


GRADUATE COUNCIL

May 27, 2020

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Jason Stajich, Chair 
Graduate Council

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

The Graduate Council reviewed the Proposal to Extend COVID-19 Remote Instruction at UCR at the committee's May 21, 2020 meeting.

The Council does not feel the language of the proposal for on campus learning addresses the mechanics of in person classes if they take place. In particular labs or performance courses where there is high likelihood of close proximity needed for instruction (e.g. equipment adjustments in an experimental laboratory, performances) are the courses which will be a priority to bring back in person first, but are also the riskiest for infection spreading.

These interactions are also more likely to be the responsibility of graduate student TAs and undergraduates who may bear more risk than faculty instructors. There could be a better explanation or assessment of the risks to be weighed and the defined benefits of offering these classes in a quarter when the incidence of COVID-19 is still high.

It was unclear from the document how consultation with Chairs will be facilitated and recorded. Is there a consistent checklist of guidelines that reflect campus legal and health safety principles?

The committee also notes that students already have a hard time getting classes they need – limiting class sizes will make it more difficult. The guiding goals and purpose for returning to on-campus instruction is not well laid out and needs to be better defined in the proposal.

Graduate Council members are concerned that the proposal presents a huge liability for faculty as the burden is shifted from the campus to departments and faculty. Is the

instructor solely responsible for enforcing health guidelines? If a student, TA, or instructor gets sick, are there legal ramifications?

Invisible labor is not mentioned in the proposal. It doubles the work of the faculty if asked to have in-person and online versions of a course, in addition to difficult health and safety decisions faculty will need to be making while in the classroom.

The proposal lacks discussion of resources and partnership regarding sanitation support. Disinfecting and sanitation requirements are not specific enough – who will be disinfecting and how often? Will additional staff be hired to do this? As written, the proposal does not assure faculty or teaching instructors enough to feel comfortable to return. As written, it almost feels like returning to campus is being discouraged.