

MEMORANDUM

TO: Academic Affairs Faculty, Staff, Chairs, Associate Deans, and Deans

FROM: Christine W. Curtis *Christine W. Curtis*
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Preparing for Fall Semester 2020 at The University of Alabama in Huntsville

DATE: June 29, 2020

This spring, President Dawson established the UAH Return to Campus Task Force with Working Groups to prepare for our re-entry to campus this fall. The UAH Task Force working with The University of Alabama System Task Force on Health and Safety established by Chancellor St. John with the support of The University of Alabama Board of Trustees developed health and safety guidelines for our return this fall. An interim policy, "Safety and Health Requirements for Presence on UAH's Campus" is now undergoing final review and will be sent to you soon. The measures in this policy are designed to protect the health and safety of all of us.

The UAH Academics Working Group has worked diligently to develop the plans presented herein for us to return to teaching this fall. The Academics Working Group continues to work on the Class Schedule as discussed below. More information about the class schedule will be forthcoming in mid-July. We are indebted to the Academics Working Group and all of the other Working Groups for their efforts on our behalf.

Fall Semester. Fall semester 2020 at UAH will follow its regular academic calendar and begin on August 19, 2020. At this time, our plan is to have the scheduled breaks for Labor Day holiday, Fall Break, and Thanksgiving Break, and return after Thanksgiving for one week of classes and then final exams. We are planning for Fall Commencement on December 14, 2020. With the current situation with COVID-19 and the unknown future circumstances, we all must remain flexible and realize that during fall semester, changes may need to be made in the calendar to protect our students, faculty and staff.

In my May 1, 2020, memorandum to you, I asked all faculty to prepare their fall classes for asynchronous online delivery. The Enhanced Teaching and Learning Center and the college deans have reported that many of you are taking full advantage of Quality Education Practices Online (QEPO) and even more of you are using the limited approval for your fall courses. I appreciate your diligence in developing your courses for online asynchronous delivery. The importance of preparing these courses online cannot be overstated. It is impossible to predict the effect that COVID-19 will have on Academics this fall at UAH. We all realize that if the

outbreaks become sufficiently severe, we will have to move from a combination of on-campus and online delivery to total online delivery. Whatever the situation, we must be prepared.

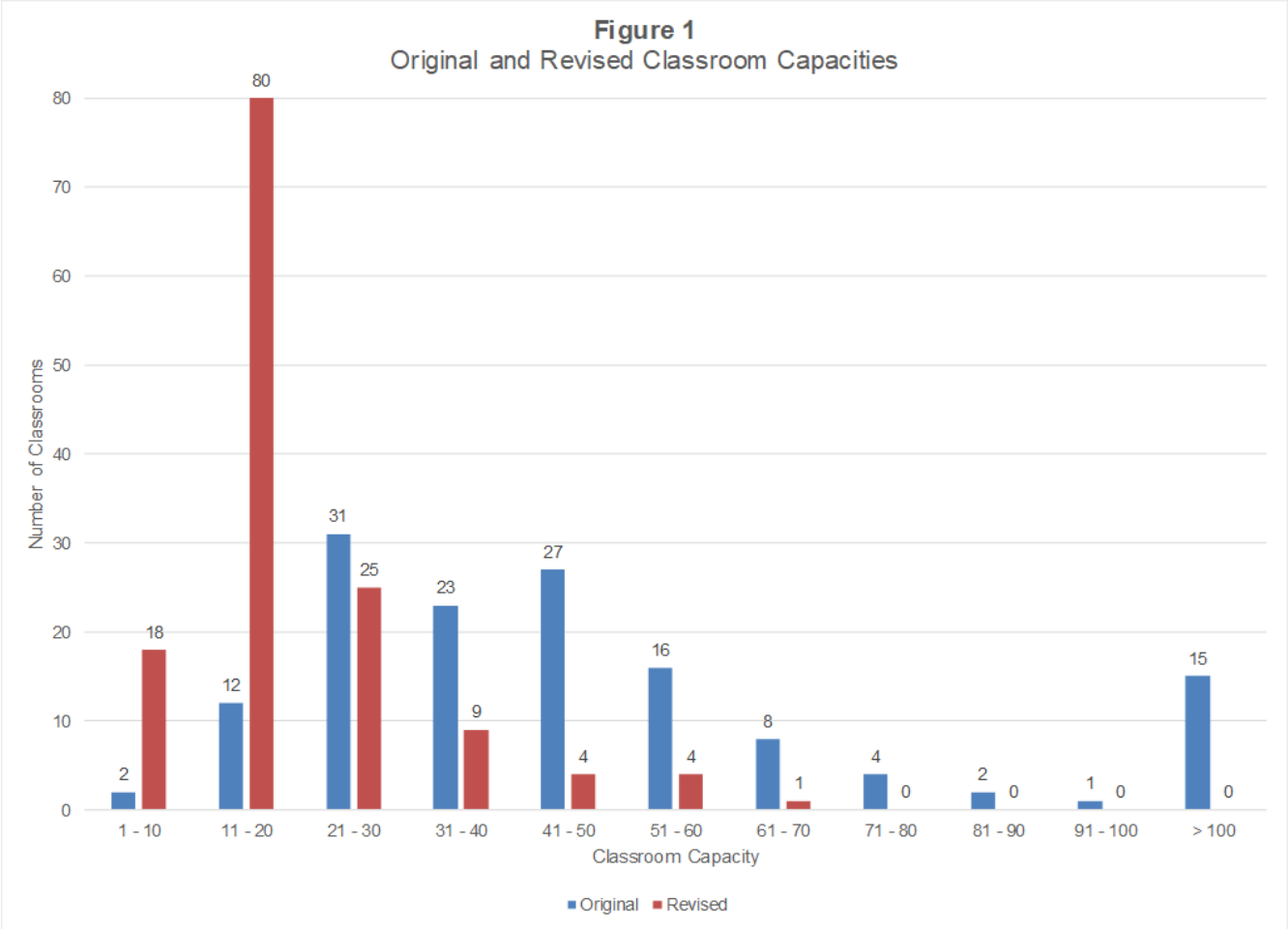
Protecting the health and safety of the UAH community while providing the unique value of the UAH education through on-campus activities is paramount. This overarching goal for Academic Affairs led to the development of the Academic Affairs Re-entry Plan by the Academic Working Group of the UAH Return to Campus Task Force. Key tenets used in the development of the Academic Affairs Plan and followed by all colleges are:

- 1) Reduce the density of people on campus at any time.
- 2) Deliver a high quality educational experience regardless of educational modality.
- 3) Be prepared to transition from on-campus and online to total online when necessary.
- 4) Provide remote access to all on-campus classes for students who want or need it.
- 5) Accommodate, whenever possible, faculty preferences for hybrid and online teaching modes.
- 6) Coordinate across academic units to facilitate scheduling.

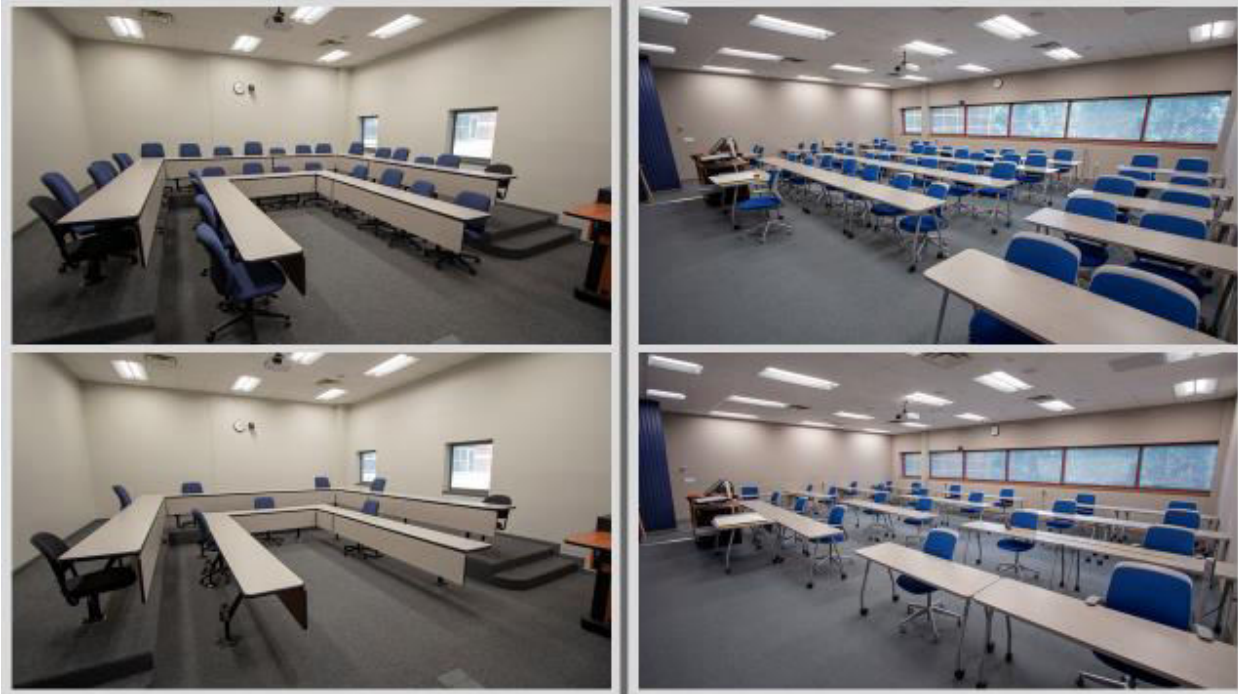
Please note that the College of Nursing and the College of Education Curriculum and Instruction Department have special restrictions imposed by outside agencies. They may follow the guiding principles of the Academics Plan but will have different implementations.

Academic Affairs Plan: The basic premise of the Academic Affairs plan is to provide a quality educational experience and promote safety and health by facilitating social distancing and reducing the density of students on campus. To accomplish these objectives, we must change from our normal course delivery mode.

Social distancing requirements of 6 feet separation circumferentially in classrooms severely limit the number of students who can occupy classrooms at one time. Our overall campus classroom capacity is lowered to 38% of normal capacity. Some classrooms have higher capacity, close to 50%, while others, particularly auditoriums, are less, sometimes, much less. Classrooms with auditorium seating are sparsely populated because the type of seating offers no flexibility and rows must be skipped to provide 6 feet of space circumferentially around each student. The number of students allowed in laboratories and studios at any given time is quite low. The table below shows the classroom limitations. The largest number of classrooms has a capacity of 15 to 20 persons.



In thinking about the changes in the classrooms required by practicing social distancing, imagine a typical classroom for 40 students filled to capacity. Then take away approximately 60% of the desks or chairs, leaving only 16 desks or chairs spaced 6 feet apart. The visuals of two classrooms in the Business Building with appropriate social distancing compared to their normal seating shown below illustrate the restrictions of social distancing.



For most classes, there are too many students in the class to be able to teach them all together. After a thorough analysis, the Academics Working Group developed the following plan:

- 1) UAH faculty will deliver the majority of undergraduate courses as hybrid courses, where part of the course is online and part on-campus. For those students who can come on campus, their attendance is rotated by assigning students to two groups: blue and silver. The students will be separated by the last digit of their A number. The blue group is composed of students with numbers from 0 to 4 and the silver group is composed of those with numbers from 5 to 9. The blue group attends class Monday and Tuesday while the silver group attends Wednesday and Thursday.
- 2) For undergraduate and select graduate on-campus courses, a faculty member would teach on-campus the blue group on Monday or Tuesday and the silver group on Wednesday or Thursday. The blue group on Wednesday or Thursday will complete course assignments and activities online; similarly, the silver group will work online on Monday or Tuesday. Faculty may want to use the in-class time for high-value activities such as collaborative learning, though 6 feet apart, case studies, problem solving, group discussions, etc.; you may want to use class time for lectures with question/answer periods, or possibly for student presentations, project-based learning, etc. For the students, on the other color block and for the students in your class who are in the remote section, learning fully online, you will record the class section via Panopto to be uploaded in Canvas or assign similar activities online.

- 3) Some students cannot come to campus for health or family reasons. For those students each on-campus course will have a simultaneous remote section where the students will take the course completely online. Those students who become COVID-19 positive or who must be quarantined during the semester can then utilize the online activities of the remote section of their on-campus course and remain current with their studies if they do not become too ill. A schematic of how the course will function is given below.

Hybrid Undergraduate Class		
Monday/Tuesday Class	Wednesday/Thursday Class	Friday
<u>Blue In Class</u> Students with A numbers ending in 0 to 4	<u>Silver In Class</u> Students with A numbers ending in 5 to 9	<u>Special Activities</u> Must be accessible for all students
<u>Silver online</u>	<u>Blue online</u>	
<u>Remote Section for Students Online</u> Includes those students who opt for online delivery or who are in quarantine		

- 4) Selected courses will only be taught fully online, particularly large enrollment courses, where UAH does not have sufficiently large classrooms to accommodate students because of social distancing. Department chairs and deans must approve courses that are taught fully online.
- 5) Colleges and departments will utilize Fridays to accommodate special class needs, such as ensembles, laboratories, theatre, 4-credit hour courses, etc. If your class has such a need, please discuss your need for utilizing Fridays with your department chair and dean to schedule the activity. Please remember online students will need to have an equivalent activity.
- 6) Some classes have sufficiently low enrollment that the classroom can accommodate the entire enrollment. In those cases, the course can be taught in our normal manner with the exception that there needs to be a simultaneous remote section to provide access for those who cannot come to class.
- 7) Students and faculty will have access to departmental, college, and university resources. The Library, Student Success Center, Instructional Testing Center, Disability Student Services, and academic advisors will all be open and available to students on-campus and online. Other resources, such as computer labs and college and departmental tutoring centers, will be available on-campus and arrangements are being made for remote access where possible.

This plan is sufficiently flexible to accommodate the programmatic and laboratory needs of the different colleges. Each college will determine whether the blue/silver schedule is required for their graduate classes. The number of students in the course and the availability of classrooms

where social distancing can be maintained will determine which graduate classes can follow a normal schedule with a remote/online section for those graduate students who cannot come to campus.

Class Schedule. Colleges have control over the delivery modality of their courses. Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and faculty of each college have worked together to define courses that are best offered fully online and best as hybrid courses. Please keep in mind all courses must be offered in a manner that allows students to complete them remotely and, where possible, courses should have an on-campus component to add value to the student experience. The class schedule will be updated online and in Banner to reflect delivery mode. Student schedules will be updated to reflect course changes with minimal effort on their part.

Other Health and Safety Measures. We are also taking other measures to reduce the likelihood of transmission of the virus on campus. All students, faculty, staff, and visitors are required to wear a face covering, such as a cloth mask or face shield in common areas, such as classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, etc. Students are being notified of this requirement. The Office of Academic Affairs will provide masks and face shields for all faculty members, GTAs, and staff members. If faculty members want an acrylic protection barrier at the podium of a classroom in which they teach, please contact Peggy Bower in the Office of Academic Affairs at peggy.bower@uah.edu. If the configuration of the classroom allows for the installation of an acrylic protection barrier, an acrylic shield will be provided for you.

All are encouraged to wash or sanitize hands frequently. Additional sanitizing stations and materials are being added throughout campus. Classroom layouts will maintain at least 6 feet between each person. Signage within the buildings will indicate directions in the hallways and on stairways. When possible, stairways will be up only or down only. Likewise, where rooms or buildings have multiple doors, marked entrances and exits will direct traffic flow. I encourage you to utilize technology, such as Zoom, to conduct office hours or to meet with students or colleagues outside of class.

Questions: Please contact your chairs, associate deans, and deans if you have questions regarding your classes and your re-entry to campus.

Although the uncertainty that we are facing is unsettling and these changes are disruptive, I am confident that, working together, we will have a successful fall semester. I appreciate your diligence in developing your courses for online asynchronous delivery and am grateful for your continued efforts on behalf of the education of our students.