FACULTY RETURN TO CAMPUS GUIDE FOR FALL 2021

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

The following information is intended to provide additional guidance to faculty relating to the resumption of face-to-face instruction for Fall 2021 and in large part reflects recommendations of the Faculty COVID-19 Academic Planning Committee.

This Faculty Guide will be updated as appropriate.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- **Regardless of vaccination status, individuals are expected to wear a mask in indoor public spaces.** This includes classrooms, offices and meeting spaces.
    - If you are in a private space, you are not required to wear a mask as long as you keep the door to that space closed.
    - While indoors, masks are only permitted to be removed while actively eating or drinking.
- **Individuals who are not vaccinated are required to mask in all locations on campus.**
- Face Shields are not an acceptable alternative to masks, except for limited periods of time (such as instruction) with appropriate distancing.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Please verify that your assigned classroom meets instructional equipment needs.
- If you are assigned to a classroom that is lacking the needed instructional equipment, please contact your Dean, Associate Dean, Program Director, or Department Chair to discuss possible accommodations or room reassignment prior to the start of classes.
    - As needed, non-traditional classroom spaces (e.g., Martin University Center, Lou's Place, Baker Building) will be furnished with computers on wheels (COWs). The COWs will be connected to a projector and appropriate audio equipment. Some of these classroom spaces will also have rolling whiteboards.
    - Podium computers and COWs will have the same basic software programs as in previous years. If you need access to specialized software, such as SPSS, please notify your dean.

CLASS SCHEDULES AND OFFICE HOURS

- The 2021-2022 academic calendar as posted will be adhered to unless otherwise announced by the Provost's Office.
- Faculty will hold a combination of face-to-face and virtual office hours. Faculty should hold office hours equivalent to the number of credit hours taught per semester. The maximum number of required office hours is 12 hours per week.

- Virtual office hours may be conducted synchronously via Teams or Collaborate if video is needed or preferred.
- The deans and their administrators will work with faculty to determine that appropriate combination and schedule of face-to-face and virtual office hours. The university wants to ensure that students have reasonable FTF access to faculty and faculty should be willing to adjust their virtual office hour schedule to meet students FTF as needed.
- If a faculty member's office is too small or too poorly ventilated to accommodate meeting with students, deans will identify empty classrooms or conference rooms in which student meetings can be held.
- Both faculty and visitors must wear a mask during any meeting, whether in the office or in an alternative space.

FACULTY ABSENCES

- Please contact the office of Human Resources for processes and procedures related to employees reporting of COVID-19 symptoms or positive testing for COVID-19.
- Should a faculty member become ill, self-report new COVID-19 like symptoms, or test positive for COVID-19, the University is setting into place a three-phase system to ensure the continuance of instruction. Critical to the sustainability of instruction is the contingency planning described in Phase 2 below related to the creation of a 2-week module(s) by all faculty.
- **Phase 1**: if the faculty member is well enough to teach, but not cleared to return to campus
  - The faculty member should inform the affected students of the temporary change in course format via SSC-Navigate's email and text messaging functions (use both), as well as via an announcement in course Blackboard site(s).
  - The faculty member should switch to teaching all face-to-face class meetings virtually, using Teams or Collaborate.
  - Faculty should update students regularly of when they can expect to return to the face-to-face format in that class, if possible.
  - Faculty office hours will move to all virtual until the faculty member is cleared to return to campus.
- **Phase 2**: the faculty member is too ill to meet classes for a short period (up to approximately two weeks)
  - All faculty members should create a two-week module(s) of coursework in each course Blackboard site for students to access in case of a brief absence. Members of the Faculty COVID-19 Academic Planning Committee recommended that the content for this purpose be flexible enough to be used at any point during the semester. The content could be a project, research paper, or supplemental reading outside the textbook relating to the subject. This content should be hidden from view within Blackboard until needed.

- o The faculty member will advise the dean, associate dean, program director or department chair of the modules' title and location within Blackboard.
  - o Once notified of a faculty member's absence, the program's office admin will contact the students via the SSC-Navigate messaging systems to direct them to the module(s).
  - o Once the faculty member is well enough to shift back to Phase 1, or to return to campus, the students will be notified via SSC-Navigate of the updated status.
- **Phase 3**: the faculty member will not be able to return to Phase 1 instruction, or to campus, for an extended period (i.e., more than two weeks)
  - o The timing of the absence will determine how to proceed.
  - o If the absence is very late in the term, it may be possible to use the Phase 2 module.
  - o In this phase, the assessment of final projects or exams, as well as the assignment of final grades will have to be on a case-by-case basis. The chair/director and the dean/associate dean should work with the Registrar's Office if any unusual processes are needed.
  - o If the absence is earlier in the term, a colleague within the program or an adjunct may be asked to fill in for the duration of the instructor's absence, or potentially through the remainder of the term. The level of disruption to student learning will be considered by the program's chair/director and dean/associate dean in making these decisions.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Faculty should monitor and facilitate students' maintaining minimum distance (3 feet) during class.
- Faculty are encouraged to require assigned seating in classes for attendance and other purposes.
- Students **must** wear a mask covering their mouth and nose while in class and non-vaccinated students must wear mask in all campus locations. Failure to do so is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Faculty that encounter difficulty with students refusing to wear a mask (or leaving the FTF class) should report the student and incident to the Office of Student Affairs.

MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

In the event a faculty member is advised by a student that he/she has tested positive for COVID-19:

- The faculty member should notify the office of Dennis Hall, V.P. of Student Affairs, for purposes of communicating that information to the Tarrant County Health Department.
- For students who become ill for an extended period of time, please work with them in the same way you would with a student facing recovery from a major accident, any other major illness, or a critical life event that might affect attendance and course work.

RECORDED INSTRUCTION

Faculty are encouraged, but not required, to record their F2F class instruction or portions of their F2F instruction (e.g., audio only) for the benefit of their students to review later. Many students have expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to review recorded lectures so please consider providing recordings as an instructional resource to students. Faculty may be contacted by students who are unable to attend F2F courses (e.g., international students) and it is the instructor's discretion to provide an accommodation in those cases.

SYLLABI

- All course syllabi will be posted in the respective Blackboard course site. **Copies of course syllabi should not be made and handed out to students**. Faculty should strive to minimize the amount of copied and handout materials and instead post items in Blackboard for students to view digitally or print out.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES (GENERAL)

- Attendance must be recorded for each class meeting in SSC-Navigate. Faculty must record attendance for online courses at least once per week.
- All required course rosters must be submitted by the deadlines. These include 6th day, 12th day, and mid-term rosters requested by the Office of Student Records.
- Once dropped from a course a student cannot be added back to a course.

CLASS ATTENDANCE FOR FACE-TO-FACE COURSES

Regular and punctual attendance at all scheduled classes is expected of all students. Students are **required** to notify instructors prior to any missed class and will be held responsible for all class and laboratory assignments.

The maximum number of **authorized** absences during one semester is:

- **Two** for a class that meets once per week
- **Three** for a Monday/Wednesday or a Tuesday/Thursday class
- **Five** for a Monday/Wednesday/Friday class

Additional authorized absences may be granted on an individual basis when extreme circumstances warrant.

A student who has been absent from any regular examination and has satisfied the instructor that the absence was due to serious illness or other avoidable cause may take a special examination at the discretion of the instructor concerned.

Students who have the following number of **non-consecutive unauthorized** absences may be dropped from the course by the instructor:

- **One** unauthorized absence for classes that meet one time a week
- **Two** unauthorized absence for classes that meet two times a week
- **Three** unauthorized absences for classes that meet three times a week

ONLINE AND HYBRID CLASS ATTENDANCE AND/OR PARTICIPATION

Students enrolled in distance education courses must demonstrate academic engagement throughout the course to be counted present.

Academic engagement means actively engaging with course content. Examples of academic engagement include attending a synchronous session, interacting with your instructor, participating in an online discussion, completing interactive tutorials or web-based assignments, and completing assignments or exams.

Academic engagement **does not include** the act of logging into Blackboard, nor does it include participating in academic counseling or advising.

Students must demonstrate academic engagement a minimum of once each week in order to be marked present for that week. Customize attendance requirements for your DE class as needed.

FACULTY-INITIATED STUDENT WITHDRAWAL FROM A COURSE

When a student accumulates **consecutive unauthorized absences** equal to the number of days the class meets per week (1, 2, or 3) AND has not communicated with the instructor about the absences, the instructor must drop the student from the class using the Faculty Initiated Student Withdrawal process within 10 calendar days from the last date of attendance.

The Registrar will record a grade of "DP" for the course on the student's transcript. The Registrar will record a grade of "WF" (failure) on the student's transcript if the instructor drops the student after the date for receiving a grade of "DP" as specified in the University catalog. *Note: Per the Office of Financial Aid, students who withdraw from a course **cannot** be re-enrolled in that course during the same semester.*

The complete Attendance Policy is available in the 2021-2022 University Catalog (pages 91, 100)

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

Consider the following resources as you plan your first class session. For a general guide, read How to Have a Good First Day of Class (James M. Lang, *The Chronicle of Higher Ed*).

GET TO KNOW YOUR STUDENTS

- Create a First Day of Class Questionnaire. The questionnaire can be anonymous or not, related to course content or not, and offered through a digital form or polling tool. (Additional tips available from UC Berkeley's Center for Teaching and Learning.)
- In your class welcome announcement, invite students to share (appropriate) coronavirus memes to a discussion board. Show the memes during the first class session.

FOCUS ON SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY

Consider using Staying Safe in the Classroom: An Activity to Increase Safety Compliance (provided at the end of this document) by Dr. Linda Metcalf.

APPENDIX A: FIRST DAY OF CLASS ACTIVITY—STAYING SAFE IN THE CLASSROOM

A First Day of Class Activity to Increase Safety Compliance

Linda Metcalf, M.Ed., Ph.D.

Welcome to our class. I am honored to get to teach you face to face this semester. Let's get to know each other.
(Spend time learning names, etc.)

As we get started, I would like us to talk about the protocol that is now in place that is required of all of us, to stay safe and healthy on campus. Who knows the protocol? (Wait for answers and clarify that masks are required in class as well as social distancing.)

Since you and I are required to wear masks and keep a social distance at all times as we meet together, how can we all work together and encourage each other to stay safe and follow the protocol when we are in the classroom?

Wait for answers and write them down.

    1.

    2.

What can I do as your instructor to keep us on track with this protocol?

    1.

    2.

*So, if someone **forgets** to wear a mask or gets too close, what can we all do that is respectful and kind?   What would you want me to do?* Wait for answers and write them down.

    1.

    2.

Thanks.

I have made a list as we talked and will make copies for us. I will bring them next time and give you the ideas you generated. Optional: *Each one of us will sign a copy as a way of supporting each other.*

Thank you! Welcome to our semester.

*There may be a student that thinks the protocol is not needed. It would be best to not argue or confront. Instead, listen, reply with respect privately and let them student know the alternative is to learn virtually. But, also invite the student to reconsider what the class discussed and let the student know that his/her presence is important.