Planning for Fall 21: Department Head edition

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Tina Deemer, deemer@math.arizona.edu
Alex Underwood, aunderwood@arizona.edu
Dawn Hunziker, hunziker@arizona.edu
Diane Austin, daustin@arizona.edu
Lisa Elfring, elfring@arizona.edu
Overview

● What we know: plans for Fall 2021

● What could change?
  ○ Nothing is certain in our post-pandemic world

● Potential complications
  ○ Remote students
  ○ Instructor flexibility
  ○ Classroom technology
  ○ Classroom capacities

● What you can do now to prepare

● Questions & Discussion
An anniversary

One year ago today, late in the afternoon, the decision was made to ask students not to return from Spring Break.

● All classes would be taught remotely for the remainder of the spring semester.
● With two additional days added to spring break, instructors revised their courses for remote delivery.
Fall 2021: What we know

- Memos to staff and faculty, new and prospective students announcing most operations are anticipated to be in-person.
- Students asked to register for Live Online or iCourses if not participating in person.
- Room scheduling has taken place, students begin registering April 5.
  - Classroom density will (tentatively) return to mostly pre-pandemic levels in Fall, but will remain reduced for Summer 2021.
- Options for class modalities will remain the same as this year.
- Appropriate public-health precautions will be taken.
- We will still be dealing with COVID-19.
Fall 2021: What could change?

- We anticipate most domestic students will have the opportunity to be vaccinated before returning in fall. What if some don't?
- It is likely that some international students will remain outside the country or will not have access to the vaccine.
- Will more students prefer learning online/remotely?
- CDC guidelines about mitigation may change.
- Who knows what lies ahead?
Program Flexibility

Some courses required for major completion may not currently be available as Live Online or iCourses.

- Are programs willing and able to provide alternatives for remote students?
- Are programs expecting instructors to simultaneously teach in-person and remote students?
- Are advisors aware of alternatives and the circumstances under which they can approve them?

Instructor Flexibility

Some courses required for major completion may not currently be available as Live Online or iCourses.

- Are instructors for those courses willing and able to provide access for remote students?
- Guiding and monitoring learning with two distinct groups of students is difficult.

What do we know about remote students' experiences?

- Difficult to hear the instructor if they move away from the teaching station.
- Difficult to get the instructor's attention to participate or let them know about technical issues (microphone muted, etc.).
- If there is a group activity in class, are the remote students able to form a group for collaboration?
- Difficult for remote students to hear questions/comments from the in-person students unless instructors repeat them.
- Use of whiteboards in classrooms is usually inaccessible to remote students; document camera is much better.
- *If possible*, a TA or learning assistant/preceptor should monitor the Zoom window and chat to ensure that remote students can hear/see/participate/.
Supporting Instructor Flexibility

- Are instructors planning appropriate technology, and do they have access to what they need?
- Do they have a plan for monitoring remote students—learning assistants/TAs?
- Will they have the option to decide whether their learning assistants/TAs work remotely or in person?
- How will assessment be handled for remote students?

Supporting Teaching/Learning Assistant Flexibility

- Will the learning assistants/TAs have the option of working remotely or in person?
- Will learning assistants/TAs have the appropriate technology and knowledge about using it?
- Do you have a plan for assigning/hiring learning assistants/TAs based on course modality?
- Have instructors made a plan for communication?

What can you do now?

- Review Fall 2021 schedule of classes and identify critical classes that might be required for degree completion.
- Consider:
  - Are those available in multiple modalities?
  - Identify alternatives for remote students, if needed.
  - Ensure teaching assignments align with these needs.
- Promote training/professional development to help instructors facilitate demands of working with remote and in-person students.
- Continue incorporating Universal Design strategies into courses.
What can you do now?

- Have a department-level discussion about the use of undergraduate learning assistants in your classes.
- Work with your Program Coordinator to make any changes in class modalities.
- Ensure your Academic Advisor(s) are aware of alternatives and the circumstances under which they can approve them.
- Communicate with co-instructors, GTAs and/or learning assistants about expectations and options.
Fall 2021 Classroom Information

- Classroom density will (tentatively) return to mostly pre-pandemic levels for Fall 2021 – remain reduced for Summer 2021.
- We will update classroom layouts and pictures: https://ctsrooms.arizona.edu/
- As we approach fall semester, instructors can visit classrooms.
- Current classroom expectations are outlined in this short video: https://arizona.wistia.com/medias/0kswgarbmc
  - As guidance changes for Fall 2021 there will be new updates