

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE



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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0132

May 26, 2020

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Academic Senate

FROM: Lucille Chia, Chair *Lucille Chia*  
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Proposal to Extend COVID-19 Remote Instruction at UCR

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The CHASS Executive Committee discussed this proposal and submits the following comments.

1. While we recognize that there have been developments since this proposal was issued, some EC members feel that a final plan should be clearer and more precise on the dates for an extension of remote teaching, as much as this is possible. For instance, is the proposal requesting authorization for closure through the entire AY 2020-2021?

2. We are concerned about the proposal's rather vague reference to federal, state, and local standards. These standards are not always sound and constantly contested. The points that Chancellor Wilcox has made in his talks to various UCR groups, include the facts that UCR was the only UC campus **ordered** to close in late March, and that Inland Empire area have fewer medical resources for meeting the pandemic challenges than at least some other areas with UC campuses. If so, should we abide by the local standards issued by Riverside County, or by state standards? UCR needs to make a clear decision on these issues.

3. We question the proposal's apparent suggestion that staying home is going to be an advantage for enrollments. This is not the impression that EC members have, based on their own teaching experiences and talks with students in general.

Several EC members have surveyed their students, especially the undergraduates. It seems that the vast majority of the student canvassed intend to return to UCR for the Fall Quarter, even if many classes will be taught remotely. No student was happy with this, but those who have taken lecture courses that do not require hands-on experience (performance like dance, art; labs; or field work) are reluctantly accepting of remote teaching. We may add that over the course of the Spring Quarter, students became more adept at dealing with the challenges of Zoom and other ways of taking courses remotely, but this is a far cry from nearly all students and

most instructors feeling unhappy and pessimistic about continuing with this way of learning and teaching. Furthermore, several EC members noted that weaker students are the ones who are at an even greater disadvantage because of the lack of in-person contact with their instructors in class and during office hours. Not surprising, those students most vociferous in their discontent are the ones who are not on scholarship and who see no reason to pay the same fees for remote instruction as they did for in-person classes and have no access to resources on campus while it is closed.

Another group of students who may not return for remote instruction are international students, the number of whom UCR has been making strenuous efforts to grow. Many of those taking undergraduate courses are enrolled through the University Extension. The EC has noticed that while UNEX students enrolled in course for the Spring 2020 quarter have not dropped out, some of them are no longer in the local Riverside area but have returned to their home countries. Of the several international students in my course, all said that they would not return if the Fall Quarter instruction is offered remotely. Reasons for this decision include the educational expense and the arduousness of travel (assuming they are allowed to do so) and a fourteen-day quarantine upon entering the U.S. If many international students from UNEX and all the UCR schools do not return in the fall, this would have a serious impact on the school's finances.

An added issue with students taking remotely taught courses is cyber security. Even though UNEX students very recently have been given ucr.edu email accounts, they may still have difficulty logging on if they are back in their home countries that block these email accounts. In addition, instructors may be wary of putting instructional materials online that may be inadvertently distributed to non-UCR individuals, etc.

4. The EC is concerned about how the school will proceed with the evaluation of instructors by students. We are continuing to use iEval for the Spring Quarter, but is there any discussion about modifying the teaching evaluation process for next year and beyond?

We suggest that it may be very useful if, during the summer, faculty committees together with relevant administrative offices get together to examine by comparing, where possible, the iEval results for a given course taught in-person and remotely. The evaluations, especially the comments about a course taught remotely will suggest ways for instructors to improve their remote teaching, as well as ways to modify iEval or design a more effective ways for student evaluation of teaching.

5. While much of the current dialog on campus has been concerned about safe ways to resume research in STEM fields, we note that research for faculty and graduate students in the humanities and social sciences have been very seriously throttled because of the lack of access to library resources not available electronically. While a small part of this problem has been mitigated, such as the temporary access to some print materials on HathiTrust, these measures suffer from great limitations (one-day online loans, prohibition from printing more than one page, etc.). We urge the administration to allow as soon as possible ways for the UCR library to provide access to non-digital materials, such as curbside pickup (something that the University Librarian and his staff are already planning on) and possibly even limited in-person access to the libraries. We also would like to encourage the resumption of Interlibrary Loan for materials not available electronically.