




May 20, 2020

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Leonid Pryadko 
Committee on Library and Information Technology

Re: 19-20. CR. Proposal to Extend COVID-19 Remote Instruction at UCR

The Committee on Library and Information Technology reviewed the proposal to Extend COVID-19 Remote Instruction at UCR and note the following:

1. In our opinion, the Proposal is too ambitious in giving freedom of choice between the remote and in-person modes to both instructors/faculty and to students who take the classes:

(a) Some classes cannot be offered online. These include some group performance classes in CHASS, and some skills-based lab classes in CNAS.

(b) Some classes are difficult or impossible to offer in combined remote/in-person mode. One particular example are undergraduate lab classes which can be offered remotely via some virtual lab, be conducted as demo sessions by the TA, etc, but this would be difficult to combine with in-person labs. (This could potentially be overcome by having in-person or remote-only lab sections).

(c) Further, even regular (e.g., lecture) classes may be difficult to offer in a combined mode. The issues include additional burden on the instructor who has to provide both in-person and remote instruction, potential additional costs, e.g., to operate in-class cameras and other equipment, and equity issues between the students taking the class in-person and remotely.

2. In our opinion, a more honest option would be to acknowledge these issues and promise to go on a quarter-by-quarter basis, where each offered class would be designated for an in-person, remote-only, or combined option. The instructor for each class should be aware of the operation mode ahead of time, if only to facilitate the planning of their curriculum, exam structure, types of group work, etc. Also, this information should be available to the students in time for registration.

3. Some of the classes in item 1(a) above may be required for graduation. The departments should be encouraged to consider a possibility of temporarily reducing or waiving such requirements. However, any changes in degree requirements should go through the normal approval process (department, school executive committee, etc).

4. Switching to remote-only instruction should always remain an emergency option (in case of a worsening of the pandemic). While it is not clear how useful a partial shut-down of in-person instruction would be, such a possibility may also be considered. However, any of these possibilities should be limited to the case of an emergency, as it may be extremely challenging to switch mid-quarter from in-person to fully-online courses.

5. It may be advisable to move the Fall quarter registration deadline, e.g., to end of August, or announce the continuation of remote-only instruction for undergraduate students in the Fall.

6. Also, there is no mention of testing for COVID-19 and contact-tracing anywhere in the proposal. If the faculty teach at least part of their classes in-person in the fall, does that mean that the university will have the resources to test students/faculty/staff and contact-trace following the UCSD model? <https://coronavirus.ucsd.edu/return-to-learn/>