Responses to Questions received via Townhalls and Communications with Faculty Senate Representatives

The following responses are organized by topical themes

INSTRUCTION

Are some bi-modal faculty going to teach the first two weeks online?
- Bi-modal faculty can make their own decisions about when and how they teach face to face sessions and when they will do online sessions now and throughout fall semester.
- Bi-modal faculty will not be held to the percentages that were originally submitted before the start of the semester.
- The key is that faculty must communicate their plans early and often with students.
- Faculty are empowered to make the decision that is best based upon the content they are teaching, the needs of the faculty member and the students, and more.
- Again, please ensure that you communicate with your students what your plans are and please give plenty of notice if you will be making changes to your plans throughout the semester.
- Guidance for faculty provided on the Faculty Syllabus_081620 includes:
  Syllabus Changes (required language for all courses)
  Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through (specify how students will be notified of changes).

Three Related Questions:
1. In the Friday 8/14 4pm email from President Blake discussing the reopening plan, there was a directive that faculty must report any changes to instruction mode to Human Resources. This has since changed and there is no requirement for faculty o report to Human Resources regarding a change in their course instruction modality.

2. Are we going to have to provide a note from a doctor to move from bimodal to online?

3. On the "Request for Workplace Accommodation Form", which specific type of accommodation does a shift from bimodal to online synchronous qualify as?

- There is no longer a required exception to simply change your mode of instruction or adjust your percentages of F2F sessions if you are a bi-modal faculty.
- If you want to completely change your mode away from bi-modal to another of our three instruction modes, you need to notify your Dean.
- If you plan to stay bi-modal and adjust your percentages of online instruction, faculty are empowered to do this at their own discretion, communicate it early and frequently with students, and ensure that learning is taking place.

Who will be identifying the seats in the lecture halls where students sit?
- Facilities will be doing this work and all seating for appropriate spacing will be marked/indicated prior to August 24th.
- One college has submitted layouts and plans for their classrooms/labs which are being reviewed.

Is it confirmed that the plan is to delay Face-to-Face classes until at least after Labor Day? Have students been informed of this or do faculty need to contact students?

- UHCL is open for learning. The [opening plan](#) is on the website and classes begin on August 24, 2020.
- Bimodal faculty have the flexibility to engage students in the mode they choose. Online faculty can choose as well to meet synchronously or asynchronously.
- Emphasis remains on ensuring faculty provide clarity to students with regard to course plans and expectations.

Can the university set up a few tents outside to provide shade so that faculty can teach courses outdoors, lowering the risk of Covid-19 transmission? or Is there any plan to have tents (simple ones with chairs) for outdoor meetings?

- There is no plan to use tents currently.
- However, if faculty can find an outdoor space on campus that meets their needs, they are not discouraged from meeting students individually or in small or large groups if they so choose.

Have cameras been installed in classrooms so that faculty can record for students who are unable to attend?

- From the Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) newsletter sent out on Monday (8/10) "UCT staff are currently working to install Echo360's Universal Capture: Classroom software in classrooms and teaching labs throughout the university and we'll post a status update on that effort in next week's newsletter."
- There is some information in Monday's newsletter (8/10) to help faculty prepare to use Echo360, and it is advised that faculty consult that email for guidance and resources.
- Echo360 is now available for faculty to use on home and office computers if faculty want to begin utilizing or practicing with the software.

How can I confirm that my classrooms have the equipment I need to teach like cameras and a microphone?

- You can watch for the IDT newsletter next week which should have updates on classroom installation.

Will an updated list of instructional and technology resources be provided to faculty?

- This is being updated at all times on the [Instructional Continuity Website](#) and on the [Center for Faculty Development](#) Website. Please check these routinely.

Is there a post-Thanksgiving plan?

- It is anticipated that COVID 19 cases will spike after Thanksgiving, hence, faculty are encouraged to be prepared to teach completely online after Thanksgiving.

I have a lab statement in the syllabus. When will we receive information about status of the computer labs?

- Faculty and students can access the most current updates pertaining to labs on UTC/[Academic Computer Labs website](#).

Are students going to be required to show documentation to faculty that they have COVID in the event of excessive absences?

- Faculty are asked to ensure attendance policies will not penalize a student for absences or failing to 'attend' a class.
- Students should be encouraged not to come to any F2F sessions if they are ill or suspect they may have been exposed to someone who has Covid-19.
- Students should report their exposure or illness through the Covid-19 Health Alert webpage and online forms.
- Faculty should not require a doctor's note for a missed F2F or online synchronous session.
    - Please see the Participation and Engagement guidance document on the CFD website.

I heard back from one of my students in my bimodal class who said she doesn't feel comfortable coming to class. Do students such as this need to register with Accessibility Support Center for an official accommodation?
- No, students received a communication on 8/13 providing them information on different options they have for medical and non-medical issues related to class attendance.
- The Accessibility Support Center is supporting students who have documented disabilities that place them at high risk for COVID.
- The Accessibility Support Center can provide academic accommodations to students with documented needs.
- If students have concerns about the requirements and design of a specific course, they can contact their academic advisor to discuss additional options for their courses, which may include the availability of an online class.
- Students experiencing anxiety and stress around COVID-19 should contact Counseling Services for online resources.

SUPPORTS FOR FACULTY

We realize knowledge of and access to information and resources are critical to faculty. Please always reference the following site-specific links for the most current updates:

Center for Faculty Development

Instructional Continuity

Provost Communications

UHCL Health Alert – Covid-19 Updates

SUPPORTS FOR and INFORMATION PERTAINING TO STUDENTS

What have students been told about start up?
- Students received the email from President Blake that went out on Friday (8/14) at 4:01pm
- Students have also received the Email from President Blake that went out on Friday (8/14) at 10:10pm.
- Prior to these two emails, students received emails from the university explaining our four instruction modes.

- While we acknowledge the university and individual divisions have roles in communicating, faculty are encouraged to communicate frequent updates pertaining to teaching and learning with their students.

In the spring and summer, faculty were told there were no available laptops for students to checkout and utilize. Will there be available laptops and technology for students to checkout in the fall semester?
- UHCL is continuing the [Online Learning Assistance and Reimbursement Program](#) (OLARP).

Will students be allowed to stay on campus between classes or just as a quiet place to work when the semester begins?
- Students will be allowed to stay on campus between classes and/or have place to work. Students will receive a list of classrooms that have been designated for this use. There will also be spaces in SSCB and Pearland computer labs.
- Cleaning supplies will be available for students to clean the area before and after use.
- Social distancing must be practiced in these spaces.
- Masks must be worn at all times on campus.

When will the university start communicating with our students or are faculty assumed to be the point of communications even for things outside of instruction? If communications are happening with students, much like the weekly Academic Affairs Provost and FS emails, where can faculty see what students are being told?
- All communications generated by MarComm can be found in the health-alert section: https://www.uhcl.edu/health-alert/communications/

What are the accessibility formats for all student support services starting week 1 (writing center, math center)? We need to know this to include in our syllabi.
- Academic Affairs staff are working on releasing information about how all services will be offered at the start of the semester.
- We know this information is important for syllabi and it will be forthcoming during the week prior to the start of the semester.
- The [UHCL website](#) has a nice list of virtual student support services and information on their availability, this might be something faculty want to put in blackboard for their students in addition to anything put in syllabi.

Will textbooks and other resources on reserve be available for students during the first week of the semester? (for example, students commonly can access textbooks until the ones they order come inif the faculty member has placed a copy on reserve).
- E-Reserve textbooks and other resources, as provided by faculty, will be available in part via the library online system.
- Both personal and general emails were sent to faculty a few weeks ago requesting an update on the materials they would like placed on reserve.
- The library observes fair use copyright standards and in so doing can make approximately 2 chapters of a resource available at a time via our online system. If materials are received in hard copy, the library staff requires time to scan, upload, and link these materials; typically, we request two weeks to process.
- If faculty have materials for E-Reserve, please use the Reserves Request form at https://apps.uhcl.edu/CourseReserves or email library-cl-circdesk@uhcl.edu.

COVID CONSIDERATIONS and PROTOCALS

We have ordered PPE through our colleges. Do we know when PPE will available or how delivered/distributed?

- PPE materials are arriving daily; watch for notifications through your college.

If I can keep students 6 ft apart, can I have more than 25% ROOM capacity?

- Yes, but up to 50% occupancy so long as we are under Governor Abbot's Open Texas Plan phase III.

When 25% of students are in the class, are they are required to wear a mask? Instructor, too?

- Students MUST wear a mask in the classroom, public spaces, hallways, bathrooms, etc.
- The only exception to this would be that some students may be allowed to wear a face shield due to an accommodation. If this is the case, Accessibility Support Center will email the faculty member in advance of the semester, just as they have for other accommodations in the past and therefore, faculty should know which students have completed the paperwork to allow for a face shield.
- Instructor is required to wear a mask while teaching, when in public spaces, hallways, bathrooms, etc. The only time a faculty member does not have to wear a mask is when they are in a private office working alone. If someone enters that office, a mask must be put on.
- Faculty are allowed to lecture in a face shield if they so choose. Unless there is an accommodation, masks are required at all other times.
- See Provost Document for Faculty Syllabus_081620

Will hand sanitizer be available in each classroom?

- Yes, hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes will be available in each classroom.
- There will be hand sanitizer stations located throughout the buildings.
- There will be disposable masks available throughout the buildings.

Will students have guidelines to be on campus - no fever, no contact with Covid+ person? etc.

- Yes, students have a mandatory training that they must complete before coming on to campus that is similar to the training faculty and staff must complete.
- Students will access this training in EServices.
- Faculty are asked to encourage students to complete the training by mentioning the training on blackboard, in orientation discussions, in class sessions, etc.
- Faculty are also encouraged to include a statement on the syllabus that encourages (or even directs students) not to come to campus if they are feeling ill or have reason to believe they may have been exposed to someone who is ill.
  - Please see the Participation and Engagement guidance document on the CFD website.
  - See Provost Document for Faculty Syllabus_081620

Do students who say they can't come to class because of health issue need to produce a doctor's note?

- Faculty are asked to include language on their syllabus that does not penalize a student for not 'attending' a class.
- Students should be encouraged not to come to any F2F sessions if they are ill or suspect they may have been exposed to someone who has Covid-19.
- Students should report their exposure or illness through the Covid-19 webpage and online forms.

- Faculty should not require a doctor's note for a missed f2f or online synchronous session.
  - Please see the Participation and Engagement guidance document on the CFD website.
- Faculty can articulate an expectation for engagement while extending flexibility should a student become ill with symptoms that impact their health.

Are students going to be required to show documentation to faculty that they have COVID in the event of excessive absences?
- Students received a communication requesting that they contact Health Services and report COVID-19 exposure or illness. Health Services will communicate this information to faculty members.

What if a student or a faculty member has been exposed to Covid? Should they quarantine for 14 days? Do they need a medical note?
- Any student, faculty or staff who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 must report this diagnosis on the Covid-19 Health Alert Page through the online forms.
- Any student, faculty or staff who believe they have been exposed to someone who has a diagnosis of Covid-19 should also report this on the Health Alert Page using the "Report Exposure" forms.
- There is a form on the Health Alert page that is a 'Request to Return' form and students, faculty and staff should complete this form, as well.
- Health Services and Emergency Management will be in contact with anyone reporting and will work with them on the steps that need to be taken to remain off campus and when it is time to return.

How does a student, who has been in quarantined, be released to come back to course?
How will we know when they can be let back into a labs or courses?
- Health Services and Emergency Management has a process in place and will guide the student about return to campus.
- There is a "Request to Return" form on the Covid-19 Health Alert Page for students, faculty, and staff to use if needed or when it is time.

I'm still not clear on what we do if we have symptoms or if we've been exposed to Covid?
- If you have symptoms, if you have a diagnosis, if you believe you have been exposed, you are to go to the Health Alert Page and complete one of the reporting forms. Choose the form that is most appropriate to your situation (eg, Diagnosis, Exposure, etc.).

For students, staff, and faculty who will be on campus, what is the process in place for people who have recently been in contact with someone who tested positive for Covid-19? Will this group of people be asked to quarantine (and not come to campus) for 14 days? How might this impact Bimodal courses?
- If you are feeling ill or have a respiratory illness of any kind, with fever and cough, you should stay home to prevent spreading it to others.
- You should not come to campus if you know, or have reason to suspect, you have been in close contact with a person infected with COVID-19.
- Faculty, Staff, and Students are required to complete the UHSystem Mandatory training and complete a daily checklist of symptoms as well as take daily temperature checks before coming to campus.

Under what conditions will UHCL be shut down for community spread? How will updates regarding the status and number of cases be communicated?

- UHCL will provide instruction according to the codes indicated on the opening plan.
- Announcements regarding the status of campus can be found on the following webpage and will be communicated from President Blake.
    - https://www.uhcl.edu/health-alert/health-safety/

CARE FOR OUR UHCL COMMUNITY

Will the university share names of colleagues (staff, students, faculty) who have already died of Covid-19? Or if the reasons can't be stated, can we remember those who have died in the spring and summer of 2020 through a public message?

- We cannot share names of those infected; as of 8/13, MARCOM has been notified that they will begin updating positive case counts on the website
- Acknowledging the deaths among our UHCL family remains something that Faculty Senate will continue to pursue.

Will there be any events, even virtually, to kick off the year to promote connection and sense of community?

- Faculty Senate Officers are in the process of planning some informal virtual opportunities for faculty to connect with one another.
- Please look for communications from Faculty Senate.
- MarComm has not shared news of any specific events