order to accommodate international students whose arrival is delayed by visa or travel restrictions, most classes will be in-person only. Decisions about how to best serve affected students are up to the individual academic program. In some cases, the class may be taught as a hybrid, in others it may be split into two separate sections, each using a different modality. Students with exceptional circumstances may seek assistance through the usual processes for accommodation; faculty are familiar with providing specific arrangements for individuals in their classes

UCD - https://campusready.ucdavis.edu/students-and-families

(expecting all in person)

https://campusready.ucdavis.edu/students-and-families

- As announced in the Chancellor and Provost update, we are planning for instruction to be in-person with normal classroom occupancy. Students, faculty, and TAs should expect to participate largely or solely in-person instruction.
- Students with disabilities who wish to request an academic adjustment related to COVID-19 are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Center early to discuss accommodations.
- For international students, please see the International Student section below.

and https://www.ucdavis.edu/coronavirus/news/fall-2021-campus-planning-update-chancellor-and-provost

Instruction

Based on public health guidance and the UC Office of the President, we are planning for instruction to be in-person with normal classroom occupancy. Students, faculty, and TAs should expect to participate largely or solely in-person instruction.

Registration for continuing students begins in May. To make sure that we have adequate space for all offerings, we will place all classes (e.g., lectures, discussion, studio, performance) in a classroom. Laboratory instruction will occur in teaching laboratories at full capacity.

We recognize that some courses may need to modify their instruction modes to support students impacted by travel and visa restrictions and to accommodate specific faculty needs. We are working with the Academic Senate to establish a process for reviewing and approving such modifications, with the goal of providing more detailed process information in May. Our goal is to allow academic departments to submit such adjustments starting on July 1, 2021 — an inflection point that is late enough to ensure we have data-supported insights into public health conditions, yet early enough to afford flexibility for adjusting academic plans.

UCLA https://covid-19.ucla.edu/information-for-faculty/

Fall 2021: At this time, UCLA expects to offer close to 80% of courses in-person this fall. Large lecture classes will most likely be held remotely, with corresponding discussion sections held primarily in person.

https://covid-19.ucla.edu/ucla-return-to-campus/

With public health restrictions being rolled back and COVID-19 vaccinations continuing to progress, UCLA expects to offer a substantial in-person learning experience in the fall. At this point, campus officials hope to implement the following plan:

Close to 80% of courses would be offered in person, as well as most labs.

Large lectures would primarily be conducted remotely, with corresponding discussion sections held primarily in person.

Our expectation is that every student will receive at least some in-person instruction. For those unable return to campus at this time, there will still be a number of remote courses available to support continued progress toward their degree.

Based on public health guidance, adjustments could be made to classroom density or enrollment limits for in-person instruction. While we do not believe it will be needed, the campus will develop a contingency plan to reduce in-person learning and other activities should that become necessary.