

## Questions from Provost's Office Hours

### Fall Quarter Instruction

- **What is the plan for fall quarter instruction? Will it be in-person or remote? Will dual mode instruction be required?**
  - Interim Provost Smith announced our Fall 2021 Instruction plan [here](#). UC campuses have been asked to plan for a return to primarily in-person instruction. Rising vaccination rates make us optimistic that we will be able to return, so the plan is to have around 75% in-person classes (if allowed by state and county public health rules) and 25% remote classes.
  - The 25% remote classes will include our largest classes for which we don't have space, and other classes to help accommodate instructors and students who say they will not be entirely ready to return in fall.
  - Dual mode instruction will not be required but may be offered in some cases. We are planning to upgrade classroom technology to make dual mode easier.
- **What will we do if fall quarter conditions aren't as good as currently hoped for? Is UCR planning to return to in-person instruction even if state and county public health rules prohibit such a return?**
  - Campus health and safety continues to be a top priority. No one will be required to work, teach, or learn in situations that are non-compliant with state and county rules. If needed, we will pull back from our plans for in-person and return to primarily or entirely remote.
- **What will campus policy be if faculty refuse to teach in person?**
  - Instructors who do not feel safe to teach in-person but are assigned to do so should raise their concern with their chair or director as soon as possible.
  - If the concern cannot be resolved informally at the department or program level by adjusting the teaching plan, then the instructor can request a disability-related accommodation through Disability Management ([disabilitymanagement@ucr.edu](mailto:disabilitymanagement@ucr.edu)).
- **Will all students enrolling in in-person courses or in a course with an in-person component be required to commit to attending the in-person instruction?**
  - Students enrolled in in-person classes will be expected to attend in-person unless the course offers a remote option (such as dual mode instruction).
- **What is the best way to plan for fall discussion sections? If the lecture is in person, will the discussion sections also be in person? Will there be a mix of in-person and remote students within the same discussion section?**
  - Chairs, directors, and their faculty have the discretion to choose which discussion sections will be offered in-person and which will be offered remotely. Lectures offered in-person without a remote option might have all in-person discussion sections and remote lectures, or in-person lectures offered with a remote option, might have a mix of in-person and remote discussion sections to best serve all students.
  - This also helps provide options for teaching assistants who may have different teaching preferences. It is possible, though not required, that a single in-person discussion section also offers a remote option for students.
- **Some departments work reasonably well with remote, while some departments need nearly 100% in-person teaching. Can departments collaborate with each other to reach 70-80% in-person instruction overall?**

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- Our goal is to provide a mix of in-person and remote courses to all instructors and students regardless of program. Therefore, we prefer to avoid collaborations between departments that would result in some programs being at nearly 100% in-person while others have hardly any in-person courses.
- **Will assigned seating be required in all in-person classes, as it is now? How will this be implemented and enforced? How can we reach our pedagogical goals if students cannot move around to participate in active learning, group work, lab stations, etc.?**
  - At this time, we do not know if assigned seating will still be required in fall quarter, or if there will be exceptions based on pedagogical need. We will update the campus when we know more.
- **Where will the students who are on campus for some of their in-person classes be able to set up for on-line instruction?**
  - This is one of several issues the instructional continuity workgroup is taking up. We'll identify locations for remote class participation by on-campus students and the resources needed for these spaces to be made adequate.
- **I am concerned about the proposed rule of allowing classes with fewer than 35 to be held in rooms at full capacity. How can this possibly meet the current requirements of 6 feet of physical distance?**
  - We initially tried planning for fall under the current requirement of 6 feet of physical distance, but this doesn't allow for enough in-person classes. So, we developed a plan that preserves some distancing and allows us to achieve primarily in-person instruction. Underlying our plan is an educated guess about how the public health guidance will evolve between now and the fall. If our plan proves to be consistent with the revised guidance, then we'll be able to implement it. If not, we will have to adjust. By design, our plan will help to minimize those adjustments.
- **Do we have enough larger classrooms, 80-150 seating capacity, to accommodate the plan?**
  - The Registrar's Office has been working on scheduling models since shortly after [President Drake's letter](#) was issued. We have identified which of our classes must remain online because they are too large to accommodate in any of our rooms with reduced seating density, and we have estimated the fraction of classes in different size ranges that also may have to remain online due to limited numbers of appropriately sized rooms. We used this modeling to help develop our fall instructional plan.
- **Have diversity and equity implications of the instructional plan been considered given disproportionate spread of the virus, negative outcomes, and perceptions about vaccinations based on cultural perspective?**
  - The instructional continuity workgroup is a diverse group of faculty, staff, students, and senior administrators. A wide range of perspectives, including those submitted through the campus-wide surveys, were considered when developing the plan. The workgroup is continuing to work on identifying equity issues and developing plans to address them.
- **Safety Guideline Enforcement**
- **How do we monitor building capacity, especially in hallways? What will campus policy be if a someone participating in in-person class refuses to follow COVID19 guidelines?**
  - A successful return will require everyone to be personally committed to upholding the campus health and safety standards and encouraging others to do the same. We will post signage and work to educate everyone through a positive messaging campaign, calling on everyone to help protect our community from having to return to remote operations. As is currently the case, non-compliance and other concerning incidents can

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be [reported](#) to EH&S for follow up. Non-compliance by students will be considered a violation of the UCR Standards of Conduct and subject to the conduct process. There were similar concerns going into our ramp up and partial-return activities this past year, but everyone has been very responsible and compliant with campus rules.

- **What plans are being put in place for students who do extracurricular activities? Students who are in social clubs might have parties or events which could potentially increase transmission of the virus.**
  - We will rely on both personal responsibility and a collective effort for these campus activities as well. These activities fall under the campus gatherings policy which will be reviewed and updated to be consistent with evolving state and county rules.
- **What defines an outbreak and what happens if there is one on campus? Will one case shutdown a research lab or an in-person course? What are the guidelines for determining when classes need to shift from in-person to remote instruction?**
  - Appropriate responses are case-specific and will be made by public health experts. The county would determine if we have an “outbreak” that requires a focused response, for which we have established protocols. We have had positive cases on campus, in both research labs and in-person classes, but we have not yet had to shut down a lab or course. A large campus-wide shift from in-person to remote could depend on campus and/or county-wide conditions (case rates, testing positivity rates) and guidance from public health officials. We are expecting revised CDPH higher ed guidance in the coming weeks that will shed more light on this.
- **What is the plan for contact tracing once we return to in-person teaching?**
  - The [hotlines](#) will still operate as they do now, following up on individual cases and determining how to handle each one depending on its unique circumstances. Contact tracing technically is handled by the county but UCR helps with some aspects of case investigation. We cannot compel reporting of private health information but we will urge everyone to voluntarily do so because this is one of the best ways to avoid outbreaks and major setbacks.
- **Will the campus require COVID testing for all instructional staff in direct contact with students? Will testing be available for anyone who is unable to be vaccinated?**
  - Testing guidance is evolving quickly. The CDC recently said that fully vaccinated don't need asymptomatic testing but the state and county have not yet updated their guidelines. We will continue to watch this closely and update campus practices to be consistent with state and county rules. The campus will maintain an appropriate level of testing based on county guidelines. It is likely that anyone who is not vaccinated will require regular asymptomatic testing.

### Graduate Students Teaching on Campus

- **Most labs and discussions, which are planned for normal density, are taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants. How have graduate students participated in or been represented in the discussion about returning to in-person teaching?**
  - The GSA president is an active member of the instructional continuity group and has helped to surface graduate student issues. The Graduate Dean also is a member and has provided a similar perspective to the group. We also have been in touch with our campus contact to the union and have not heard of any issues so far.
- **What happens when a TA says they don't feel safe teaching in-person?**

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- TAs who do feel safe to teach in-person but are assigned to do so should raise their concern with their instructor or chair/director as soon as possible.
- If the concern cannot be resolved informally at the department or program level by adjusting the teaching plan, then the Teaching Assistant (or any other academic employee serving in an instructional capacity) can request a disability-related accommodation through Disability Management ([disabilitymanagement@ucr.edu](mailto:disabilitymanagement@ucr.edu)).

### Staff Questions and Concerns

- **What are the plans for staff on campus given the fall instruction plans? Could you address how planning for in-person instruction aligns with the campus' support of administrative staff continuing to work from home, even after the pandemic ends and campus re-opens?**
  - We don't know what the future post-COVID equilibrium for the campus will look like, but there may be a rebalancing with more staff who spend more time working remotely, so long as they can continue doing their jobs effectively. We already had some of these remote workers pre-COVID.
  - Efforts to develop more detailed staffing plans for fall are getting underway, including a
  - Planning for staff might seem to be lagging behind instructional planning but course scheduling always starts far in advance of the beginning of each quarter.
- **Will people who do not have to be on campus to do their work be encouraged to continue to work remotely past summer and maybe longer?**
  - This question is addressed more fully in VC Bomotti's March 19 town hall about post-COVID return to work plans for staff.
  - Return to work plans will be largely determined at the local level, and in light of prevailing public health conditions in fall and the needs of the campus constituencies served by the unit in question. The ability of a unit to do its work effectively will be a key consideration when determining whether to extend remote work beyond the time when returning to campus is allowed.

### Employees with Young Children

- **What is the alternative plan for employees who are unable to secure childcare for kids under 5 years old or for school districts who may not provide in-person learning for K-12 in Fall?**
  - It appears likely that K-12 will be out in front of higher ed, in terms of returning. So, if UCR is back in-person, the number of problematic K-12/childcare cases is likely to be small and we would hope that these can be handled locally by unit heads and supervisors (as they would have been pre-COVID). Some leave programs may still be in effect as well.
- **Will considerations be made for employees with children who are under 16 and not able to be vaccinated, but who may be exposed to COVID through a parent who is working on campus?**
  - Public health officials evaluate transmission risk when determining conditions under which in-person activities may occur. The risk of an employee in any industry transmitting the virus to family members has been present throughout the pandemic. Higher vaccination rates will substantially reduce this risk, but if public health officials determine the risk is too great, we will modify campus operations according to their guidelines.
- **Is there a plan to expand operation hours to mirror the needs for early and late classes?**

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- We plan to add more than 20 new general assignment classrooms in fall quarter. Most of these are in the new Student Success Center but others are in Dundee, Glasgow, and the North District housing complexes. We expect this will help to shorten the instructional day compared to last year.

### Vaccines

- **Can the vaccines be mandated for all students? What about employees? How will a mandate be communicated?**
  - A student vaccine mandate is being discussed at OP. After the vaccines receive full (rather than just emergency use) authorization, a student vaccine requirement looks probable – assuming widespread availability of the vaccine. A requirement for employees is less certain but also possible. We expect a decision will be communicated directly from OP to the campuses, as well as publicly through a press release.
- **How will vaccination be confirmed within the confines of confidentiality law? Would an instructor know which students have been vaccinated?**
  - This is currently being discussed and we will provide updates when available.
- **Are student employees eligible for the vaccine? If students have not been vaccinated and want to be vaccinated how do we help them?**
  - Student employees including undergraduate researchers are eligible for the vaccine, and can request a letter from their supervisor verifying their eligibility. Any student who is eligible and wants to receive the vaccine should contact their health care provider.
- **Will undocumented students be able to get the vaccine?**
  - We expect that undocumented students will be able to get the vaccine through Riverside County.

### Other Questions

- **Will UCR provide additional funding to departments to get needed PPE for labs? What about reusable masks for students?**
  - Faculty and staff can request face coverings [here](#), and students can request them [here](#). Signage is available [here](#). Information about other PPE can be found [here](#). We do not anticipate any PPE supply shortages at this time.
- **Will Facilities/ITS/and Media Resources staff who were laid off be brought back? Currently staffing levels seem too low and created bottlenecks.**
  - In recent months, the budget outlook for the campus has improved and unit-level budget reductions have been scaled back. This may allow some units to increase staffing levels. These decisions will be made at the local (unit) level.
- **Will the ventilation system for each classroom and office building be checked before the school reopens? What if rooms have no or bad ventilation systems?**
  - Details on building ventilation are available [here](#) under “ventilation”. An FAQs on ventilation is available [here](#). For classrooms, Facilities Services will continue to work closely with the Registrar's Office and the Provost's Office to ensure active teaching spaces scheduled for Fall continue to be set with the maximum amount of air exchanges possible between sessions as scheduling will allow.
- **What type of guidance will be provided to departments on density requirements for shared spaces (offices, etc.)? When will that guidance go out?**

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- Guidance is currently posted and managed through the [Worksite Specific Plan](#) process. In addition, EH&S can be consulted for specific locations/concerns. As updated guidance is developed, it will be communicated to campus. Campus guidance will be based on state and local public health information and may change as we move closer to fall.
- **Do we have an estimate on when you are planning to "open" the campus with buildings unlocked, food service available, etcetera?**
  - We currently do not have estimated dates for these activities but will communicate broadly as buildings and services become available.