

Date: August 6, 2021

From: Chuck Taber, Provost and Executive Vice President

To: Deans and Department Heads

RE: Guidance for Course Mode Decisions and Faculty Communications to Students for the Beginning of the Fall Semester

We will soon be welcoming students back to our campuses for an in-person fall semester. Our teaching, learning, advising, and research functions will return to levels of in-person offerings similar to our pre-pandemic operations. I am looking forward to seeing you and our faculty, staff, and students on campus and the semester in full swing.

As we entered the spring semester last January, I shared [guidance](#) for course mode decisions and communications to students. The processes for making decisions to adjust course modalities this fall remain the same as last academic year and are outlined below.

#### **Guidance for temporary shifts to online instruction**

Faculty will have the ability to temporarily adjust class modalities due to COVID-19 impact on in-person class attendance or changes in the pandemic situation. If a faculty member believes that a temporary move to fully online instruction better supports student learning, they must do the following:

- Consult with their department head to obtain approval.
- Communicate the temporary move to online instruction to the students with a clear start and end date.
- If a high isolation/quarantine rate persists after the designated end date of the temporary move to online instruction, the period may be extended with department head approval.

Department heads must do the following:

Track any approved temporary shifts to remote instruction on the reporting spreadsheet and provide the documentation to the Registrar's Office at the end of the semester. The Registrar's Office will need the course subject, course number, start and end date of temporary remote option, date of student communication, reason, approval department head name and approval date.

It is important to note that it would not be appropriate to declare the shift of an in-person class to fully online instruction for the entirety of the semester unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as a faculty member unable to teach in person. In those cases, dean and provost approval is required.

**Faculty communication to students**

I also ask all faculty to communicate with students in their courses prior to the start of the semester. This outreach can assist in confirming the instructional mode for courses, clarifying expectations, and encouraging connections. Please ask all faculty in your unit to send a message to all students, regardless of whether they are enrolled in a class meeting in-person or not, by end of business on Friday, August 20. A template with sample messages is attached.

While the university is moving to phase out and returning to more normal operations, there is no doubt that this will be another semester that requires our flexibility and resilience, I encourage us all to demonstrate care and support. Your mental health and wellness is also important, so please use the resources and individuals who are ready to help you.

Please contact Tanya González, Acting Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, [tgonzale@ksu.edu](mailto:tgonzale@ksu.edu), with any questions. We appreciate your assistance in sharing this message within your unit and encourage you to continue to share your questions and feedback as we prepare for the semester.

Thank you,  
Chuck

## Template for Faculty & GTAs

This template is to assist you in communicating with your students in preparation for the fall 2021 semester:

Dear Students,

Welcome back to K-State! We look forward to the start of the fall 2021 semester. I know we have been through a lot over the last year and a half, and we are still dealing with the pandemic. But I know we can work together to make this a great semester at K-State.

I am writing to both provide you with information that you will need, and to assure you that we remain committed to supporting you in your learning.

Our **class will meet as scheduled** (in-person, hybrid or online). OPTIONAL: Include information about any temporary remote instruction, as applicable.

As you may have heard, K-State is currently mandating face masks in all indoor areas, including classrooms. This [mask policy](#) is subject to change, but as of now we will need to wear masks during in person classes. You can find the most current information regarding university [COVID-19 guidance and protocols](#) on the COVID-19 website.

### General points that could be included:

- Students who are unable to attend class due to the need to isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 related symptoms, exposure, illness, or travel-related self-quarantine mandates (see <https://www.k-state.edu/covid-19/guidance/health/covid-19-exposure-protocol.html>) should contact the Office of Student Life, who will inform the student's instructors.
  - Manhattan campus – **Complete the form on the Office of Student Life website or contact them at 785-532-6432 or [stulife@k-state.edu](mailto:stulife@k-state.edu)**
  - Polytechnic campus – **Kyle Chamberlin at 785-826-2662 or [kchamberlin5@k-state.edu](mailto:kchamberlin5@k-state.edu)**
  - Olathe campus - **Kimberly Ramacciotti at 913-307-7313 or [kramacciotti@k-state.edu](mailto:kramacciotti@k-state.edu)**
- We remain in a challenging time. Your mental health and wellness are important. There are a number of [resources and individuals](#) who are ready to help you.