

Date: March 5, 2021

From: Chuck Taber, Provost and Executive Vice President

RE: Guidance on Determining Academic Instruction Mode for Fall 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Since my last [message](#) on February 24, we have heard from many of you with questions about planning for fall 2021 courses. I am writing to clarify the expectations for the mix of instructional modes for the fall to assist with your planning.

President Myers [announced](#) the plan to move to phaseout of the university's [reopening plan](#) beginning August 1. This means that we are planning for an in-person semester. Our teaching, learning, advising, and research functions will return to levels of in-person offerings that are similar to our pre-pandemic operations. I look forward to having our students, faculty, and staff back on campus.

Faculty are expected to return to in-person teaching if they were teaching in-person before the pandemic. There may be legitimate health or pedagogical reasons that a faculty member would need to adjust to a hybrid or online mode. Faculty members in this situation should consult with their department head and college dean's office for approval.

We want to ensure we are providing a diverse set of course offerings to support students in the educational experiences they seek as the threat of the pandemic lessens. The Office of the Provost will continue to monitor the overall distribution of courses by modality. We want to be clear in our instructional modes to support students in their course selection. Academic advisors will play an important role in helping students understand and choose course modes.

Faculty are no longer expected to teach in high-flex modalities, meaning simultaneous in-person and online instruction. That was a pandemic measure to support students dealing with COVID-19 impacts. I do expect faculty to work with students to support their learning if they are unable to attend class for legitimate reasons, as they always have.

Important next steps include finalizing the academic schedule and launching advising and enrollment for summer and fall. Following are important reminders:

- Faculty, departments and colleges are asked to confirm the course schedule information using the process outlined by the Registrar's Office. Please contact Kelley Brundage, University Registrar, at [kbrundage@ksu.edu](mailto:kbrundage@ksu.edu) with questions. **We need all course changes by March 12.**

- Students will have access to the course schedule on March 5 and there will be adjustments through March 12. Advisors should communicate with students during advising appointments the need to review course plans prior to enrollment.
- **Enrollment will start on March 29, one week later than usual.**

The decision to move to phaseout is based on the promising signs of lower rates of infection, a decrease in hospitalizations, and improving rates of vaccine availability and dissemination. While nothing is certain, we will proceed with our plans to return to pre-pandemic operations and adjust if needed. The principles we established in the earliest days of the pandemic remain important and will continue to guide our decision making:

- Continue to protect the health and safety of students, faculty, GTAs, staff and our communities.
- Maintain high-quality learning environments for our students.
- Balance the needs of students and faculty/GTAs.
- Be adaptable to respond to changing conditions related to COVID-19.

At this time, we anticipate that face coverings will still be required in the classroom for fall 2021. The university continues to monitor CDC, state, and local guidance.

We will provide additional information and updates regarding health and wellness guidance and protocols as they evolve over the spring and summer. Our preparations for the fall 2020 semester involved many weeks of work and it will take a similar level of effort to roll back our restrictions as warranted by changing conditions. I know you have many questions and I ask for your patience as we revisit our policies and procedures in the coming months.

The rate at which vaccinations are disseminated is an important factor in our successful return to an in-person fall semester. I urge you to register through your county of residence as well as Lafene Health Center or seek appointments for the vaccine through your local pharmacies and healthcare providers. You should receive the vaccine from the first provider that contacts you.

Please contact Karen Goos at [goos@ksu.edu](mailto:goos@ksu.edu) and Kelley Brundage at [kbrundage@ksu.edu](mailto:kbrundage@ksu.edu) for questions about course schedules. Other questions may be directed to Brian Niehoff at [niehoff@ksu.edu](mailto:niehoff@ksu.edu).

Be well.  
Chuck

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