

**Recommendations of Academic Continuity Task Force (ACTF):
On Delivery of the Curriculum, the Academic Calendar for 2020-2021, and Resiliency**

18 June 2020

Executive Summary

I. Develop a “Low-Density” University.

- A. In order to meet a threshold of relative safety, deploy a mix of on-ground, hybrid, remote-synchronous, and online course that are appropriate according to departments’ and units’ judgments about quality of the curriculum to meet the differential needs of students.
- B. Prioritize key courses for face-to-face delivery.
- C. Use a central “conversion/transition” committee to balance the local knowledge and expertise of faculty with the scarcity of space and a holistic evaluation of the curriculum of the university in order to create a profile of courses that meet the needs of our returning and incoming students.

Rationale: Allows the university to balance safety and quality of education while respecting faculty guidance on the curriculum and provide key anchoring experiences for students.

Disadvantage: This process will take at least a few weeks (optimistically) to produce a result for F20 and S21 schedules, even while working in parallel.

II. Make Minimal Changes to the Academic Calendar for 2020/2021.

- A. For Fall 20, we recommend uniform start and stop dates. We recommend that the subset of courses delivered in face-to-face or hybrid/blended modes transition to either online-synchronous or online-asynchronous delivery after Friday, 20 November (except for the most exceptional cases) and that finals be conducted virtually.
- B. For Spring 21, we recommend uniform start and stop dates. We recommend that instruction begin mainly through online-asynchronous or online-synchronous delivery (except for the most exceptional cases) and that after 3 weeks (if the COVID19 planning team determines that conditions on the campus and in the area warrant) that those courses approved for face-to-face or hybrid instruction transition into that on-ground mode on 1 February. We recommend that Spring Break be cancelled and instruction continue through that week. This will allow instruction to end a week early and for finals to take place on 26-30 April.

Rationale: Ending most face-to-face instruction before Thanksgiving in Fall 2020, beginning most face-to-face instruction remotely in Spring 2021, and eliminating Spring Break are chosen to protect the safety of students, staff, faculty, and the wider Edwardsville community. We wish to minimize large-scale migrations of people in December 2020 and, while we envision students returning in early January 2021, allowing a two-week period to see if that migration sets off a local flareup of COVID19. Further, we recognize that the redistributing of Fall 2020 courses and the revision of the Spring 2021 schedule is a complex and urgent process. It will tax the Registrar’s Office,

the Office of Enrollment Management, and the Office of the Provost. Trying to carry out more radical modifications of either term is imprudent.

Disadvantage: By keeping the 16-week term intact, we run the not insubstantial risk of having instruction disrupted for a significant portion of classes if a “second wave” of COVID19 overtakes the region and we are forced into a fully remote/online delivery of the curriculum. The elimination of Spring Break will generate strain (physical and psychological) for faculty, staff, and students.

III. Practice Grace. In the coming year, we need to practice forbearance; we need to be considerate of the weight that each of us is bearing; we need to be willing to reach out and help each other and to be merciful. In other words, we need to cultivate the practice of grace. This practice takes two forms.

- A. We recommend that the Office of the Provost and the Vice-Chancellor of Administration, working with the Director of Human Resources, the Legal Counsel, and the Director of Equal Opportunity, Access, and Title IX Coordination develop temporary/emergency processes that would allow faculty and staff to request to teach or work remotely and students to learn remotely for situations that cannot be accommodated by the preexisting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) processes. This process would be regulated by: demonstration of need; time frame; possibility of accommodation; and, requirement to engage in appropriate professional development (for faculty and staff).
- B. We recommend that the Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate require all syllabi for academic year 2020/2021 include “a statement on grace” that faculty should take as a statement of guiding spirit when considering attendance and due dates.

Rationale: We wish to remain a humane institution—an institution to which people are committed—an institution that people feel protects and supports them. We can strengthen these bonds by helping each other and supporting each other during this crisis. We do not want to create situations in which people may be forced to make the impossible choice between the life of a loved one and their livelihood.

Disadvantage: It will be hard to build a process that can be regulated and justified. Care also must be given so that this temporary process not interfere the ADA and FMLA processes. Even if the processes can be constructed, it is likely that some requests will be denied; unhappiness and resentment will result and could escalate into grievances. The possibility of abuse of this proposed process also exists.

IV. Develop a New “Social Contract” for Campus Life. The practices of university life for faculty, students, and staff must be reimagined and reinvented for the duration of the pandemic. While it will take time for this new culture of responsibility to emerge, we recommend that:

- A. Working together, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs develop a “social contract” that promotes regular mask wearing, self-monitoring, and the practices of “physical distancing.”

- B. Working with Student Affairs, Administration, and Human Resources, that clear rules and responsibilities about mask-wearing (with serious penalties) be developed; these rules must also have procedures for enforcement.
- C. Working together, Student and Academic Affairs, develop an “influencer campaign.”

Rationale: Culture is formed through formal and informal practices; the development of rules and codes of conduct (with penalties for violation) must be supplemented with a social media campaign that leverages our desire to both belong to a group and to work collectively to improve our world.

Disadvantage: We must be prepared for people not obeying these rules (self-monitoring, distancing, and mask-wearing). We must be prepared for the tradeoff of safety and losing some number of, for example, students, who will not want to attend.

V. Develop Resiliency. Given the uncertainty associated with the pandemic, it is essential that the university improve its capacities to deliver the curriculum in a variety of modalities. We must be prepared to transition back to a fully remote delivery of the curriculum at any time during the upcoming academic year and to do it better than we did in Spring 2020. To that end, we recommend that:

- A. Departments and units engage in the process of continuous improvement; these efforts should be coordinated with and supported by the Office of the Provost, the Committee on Assessment, Instructional Design & Learning Technologies (IDLT), and the Center for Faculty Development and Innovation.
- B. The Office of the Provost, working with IDLT and the Center for Faculty Development and Innovation, develop and support a number of trainings and workshops to help prepare faculty for online (synchronous and asynchronous) teaching in the coming years; in addition, the Office of the Provost should support a number of faculty and staff facilitators who can serve as resources for the campus in key aspects of online education.
- C. The University makes targeted, evidence-based investments in hardware and software to support a greater engagement with online education.

Rationale: These investments in both the training of faculty and staff as well as the infrastructure of the institution are prudent; they help prepare us for an uncertain future.

Disadvantages: None.

VI. Coordinate a Communication Strategy for Announcing Recommendations.

Communication surrounding the announcement planned for Academic Year ‘20/‘21 must be intentional and have parallel messages sent to various audiences. This communication effort should minimally include the following recommendations, and they should occur in the order they are presented:

- A. The initial announcement should be shared in a live Town Hall meeting via Zoom webinar. Questions can be answered by Chancellor Pembroke and his administrative team at that time as well.
- B. Immediately following the Town Hall announcement, messaging should be sent out via email to alert all stakeholders. Separate emails should be sent to faculty, staff, current

students, and incoming students (and their parents), each with its own messaging tailored to the audience.

- C. Social media posts should be prepared in advance to be published immediately following the Town Hall announcement.
- D. The SIUE mainpage should include an announcement about the upcoming Fall 2020 semester. Links to additional informational pages should be included. Informational pages include, but are not limited to this document, glossary of terms, ACTF's process and membership, description of steps taken by faculty and staff to improve online instruction, and how we continue to support SIUE's mission and values.
- E. A press release should be written and disseminated after the first four communication recommendations have been achieved.

Rationale: The initial announcement should be made in a venue where questions and issues of clarification can be addressed. The SIUE community should get their information at the same time, regardless of status (e.g., student, staff, faculty). Expectations must be managed, and uncertainty must be reduced in every messaging opportunity.

Disadvantages: This nested approach to communication will take careful planning and relies on confidentiality prior to the Town Hall.

Introduction and Guiding Principles

Over the last few weeks, the Academic Continuity Task Force has been thoughtfully and energetically developing recommendations for how to restart the academic life of the campus. Our paramount concern has been the safety and health of our community. We have worked collegially, aware of the gravity of the situation.

These recommendations regarding academic affairs are respectful of and rely on the coordinated, parallel planning going on in the Vice-Chancellor of Administrations' and Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs' areas. They are informed by departmental and disciplinary expertise and, in response, respect and harness those local knowledges to build resilience through the university.

Three broad considerations have guided our discussions:

- 1) The emergent science of COVID19. We recognize that in relation to COVID19, there is much that we do not understand, and that ignorance makes us humble and cautious. We do not know what is going to happen next.
- 2) The understanding that education is a human good, an end that is whole and sufficient. Education (whether understood as deepening self-awareness or as growing reverence for our cultural heritages or as critical consciousness of our society or as the illumination of the fundamental structures and processes of the world) is an end worth living for.
- 3) The spirit of equity. As a result of systemic racism, the COVID19 pandemic has affected our community differentially. We have been guided by the spirit of justice, seeking to ameliorate these inequalities.

Straddling these aspects of reality sets up tensions that we have tried to navigate. We aimed to develop recommendations that can reconcile the safety/health of the community, the quality of the curriculum, and our institutional commitment to equity. Doubtless, we will not have satisfied everyone.

Finally, and importantly, we recognize that these recommendations reflect our best understanding of the situation in relation to the COVID19 pandemic in late-spring and early-summer of 2020. The situation is dynamic: our understanding of the novel coronavirus may change in the coming months; the COVID19 pandemic may develop in an unpredictable manner; the economic and political response to the pandemic is evolving. Taken together, it is hard to know what August 2020 will bring, let alone December 2020 and Spring 2021. These recommendations seek to provide the Chancellor with maximum flexibility to maintain the safety of the university community and the quality delivery of the curriculum. It is for this reason that we have recommended a mixed deployment of modes of delivery of the curriculum, a mainly on-line start to the Spring 21 term, and the development of plans—across the university and at every level—for the possibility of a return to a fully remote delivery of education. The task force recognizes that the Chancellor and the COVID19 planning group may have to diverge from these recommendations to respond to developments swiftly moving. We encourage such adaptability. We only encourage the Chancellor to be clear, transparent, and forthcoming in his reasoning and that his adaptations reflect the reality of the pandemic.

Conditions Necessary for On-Ground Instruction to Begin

All recommendations are provisional and open to refinement in relation to context: on the development of the COVID19 pandemic, on the decisions of the Governor of Illinois, the guidelines of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

The recommendations below depend on our region of Illinois (Southern) to be in Phase IV of the Governor's Restore Illinois plan, under which institutions of higher education are permitted to reopen with an Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) approved safety guidance. If this region is in Phase III, the University will have to operate through "remote learning." We cannot guarantee at this time that the region will be in Phase IV.

The task force strongly encourages the Chancellor to be prudent and cautious in messaging and not "over-promise" or offer "guarantees" regarding any aspect of the delivery of the curriculum in AY20/21. We understand that this uncertainty will make communication to various stakeholders difficult. SIUE has long worked to maintain a safe campus. In May 2020, it was ranked as the ninth safest campus in the United States by YourLocalSecurity. That safety is the precondition for its delivery of superb academic programs and cultivation of tight-knit communities. Rightfully proud of that record of safety, we should frame our work going forward in terms of "humility and success amidst safety" We should live this value, embracing it during the pandemic.

Beyond the condition that the region must be in Phase IV of the Restore Illinois plan, the task force believes other conditions must be in place for substantial on-ground instruction to begin August 2020. On-ground instruction is appropriate only if:

- 1) The University has a dynamic plan, informed by the Director of Student Health and specialists in infectious diseases at SIUE and the SIU Medical School, to monitor and to test (and if necessary, to track and quarantine) the university population in ways informed by science, guidance from state and federal authorities, and appropriate to the situation.
- 2) The University has adequate sanitation and cleaning guidelines, protocols, in place and the capacity to carry them out.
- 3) The University has developed a nested set of plans and procedures to establish new behavioral norms on campus (masking in classrooms, social distancing, movement of peoples in, thru, and out of buildings, etc.).
- 4) Physical space and time necessary to deliver the curriculum be given priority over non-academic and co-curricular activities.

Definitions

Amidst a pandemic caused by a novel coronavirus, we are as an institution in uncharted waters. This is true for all institutions of higher learning. Over the last months, in response to the unprecedented move to remote instruction in the Spring of 2020 and in anticipation of Fall 2020, new terms were developed: for example, remote synchronous instruction, hyflex delivery,

modular learning. These terms and the strategies they reflect do not neatly map onto existing classifications of courses at SIUE, as defined in University Policy 1C1 (see Appendix 1).

In the following recommendations we will be describing some courses as

online (asynchronous) – the online category currently exists at SIUE; 100% of work is done virtually; generally there are no synchronous meetings; students proceed at their own pace;

online (synchronous) – this category does not currently exist at SIUE; courses that meet 100% virtually, but that require regular, synchronous meetings in a “gridded” pattern (e.g., TR 1800-1915);

hyflex – this piece of handy jargon describes a course that is delivered to a set of students in a traditional face-to face mode, while it is simultaneously and synchronously delivered remotely to another set of students, and, for a smaller number of students, can be accessed online asynchronously; because it mixes remote and traditional delivery it is a “hybrid” course; because it permits, as an example, 100 students to stay enrolled in a course, while only 33 attend in person at any given session, it is said to be “flexible” (in relation to space and new room occupancy). While this category does not exist at SIUE, it could reasonably be said to be a subset of the **hybrid/blended category**, which permit 30-99% of instruction to be done virtually;

on-ground, face-to-face courses – traditional courses with synchronous meetings, meeting in a scheduled room at a scheduled time. This category exists, and these courses can be supplemented with online/virtual activities up to 29% of the time.

We will also recommend certain strategies associated with the calendar that will require some subset of courses to be offered for part of the term face-to-face (traditional) and another part of the term online. Depending on the percentage of time spent in face-to-face instruction and in online (asynchronous or synchronous) instruction these courses could fall in either pre-existing face-to-face or blended categories.

Scarcity of Space

The capacity of the physical plant used for instruction will be severely constrained in the coming academic year. Phase IV of Restore Illinois limits any gathering to a maximum of 50 people. Both the CDC and the Illinois Department of Public Health generally recommend maintaining at least 6 feet from other people to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus. The ACTF set a “mapping” team to the task of recalculating academic space on campus in order to calculate new room occupancies. The results indicate that our capacity will be reduced by 60-70% with local variance. James Wulfson, Associate Professor of Theater and Dance, specializing in stage and set design, writes, “The committee has assessed over 450 rooms across campus totaling just shy of 10,000 seats. The average capacity of all the rooms assessed is at 39.9% of original capacity (3,822 after adjustment for Covid spacing - over 60% reduction in seats). The bulk of traditional classroom (one-piece student chair/desks) reductions group at 40-50% and 20-30%. Spaces with fixed seating, labs and studios are hardest hit with reductions to 20-30% capacity after spacing ... [Further,] we have just 5 spaces with a 50-seat capacity in distanced layouts. As an example,

Dunham Hall's theater is reduced from 360 seats to 57 when spacing is applied—a maximum of just 50 would be allowed under Phase 4 of Restore Illinois guidelines ... In assessing the capacity for each classroom, laboratory, and studio on campus the 'Space force' subcommittee followed some simple guidelines:

- A minimum of 6'-0" spacing for each student to allow for recommended distance. A simple 3'-0" radius circle drawn for each desk and/or workstation illustrates this.
- A grid array of circles/desks is used in most rooms. Honeycomb staggering of seats is recommended where the pattern and room dimensions allows additional capacity
- A minimum of 8' across the 'front' of the room to give professors access to the boards, lecterns and teaching materials as well as facilitate an array of teaching styles.
- Extra spacing at the doors for entrance/exit if not part of the 'front' of the room.
- Aisles where needed, though in most cases the 6'-0" spacing gives adequate distancing."

Recommendation 1: A “Low-Density” Campus.

We believe it is possible to offer classes in a low-density mode. As Dr. Susan Wiediger writes, “To free up maximum on-ground space, as much learning as possible should be moved to online, blended/hybrid, or remote learning (percentage to be negotiated once the Space Task Force has completed their assessment), subject to the considerations stated in the next section (Prioritization), while classes of priority are provided on-ground.” Such a mix would allow the university to satisfy the differential needs of students while considering the concerns of faculty and staff for safety and the quality of their curricula. The campus physical plant is currently being mapped to determined new maximum occupancies. Initial estimates are that we will be able to accommodate only 30-40% of the typical number of on-ground courses. While we recognize that departmental and unit faculty are best able to determine the mode of delivery of their curricula (and we are currently seeking their input to construct an “ideal” profile for their course offerings through the recent request for an inventory of their AY20/21 offerings), the scarcity of space on campus will require a central scheduling committee to re-distribute space and keep the curriculum coordinated across units. This group will work in dialogue with units to determine the final schedule for F20 and S21. We suggest that initially no department propose more than 1/3 of its course inventory in fully on ground mode. This percentage is an initial target that will be adjusted iteratively, in a tight timeframe, department/unit by department/unit to achieve the optimal mix of modes of delivery for each department/unit. In order to achieve this end, the University must:

- A. optimize online asynchronous and online synchronous delivery of classes;
- B. set the mode of delivery of instruction in another set of classes to hybrid/blended and flex these classes; this means that on-ground classes are simultaneously delivered remotely/synchronously (with provisions of recording for asynchronous “viewing”); in addition, students in this classes are split into pods (e.g., A/B) and are rotated through the classroom space. This is the meaning of “hyflex” mode of delivery. Courses scheduled with face-to-face, on-ground instruction may still require that students rotate in-class attendance to meet the physical space limitations of specific classrooms (Flex Attendance). For example, a Monday, Wednesday, Friday course meeting on-ground, may only require one-third of enrolled students to attend class in-person each of day of the week, while attending virtually the other two. Care must be given to provide access and equity to all students in this mode; further, faculty are divided about the feasibility of this strategy: some comment that it is a central part of their planning; other wonder if we have the technical infrastructure and support necessary to carry it off. It is important for departments and faculty to identify courses that they believe can be offered in this manner so that appropriate technical resources and training can be mustered to support their success.
- C. deliver another set of classes in fully on-ground mode (but still with possibility of online synchronous or online asynchronous learning).

In order to optimize the use of space, the university must prioritize certain types of classes for on-ground delivery. We propose the following prioritization:

- 1) Courses whose learning goals are difficult to attain adequately in a virtual setting, e.g.:
 - Clinicals/practicums/internships/student teaching. We note that many of these courses do not contribute to density on-campus, as they are learning at other locations.
 - Those requiring specific instrumentation or equipment – i.e. where a skill is one of the learning goals of the course (preferably a learning goal captured in the existing course description). We need to be careful of casually using terms such as “lab” since that is a term used in the Lincoln Program for a wide range of courses.
 - Those with learning goals that include an assessment requiring face-to-face interaction – e.g. certain tests or live public performance.
 - Those courses that are required by accrediting bodies or agencies to be delivered in a face-to-face setting/
- 2) Courses that serve a key role in connecting students to the university, school, or program:
 - Early first-year or transfer student courses, such as FST, Foundations courses, and other high enrollment courses for this student group.
 - Core courses in a program of study, such as introductory courses, first courses for majors, or capstone courses
 - Courses that are necessary for progress toward degree
- 3) Courses with content that could be at-risk if recorded or broadcast extensively, e.g. material is protected through copyright, intellectual property, or subject to export control.

These recommendations are aligned with the American College Health Associations recommendations: “Planning should include strategies guided by public health considerations to resume in-person instruction ... prioritiz[ing] ... in-person instruction for courses with academic outcomes that cannot be measured or achieved virtually, such as performance, laboratory, and clinical experiences ... [and] implement[ing] .. a hybrid mode of instruction for the foreseeable future” (ACHA, “Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Learning in the COVID-19 Era,” 7 May 2020). They are guided by seeking a mean between safety and concern about maintaining the quality of curriculum, which is essential for student success.

We recommend that the re-designation and redistribution of Fall (and Spring) courses be handled by augmenting the inter-unit scheduling committee within the Office of the Provost. This group has the core expertise and experience to handle this task; we suggest it be augmented by some members of the academic continuity task force. The prioritization process is expected to be iterative. We prefer an iterative process to one that gives each department or school/college the same cap. Academic units should have the opportunity to balance the implementation of their programs with available space. While the prioritization framework outlined above will allow for significant de-densification of the campus, other creative strategies will be needed to balance the need to deliver content face-to-face while adhering to the guidelines of Phase 4 in the Restore Illinois plan. See Appendix 2 for proposed membership and procedures.

When considering Spring 2021, we recommend that the scheduling/redistribution committee consider “expanding” the times between classes and stretching out the whole of the academic

day. We do not recommend this for Fall 20, because students are already enrolled in courses and we have sought to minimize disruption to student schedules; some courses (or sections of courses) in Fall 2020 may have to be moved into the evening or onto weekends to accommodate particular curricular needs.

The tradeoff associated with having a low-density campus is that university life and experience will be vastly different than what students, faculty, and staff might expect: on-campus community life, such as gatherings, student activities and social life will be limited. Also, given that we recommend respecting local departmental expertise, there will be wide disparities in the modality of departmental course offerings. This department/unit disparity will result in widely different types of schedules for individual students that cannot be predicted in advance. The relevant University offices may think about what kind of on-campus activities can safely be provided. Additionally, rather than downplaying the modified social aspect of campus life, the University's announcement about its operation in Phase 4 (or Phase 3) should mention these limitations, to set students' and parents' expectations in a more realistic manner. For more information about communication strategy, see Recommendation 6.

Recommendation 2: Minimal Changes to the Academic Calendar

The task force recommends that minimal changes be made to the AY20/21 calendar. We recommend keeping uniform start and stop dates for both terms (with pre-existing exceptions for School of Pharmacy and School of Dental Medicine). We make our recommendation, as Dr. Lakesha Butler, Clinical Professor of Pharmacy, writes, “[in order to] minimize disruption to students’ schedules and allow the University to plan effectively for a successful FA20 and SP21 terms, using the current calendar model.” Further, she writes that it “allows faculty to adjust existing 16-week courses to altered formats [modes of delivery] without precluding any learning models.” Finally, by “maintain[ing] the 16-week format for both FA20 and SP21 ... [we] allow for consistency, especially for courses that are repeated each semester.” This recommendation seeks to minimize the disruption not just for students, but for faculty, advisors, and the Office of the Registrar. We recommend no changes be made to the Winter Session.

Fall 2020 (see Appendix 3)

For Fall 2020, we recommend that:

- while work (e.g., instruction, final projects, exams) continue remotely through Friday, 11 December, most on-ground instruction should end on Friday, 20 November (before Thanksgiving Break). Pre-approved exceptions can be made to request face-to-face instruction after Thanksgiving to accommodate experiences deemed necessary for the quality of a program
- students be permitted to remain in campus housing (after Thanksgiving) to facilitate their access to campus resources
- if it is an option, housing and related support services might remain more open during Thanksgiving break, to facilitate students with on-ground commitments after break who do not want to travel
- all faculty must prepare for the possibility of needing to transition course delivery to a fully online (synchronous or asynchronous) format at any point in the semester should the region be declared in Phase 2 or 3 of the Restore Illinois Plan.

Spring 2021 (see Appendix 4)

For Spring 2021, we recommend that:

- all instruction begin on 11 January, but remotely; a small “tranche” of pre-approved courses may begin on-ground instruction on Monday, 11 January to accommodate experiences deemed necessary for the quality of the curriculum
- those courses approved for on-ground delivery shift to on-ground, face-to-face delivery on Monday, 1 February, if the COVID19 planning team determines during the week of 25 January 2021 that it appears that we have returned and a campus outbreak of COVID19 has not begun.
- instruction continue through Spring Break
- instruction end a week early and that 26-30 April be designated finals week
- all instruction (online, remote synchronous, on-ground) end on Friday, 23 April.

We recommend further that the Office of the Provost support a small number of pilot courses blocked in the 8-week format for S21. The courses would be linked (x course in the F8W and a linked course in S8W); the pilots should support departments that have not experimented with 8-week blocks and linkages between courses. Further, the participating departments and courses should design the course blocks in such a way that they can model practice for the wider university as we prepare potentially for a number of years of living with COVID19 as a serious threat. Dr. Butler writes that a small pilot would “allow units/departments to experiment with 8-week modules [and that] future adjustments ... [could] be made based on experimental successes and concerns.” We recommend that the Office of the Provost construct the Spring 2021 pilot on the model of the Summer 2020 pilot.

Recommendation 3: Conduct with Grace

Academic Year 2020/2021 will be unlike any other in living memory. We will be working and living, learning and teaching under conditions of uncertainty, anxiety, and legitimate fear. We will all have to act courageously. Courage is not fearlessness. It is acting for important ends and overriding our fear to do so. We will inevitably falter; we will be afraid and angry, will lash out or turn away. And we will not always understand each other because we will not each other’s lives—our joys or our terrors. We all suffer from what William James called a “certain human blindness”—a blindness to each other’s drives that keeps us from being able to inhabit, represent, or imagine the whole of each other’s experiences. We will all need each other’s grace.

Based on input from students via a survey in May 2020, it was evident that faculty should be reminded of the importance of extending grace and flexibility to our students in these times. One student explained, “[the professor’s] flexibility allowed me to fit [assignments] comfortably into my schedule when home life was proving difficult.” Another student explained, “I wish some of my professors were more understanding of the issue, it was very difficult for me to learn from home with all the distractions of everyday life occurring.” Students indicated a better overall learning experience when their professors were 1) flexible; and, 2) responsive in their communication.

Notions of *flexibility* included allowing students to turn in items past the deadline, breaking up larger projects into smaller projects with checkpoint deadlines, and rescheduling exams. During the conditions of emergency remote instruction, students were not always able to acquire the

components necessary for educational success (i.e., stable internet, effective technology, software access, a quiet room). Dominic Dorsey, Director of Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support, explained that “courteous goodwill toward individuals who experience challenges related to resource availability, internet connectivity, etc. is necessary for those who would be engaging in online learning during this time.” While Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 will not be conducted under emergency situations, faculty must be mindful of the external circumstances that can affect their learning environments (including the students’ own health and family health). Essentially, faculty should give students reasonable opportunity for success as well as the benefit of the doubt.

In terms of *communication*, students found it useful when their professors responded to emails quickly (or provided clear expectations about email response time), recorded their own lectures and showed their face in addition to the PowerPoint or whiteboard, consistency in due dates, reminders about deadlines, and weekly updates.

Based on findings from the student survey and good judgement, we make the following recommendations:

- A. We recommend that the Office of the Provost, the general counsel, and the Office of Equal Opportunity, Access, and Title IX develop an internal, SIUE-specific process by which faculty, staff, and students can request an accommodation to teach, work, or learn remotely. This process should be open and remain in place until there is either a vaccine or clinically-effective treatments for COVID19. The process should be relatively simple and easy to use. It should run in parallel to the existing ADA and FMLA processes/procedures. We suggest:
 - a. that the request document need;
 - b. that the request be limited in time, potentially by semester (but repeatable);
 - c. that the request provides a chair (dean/supervisor) an opportunity to comment on possible accommodations, and;
 - d. that it requires faculty or staff who seek it to commit to attending during the year at least one appropriate professional development workshop or training.

- B. Faculty should revise their attendance and class participation expectations in light of the Spring 2020 experience and their plans for Fall 2020 courses, considering the possibility of Illinois being in various phases. In the survey of faculty, one faculty member described the situation that many of our students faced, “Students were suddenly overwhelmed with assignments that would have under normal circumstances been an in-person discussion or experience in class. Their workload increased greatly while many struggled to adapt due to personal circumstance changes. Several students verbalized challenges and limited support and were thankful for flexibility. Several students shared that they were trying to stay engaged but were struggling because of feeling uncertain about the future. The emotional toll this took on students was significant.” Another professor summarized the importance of allowing flexibility in attendance and deadlines: “our students’ lives were disrupted, and we needed to make allowances for that.” While we are no longer in an “emergency remote instruction” situation, we recommend that the provost and faculty senate require that all syllabi include a “statement of grace” about attendance and due

dates. This statement is currently being developed by a task force working group focused on onboarding new and supporting continuing students.

- C. We also recommend that faculty review their course assessments and consider replacing high stakes course testing particularly for courses delivered in a planned remote learning scenario. Wherever possible, we see a need to replace course tests with low-stakes activities to turn the focus away from examination and instead to focus on enriched learning activities and more broadly speaking a cultural shift in favor of this approach. Students indicated a dislike for the high-stakes assessment online, as the technology added to their feelings of anxiety. One student explained, “I didn't like testing with ProctorU because it made me feel nervous that I could fail my test due to a mess up with the internet connection. I also did not like the amount of control ProctorU had over my computer.” A faculty member also indicated similar issues with such assessment: “Exam integrity, having to balance with internet connectivity, is also another major concern. Lastly, hands-on skills practice and assessment are difficult to carry on in the online environment.” Other faculty members mentioned potential concerns with cheating even with the use of proctoring technology, when they should instead be focused on the assessment itself. For example, a professor wrote, “My biggest concern is keeping students accountable for honesty and integrity in doing their work and in assessments.” Finally, a faculty member identified the need for training to create more thoughtful assessments: “The assignments and assessment methods need to be carefully designed. More instruction on how to set appropriate teaching goals as well as how to achieve them in an online setting would be helpful.” Shifting to this approach will require a substantial investment in faculty development, the capacity to employ sound pedagogical methods that are student learning centered, and appropriate activity-based assessment of student learning. Required professional benchmark exams will follow the protocol outlined by the discipline that administers them.

Recommendation 4: Develop a New Culture for a Low-Density Campus

Normative social behavior is invented through formal and informal means, using rules and persuasion. Self-monitoring, frequent washing of hands, mask-wearing, and social distancing must become habits this coming year and the training of these habits require the cultivation of individual and institutional responsibility. They need to be framed within a broad commitment to liberty, which protects individual action up to the point individual action can harm others. The wearing of masks and maintenance of social distancing protects others from harm we may inadvertently cause. To that end we recommend:

- A. That the Provost support the ongoing work of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (VCSA) and the Dean of Students as they are developing a “social contract” for the University community that commits one to responsible social practices;
- B. That the Dean of Students, the General Counsel, and the policy advisor in the Office of Provost develop an addition to the Student Conduct Code that mandates (with exceptions for health) mask-wearing on campus with serious and enforceable consequences for non-compliance; parallel process for faculty and staff should also be developed by the appropriate offices; some aspects of the recently released “Return-to Work” guidelines from the Vice Chancellor of Administration (VCA) are a good start;

- C. That the Office of the Provost and the VCSA working with Student Government develop an “influencer campaign” that promotes the new norms of a “low density campus.”

We further recommend that these new expectations be communicated clearly to students, parents, and the wider community prior to the semester. We recommend that they be framed as part of a culture of responsibility and safety, in which the student population is protecting the vulnerable.

Recommendation 5: Develop Resiliency

All faculty, departments, and schools must prepare for the delivery of substantial portions of their curricula remotely (online-asynchronously or online-synchronously). They also must prepare for the possibility of having to deliver the entire curriculum online (synchronously and/or asynchronously) if the pandemic surges locally, regionally, or nationally. Therefore, it is essential that we improve on our performance in Spring 2020. Dr. Allison Reeves points out that particular care must be given to maintaining “the value of our university community ... [our] people and our interactions.” To that end,

- A. We recommend that the Provost direct all departments (or schools): to review the student and faculty surveys of the S20 remote teaching experience; to then have a conversation about how, in relation to their departmental curricula, they could improve online (asynchronous and/or synchronous) in F20; to pick a small subset of issues they commit to improving; to develop strategies to improve in those locally determined areas; to develop a means to measuring those improvements; to deploy those strategies, measure their efficacy, and repeat in S21. These department- or unit-level conversations should help guide individual faculty in preparing to teach in variety of circumstances this coming academic year;
- B. We recommend that the Center for Faculty Development and Innovation, in concert with Instructional Design and Learning Technologies, quickly develop a set of locally sourced training sessions and workshops on online asynchronous and online synchronous instruction (using SIUE’s faculty and staff expertise). This is necessary because online teaching is sometimes faceless, delivered massively, and it can tend to commodify the work of higher education. The best way to avoid some of the traps of that approach is to carve out time, technological resources, and individual energy for as much structured interaction as possible, building inclusive virtual environments that enhance student engagement and success. To this point, we want to move beyond IDLT basics or foundations and raise expectations for what is possible with remote teaching and learning. These trainings would correspond to areas targeted by the Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate as essential for improvement in online or remote delivery. (See Appendix 5.)
- C. Drawing on the various surveys that have been conducted of faculty, staff, and students, we recommend that ITS make various targeted, evidence-based investments in the appropriate hardware and software necessary to support student, faculty, and staff needs in relation to greater online delivery of the curriculum. (See Appendix 6.)

Recommendation 6: A Coordinated Communication Strategy

It is essential that communication surrounding this announcement be intentional and have parallel messages disseminated with different audiences in mind.

- A. Optimally, it would be best to hold a Town Hall Zoom webinar to announce the decision for class delivery in Fall 2020. Chancellor Pembroke and his team, as well as members of the Academic Continuity Task Force, could answer questions in real-time. We recommended Friday, June 26, 2020, for this Town Hall announcement.
 - a. During the announcement, definitions of course offerings and modality formats should be defined clearly and terms used accurately.
 - b. The announcement should be coordinated with VCSA, so questions related to co-curricular issues can be addressed.
 - c. We should be prepared to answer the following:
 - What distinguishes SIUE from an online university?
 - What differentiates remote learning from online education?
 - What is SIUE doing to prepare professors for mediated instruction?
- B. Immediately following the Town Hall meeting, discrete messages should be emailed to current students, incoming students, parents (if possible), faculty, and the larger SIUE community. Social media messages should also be prepared/scheduled in advance to deploy immediately after the Town Hall ends. It is crucial that any messaging about the change in format for Fall 2020 be undeniably clear. Members of the ACTF should be looped in to drafts of these messages to provide clarity of recommendations as needed.
- C. The SIUE website mainpage should be updated to include information about the format of Fall 2020. The announcement on the mainpage should include clearly identified links to various items related to the upcoming academic year:
 - a. Glossary of relevant terms
 - b. ACTF's process and people involved
 - c. Description of steps being taken by faculty and staff to improve on instruction from Spring 2020 (e.g., trainings and workshops) and other items discussed in Recommendation 3.
 - d. How we continue to support SIUE's mission and values
- D. Finally, a press release should be written and disseminated only after the prior communication-based recommendations are accomplished. It is imperative that the SIUE community find out about decisions via formal institutional channels rather than media outlets.

Any information regarding the modified instructional format should not be disseminated in any manner or modality prior to the formal announcement unless it is a broad statement indicating that the ACTF and various constituency groups have been working to navigate the tension between achieving the same excellence in curriculum that we have come to know at SIUE while maintaining the safety of our students, staff, and faculty.

In our messaging, we must manage the expectations of the SIUE community. We must also reduce the uncertainty that undoubtedly surrounds the 2020-2021 academic year. Students should know exactly what to expect in terms of their education. We do not want to add to their cognitive labor by being imprecise with our communication. Staff must be fully informed. Faculty must be aware of the various class format options and what each entails in terms of instruction, technology, and delivery.

Conclusion

Our response falls within the broad spectrum of responses from U.S. universities and colleges. Most universities are currently working on various scenarios that would be implemented depending upon the health and state officials' directives, which is consistent with the current planning efforts of SIUE. On April 23, 2020, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Here-s-a-List-of-Colleges-/248626>) provided a list (currently updated, as of 17 June 2020) of 980 colleges in the U.S.:

- sixty-five percent (65%) are planning for 'in person' instruction
- thirteen percent (13%) are planning a 'hybrid' model
- eight percent (8%) are planning for a fully on-line experience
- eight percent (8%) are considering a range of scenarios, and
- five percent (5%) are still waiting to decide.

However, at closer inspection, most of the 65% of universities are mimicking the 21% percent that are considering either a hybrid mode or range of scenarios. Virtually no university is claiming that the fall semester will look like any other "normal" semester. If these recommendations are adopted, we will fall within the hybrid/range of scenarios band. And that is good, since the task force believes that, as Dr. Reeves expresses, "there are simply too many variables and nuances to devise a one-size-fits-all prescription. For example, student needs, space needs and capacity, and evolving accreditation standards at both university and academic unit levels must all be considered." Our recommendations allow for a substantial portion of the curriculum to be delivered remotely while permitting departments and units to proceed with on-ground instruction in cases that they determine to be essential to the quality of their programs and curricula.

Having this exercise involve a wide array of faculty, staff, and students ultimately will help SIUE adapt to the dynamic context of American life in the coming year(s) since it has made so visible the importance of planning for multiple scenarios. Our hope is that by involving many in this planning work, we have jump-started important department and unit level planning for resiliency in the new COVID19 era.

Appendix 1
Section from University Policy 1C1,
“Guidelines for Course Categories, Class Scheduling, and Publications”

Classes may be scheduled using one of the following formats:

- 1) Face-to-Face - Classes meet in-person or through video conferencing between sites. Online technologies may be utilized to supplement the Face-to-Face format. Online supplements would not exceed 29% of the overall class. These classes, with the exception of Independent Study and Individualized Learning, will be assigned classroom space for every class session.

- 2) Blended - Blended classes will be scheduled to combine Face-to-Face and Online formats. These classes will be scheduled to include an online component from 30-99%, in which the online component substitutes for a portion of the face-to-face meetings. These classes need to be assigned classroom space for the in-person portion of the class (up to 70% of overall class).

- 3) Online - 100% of the class takes place online. Online classes shall not require campus meeting times; therefore, these classes will not be assigned classroom space.

Appendix 2

Redistribution/Rescheduling Committee

Current Members:

Maureen Bell-Werner
Anne DeToye
Chris Gordon
Andy Griffin (for Roberta Harrison)
Brian Hinterscher
Janice Joplin
Tom Jordan
Norris Manning
Bill Retzlaff
Paul Rose
Laura Strom

Members to add:

Jocelyn DeGroot
Jingyang Fang-Hecht
Mark Poepsel
Eric Ruckh
Ian Toberman

Procedure

1. Acquire specific course inventory modality request as negotiated between faculty and his/her department chair
2. Holistically examine department inventory instructional preferences to ensure that departments are not moving their entire course inventory online.
3. Identify courses that will be unchanged. Remain scheduled as posted.
4. Identify courses that are requested to be asynchronous online.
 - a. Change modality on Banner
 - b. Move students to 5XX section
 - c. Alert students of change
5. Identify courses that are requested to be synchronous online.
 - a. Ensure that scheduled times and days have not changed.
 - b. Change modality on Banner
 - c. Move students to 5XX section
 - d. Alert students of change
6. Identify courses that are requested to have some face-to-face meetings.
 - a. Prioritize based on previous guidelines
 - i. Courses whose learning goals are difficult to attain adequately in a virtual setting
 1. Clinicals/practicums/internships/student teaching.
 2. Those requiring specific instrumentation or equipment – i.e. where a skill is one of the learning goals of the course
 3. Those with learning goals that include an assessment requiring face-to-face interaction – e.g. certain tests or live public performance.
 4. Those courses that are required by accrediting bodies or agencies to be delivered in a face-to-face setting
 - ii. Courses that serve a key role in connecting students to the university, school, or program:

1. Early first-year or transfer student courses, such as FST, Foundations courses, and other high enrollment courses for this student group.
2. Core courses in a program of study, such as introductory courses, first courses for majors, or capstone courses
3. Courses that are necessary for progress toward degree
- iii. Courses with content that could be at-risk if recorded or broadcast extensively, e.g. material is protected through copyright, intellectual property, or subject to export control.
- b. Match up highest priority courses with available classroom space.
- c. If changes to the posted schedule are necessary, contact instructor of record to determine if it is a viable change.
- d. Continue working iteratively through the prioritized list of courses.
- e. When all classes requiring physical space are scheduled, the courses will then be updated on Banner.
 - i. Any modality changes will be noted
 - ii. Classroom changes will be noted
 - iii. Students will be alerted of any changes to the scheduled time and day.

Timeline

15 June: Specific course inventory request sent to Chairs.

18 June: Course inventory request due to group.

22 June: Group meets to begin working on items 3-5. Courses can begin to be updated on Banner.

24 June: Group meets to discuss item 6 and its sub-components. Meetings will continue as necessary.

TBD: Final Fall 2020 course listing with schedule posted. All students informed.

**Appendix 3
Proposed Fall 2020 Calendar**

Week	Monday Date	Information	Instruction
SU20	8 Aug. 2020	Summer ends	
Pre-FA20	10 Aug. 2020		
Pre-FA20	17 Aug. 2020		
FA20 Wk1	24 Aug. 2020	F20 begins	<p>Weeks 1-13</p> <p>Based on decisions made by Rescheduling Committee, courses begin in person, online (asynchronously), online (synchronously), or in a hybrid format.</p> <p>Any classes meeting face-to-face for any amount of time must adhere to <i>Restore Illinois</i> phase requirements</p>
FA20 Wk2	31 Aug. 2020		
FA20 Wk3	7 Sep. 2020	Labor Day – No synchronous classes (online or face-to-face)	
FA20 Wk4	14 Sep. 2020		
FA20 Wk5	21 Sep. 2020		
FA20 Wk6	28 Sep. 2020		
FA20 Wk7	5 Oct. 2020		
FA20 Wk8	12 Oct. 2020		
FA20 Wk9	19 Oct. 2020		
FA20 Wk10	26 Oct. 2020		
FA20 Wk11	2 Nov. 2020		
FA20 Wk12	9 Nov. 2020		
FA20 Wk13	16 Nov. 2020		
FA20 Break	23 Nov. 2020	Thanksgiving	Break – No instruction
FA20 Wk14	30 Nov. 2020		<p>Weeks 14-16</p> <p>Students work online or remotely to complete the Fall 2020 term</p>
FA20 Wk15	7 Dec. 2020		
FA20 Wk16	14 Dec. 2020	Final Exams	
	19 Dec. 2020	Commencement	

**Appendix 4
Proposed Spring 2021 Calendar**

Week	Monday Date	Information	Instruction
SP21 WS1	21 Dec. 2020	WS Begins	
SP21 WS2	28 Dec. 2020		
SP21 WS3	4 Jan. 2021		
SP21 Wk1	11 Jan. 2021	SP21 Begins	Online (asynchronous and synchronous) instruction
SP21 Wk2	18 Jan. 2021	MLK Day – No synchronous classes (online or face-to-face)	
SP21 Wk3	25 Jan. 2021		Planning Group makes determination to begin on-ground delivery for approved courses
SP21 Wk4	1 Feb. 2021		On-ground delivery begins for approved classes based on Planning Group recommendation
SP21 Wk5	8 Feb. 2021		Any classes meeting face-to-face for any amount of time must adhere to Restore Illinois phase requirements
SP21 Wk6	15 Feb. 2021		
SP21 Wk7	22 Feb. 2021		
SP21 Wk8	1 Mar. 2021		
SP21 Wk9	8 Mar. 2021		
SP21 Wk10	15 Mar. 2021		
SP21 Wk11	22 Mar. 2021		
SP21 Wk12	29 Mar. 2021		
SP21 Wk13	5 Apr. 2021		
SP21 Wk14	12 Apr. 2021		
SP21 Wk15	19 Apr. 2021		
SP21 Wk16	26 Apr. 2021	Final Exams	
	7 & 8 May	Commencement	

Appendix 5

List of Potential Topics of Trainings and Themes for Faculty Facilitators

Already scheduled:

Summer Camp for Moving Online: Why Online is Different
Summer Camp for Moving Online: Making a Plan for your Course
Summer Camp for Moving Online: Organizing your Course
Summer Camp for Moving Online: Instructor Presence and Promoting Engagement
Summer Camp for Moving Online: Designing for Accessibility

Potential Topics (many coincide with the Faculty Focus Area Facilitators):

Alternative Assessments
Clinical Rotations in Health Professions
Collaborative Work and Group Project Design in the Virtual Environment
Engagement in Online Classes
Engagement in Socially Distant Classrooms
Equity in Online and Remote Learning
Hybrid Instruction
HyFlex Instruction
On Campus Clinical Practice
Teaching Large Classes Online and Remotely
Virtual Experiences in Studio Courses (Theater, Dance, Art, Music, Mass Comm)
Virtual Internships/Field Experiences
Virtual Laboratory Experiences
Virtual Seminar-Style Teaching

These topics should have a basic training session as well as a more advanced version if possible.

Appendix 6
Building University Capacity for Remote Learning

Strategies	Tactical Actions
Technology infrastructure improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve student access to laptops and the internet • Improve and broaden VPN access • Make remote library resources more accessible • Make required course software accessible off-campus
Knowledge base consolidation and further development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a “one-stop-shop” for all remote teaching and learning tools in an annotated list. • Assign a curator to that list with expertise, i.e. not a graduate student • Separate items in the list in terms of immediate and long-term needs • Prioritize Blackboard best practices and possibilities for standardization in departments/programs
One-pagers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDLT to develop 1-page sets of guidelines for general dispersal regarding building a durable course agenda, using appropriate Blackboard tools, with other How-To videos organized and annotated • Encourage departments/units to make their own 1-page sheets with discipline-specific guidelines for using Blackboard and other software
Online textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the switch to using online textbooks • Coordinate with those knowledgeable in open educational resources to explore supplemental or replacement materials where possible
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the extent possible, keep communication from the university and faculty on the same platform. • Limit course announcements to once per week to reduce email fatigue • Use Blackboard to deliver university-wide communiques.
Student-Centered Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set in motion a system of continuous assessment using a variety of methods to assess student achievements. • Leave recalibrations to departments and individual courses whenever possible • Maintain flexibility to the extent possible to allow for issues with student internet access • Make major tech changes at semester breaks

Appendix 7
Academic Continuity Task Force Membership

Last	First	A Group	B Group	Core	Consultant	Const Head	Representative
Anderson	Jill	3A	3B				College of Arts and Sciences
Belobrajdic	Scott		3B		X		Enrollment Management
Boysen	Colin		3B		X		Honors Student Association President
Brown	Venessa				X		Diversity Council
Butler	Lakesha	3A	1B			X	Black Faculty and Staff Association
Cady	Beth			X			Science Advisor
Cobb	Denise				X		Provost
Crk	Igor	1A	2B				School of Engineering
Crosby	Domonique		3B		X		Residence Life, First Year Communities
DeGroot	Josie			X		X	Faculty Senate President
Dorsey	Dominic				X		ACCESS
Evrensel	Ayse	2A	2B				School of Business
Gordon	Chris	3A	1B				School of Engineering
Graser	Marlee	1A	1B				Library and Information Services
Greenwalt	Riane				X		Health Services
Hall	Tim				X		Athletics Director
Harper	Chuck			X			Improvisation Advisor
Hecht	Jingyang F.	3A	2B				School of Pharmacy
Huffstutler	Steve				X		Information Technology Services
Joplin	Janice	1A	2B				School of Business
Laura	Hanson		1B		X		Head of Design/Theatre Tech
McClellan	Kimberly				X		Professional Staff Association
Poepsel	Mark	1A	2B			X	Faculty Association
Popkess	Ann	2A	2B				School of Nursing
Reeves	Alison	1A	2B				SEHHB
Roccia	Miriam	2A	3B				Student Affairs
Patterson	Earleen		3B		X		SOAR
Ruckh	Eric			X			Honors Program, Provost's Office
Rehg	Jen		1B		X		CAS Assoc Dean
Toberman	Ian	3A	3B			X	Staff Senate President
Rotter	Bruce				X		School of Dental Medicine
Schmitz	Matt				X		IDLT
Wagner	Lindy		3B		X		Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion
Wiediger	Susan	2A	1B				College of Arts and Sciences
Wolff	Laura	3A	3B			X	Non-Tenure Track Faculty Association
Wrobbel	Duff	2A	3B			X	Graduate Council
Walters	Madelyn		3B		X	X	Student Government
Xin	Huaibo	2A	1B				SEHHB
Weishaar	Mary				X		International Affairs
Wroten	Capri		3B		X		GA Pre-Collegiate Programs