

July 17, 2020

**Sent to Academic Senate members, Academic Federation members, and graduate students**  
**Subject: Instructional plans for Fall; updates on Academic Senate policies and faculty personnel processes**

Dear Colleagues:

We write to update you on instructional plans for the Fall and remind you about changes in Academic Senate policies and faculty personnel processes.

*Appreciation for your efforts*

Before anything else, we want to express our deep gratitude for all you are doing to ensure, under very difficult circumstances, the continuation of excellent teaching this Fall. We know that you have been, and are still, facing intellectual and practical challenges in this effort. We further recognize your flexibility, creativity, and patience not only in developing optimal plans for your own courses, but also in assisting your colleagues as they develop theirs. We know that these efforts strain your scholarship and academic progress. Again, we thank you for your extraordinary dedication and service.

*Our instructional goals for Fall*

We had hoped to be writing under circumstances both more favorable and less uncertain. As you know, COVID-19 is surging in California and many other states. We planned for this possibility. Our fundamental approach to instruction during the pandemic remains unchanged: Prioritizing the safety of all members of our UC Davis community while doing all we can to maintain educational excellence and student success.

*Will your course be in-person, remote, or hybrid? And what about resources?*

We continue to take a phased approach for both instruction and [research](#). For the Fall, we still hope to slightly increase in-person teaching and research from its current status, consistent with public health guidance, even as we know that a majority of teaching will need to be remote.

More specifically, we have determined the following:

- All classes with enrollments greater than or equal to 50 students will be remote.
- For classes with fewer than 50 students, in-person instruction may be possible. The decision to hold an in-person class will be decided by the Instructor of Record in coordination with department chairs and deans, followed by committee review and approval by the Provost. When feasible, this in-person instruction will take place outdoors under tents, with necessary AV and audio equipment, physical distancing of six feet, and all participants required to wear masks. Of course, this outside classroom approach is neither practical nor feasible for some courses, so it will not be the only option for in-person course delivery. We hope to have other options available for offering laboratory-based, studio-based, and equipment-based instruction to meet both safety and educational needs.
- We are currently working with the schools and colleges to determine which courses will, for pedagogical or other reasons, be offered in person, the appropriate location, and the necessary resources. Finalizing the list of specific courses that will be taught in person will enable us to provide essential information to students and augment our preparations.
- We are also in the process of determining what resources faculty need to be most successful in both in-person and remote teaching. For example, some faculty may require improved Wi-Fi, specialized equipment, or additional Teaching Assistants. We have analyzed initial data submitted by department chairs in June and will be soliciting further input.

*Ensuring equitable opportunity and promoting success for all students*

- For remote courses, we request that faculty be mindful of the varied circumstances that your students will be facing and make reasonable adjustments to your syllabi and teaching methodologies to address them. For example, students may be in very different time zones, lack quiet study space, have to support family members financially or in other ways, or lack sufficient internet or technological access. You can gain insight into the student perspective by viewing preliminary results from [UC Davis Know Your Students](#) as well as a [summary of key findings](#) from UC systemwide surveys assessing faculty and student views on remote learning during Winter/Spring 2020.
- We hope that in your roles as teachers and mentors, you remain especially mindful of [UC Davis' Principles of Community](#) and our responsibility to give all of our students every opportunity to succeed, excel, and thrive. We encourage you to implement, as appropriate, such measures as recording lectures and discussion sections (to permit students to view these materials, if needed, at a different time), flexible testing and assessment modalities, and practices that promote an inclusive learning environment. Information on these and other tools to facilitate effective remote instruction are available [here](#).
- During Spring and Summer, the Academic Senate implemented many emergency policies intended to mitigate the impact of this extraordinary moment on student learning and academic progress and will be considering which flexibilities and policy exemptions to extend into Fall. Additional information can be found [here](#).

*Adjustments to academic personnel processes*

As previously reported, UC Davis adjusted academic personnel processes, including “stop the clock” tenure/security of employment extensions, in response to the significant disruptions the pandemic has had on teaching, research, and service. Information on these adjustments for Academic Senate members is available [here](#) and for Federation members [here](#) (see also previous [letter](#) from the Academic Senate Committee on Academic Personnel as well as the systemwide Academic Council letter on [Mitigating Negative COVID-19 Impacts](#)). In addition, in May 2020 UC Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Brown announced that he would review favorably any exceptional requests for a third, one-year extension of the tenure clock.

*Looking ahead*

We look forward to a successful Fall, confident in our collective ability to provide top-quality educational experiences even under these challenging circumstances. For our students, their families, and our broader world, we know how important it is to succeed in these efforts. Thank you for making your students feel welcome, included, and connected to the UC Davis community (including those joining from far away) and for helping to support and advance their educational goals.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Mary Croughan  
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Kristin H. Lagattuta  
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

