

Date: January 11, 2021

From: Chuck Taber, Provost and Executive Vice President

To: Deans and Academic Department Heads

RE: Guidance for course mode decisions & faculty communications to students regarding beginning the spring semester

Dear Deans and Academic Department Heads,

As you are aware, President Myers [announced](#) on Friday that the first two weeks of the spring semester will be in a remote instruction format. The temporary shift to remote instruction for most classes will begin on Monday, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>. The university plans to return to the hybrid and in-person teaching modalities on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Guidance for course mode decisions during the remote instruction period**

During the remote instruction period, all courses will meet online for the first two weeks of the semester, unless the course is approved to meet in-person. Only courses that cannot effectively be delivered in remote mode may be approved for in-person meetings, which would include courses with labs, studios, performance, or clinical experiences. These courses may begin the semester in face-to-face mode if instructors:

- Consult with their department head to obtain approval.
- Communicate to students that the first two weeks of the semester will be in face-to-face mode.
  - Students must receive this communication before end of business on Tuesday, Jan. 19.
  - Earlier communication is preferred, if at all possible, to better facilitate student travel plans.

Department heads must do the following:

Track any sections approved for face-to-face 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, designation that the course started the semester in-person, date of student communication, reason, approval department head name and approval date.

This process is meant to mirror that which is used to document temporary shifts to fully online instruction for in-person and hybrid courses due to COVID-19 impacts on in-person class attendance. We instituted this process during the fall and you recently heard from the Registrar's Office requesting the fall 2020 documentation.

I recognize that the timing of these decisions and requests for communication is coinciding with faculty and department heads who may be on furlough. I recommend that department heads and deans work together to ensure timely decisions and communications to help support our faculty and students.

### **Guidance for temporary shifts to online instruction following remote instruction period**

As with the fall semester, once the two-week teaching period ends, 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. We will follow the same protocol outlined below. 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 Tuesday, Jan. 19.** A template with sample messages is attached.

As we approach what will be another semester that requires our flexibility and resiliency, I encourage us all to demonstrate care and support. The university remains in [phase 3](#), during which all who can work remotely should continue to do so.

Additional communications, including further guidance and FAQ, will be distributed tomorrow. 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.

## Faculty & GTAs

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

Dear Students,

Welcome back to K-State! We look forward to the start of the spring semester. As you may know, the university [announced](#) that the first two weeks of the spring semester will be in a remote instruction format. 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.

For the first two weeks of the semester, our class will meet remotely. The university plans to resume in-person/hybrid classes at the end of that two-week period. As was the case last fall, we may need to temporarily shift class modalities depending on the COVID-19 impact on in-person class attendance or changes in the pandemic situation. Include other information about how to connect for remote instruction and information about class mode (fully in-person, blended, or fully online) after Feb. 8.

or

*Courses approved for in-person instruction.*

For the first two weeks of the semester when most classes will meet remotely, **our class will meet as scheduled** in-person/blended (part in-person, part online). Include information about in-person attendance and remote instruction, as applicable.

### 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)**
- Information regarding university [COVID-19 guidance and protocols](#) is available. Students, faculty and staff are asked to practice prevention behaviors, including:
  1. [Monitor yourself for symptoms and stay home if you are sick.](#)
  2. [Wear a face covering.](#)
  3. [Wash your hands.](#)
  4. [Maintain 6-foot physical distancing.](#)
  5. [Take the Every Wildcat A Wellcat pledge.](#)
- There is a lot of information to process and it can be easy to feel overwhelmed. Your mental health and wellness is important. There are a number of [resources and individuals](#) who are ready to help you.