

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 4, 2020

To: Faculty and Academic Affairs Staff

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

Brent Wren
Associate Provost

Subject: Important updates for Fall Semester 2020 and for Spring Semester 2021

As we charge toward the end of the Fall semester we would like to share a few pieces of information to help our faculty and students successfully finish the semester.

Pass/Withdraw Grading Option. As was the case last spring, students will be able to opt-in to Pass/Withdraw grading for courses. Students will make this decision on a course-by-course basis after discussing their individual situation with advisors. Faculty will not be informed whether students switch to Pass/Withdraw grading, so please continue to grade as you normally would.

Final Grades. Once we enter the final exam period, it is critical that final grades be submitted in a timely manner so that students can review them and make an informed decision. Students will only have three days to review grades and request a change, so please keep in mind the 48-hour window after your final exam for submitting grades, and **submit grades as soon as possible but not later than December 15.**

Nightly Grade Updates. Please note, the Registrar's Office will be rolling grades nightly so that students are able to quickly review grades and make a decision. This means that once you enter grades in Banner students will be able to see them the next day, unlike years past where grades were held until all faculty had submitted. Any grades changed after they have been submitted and rolled will require you to submit a change of grade form.

Communicate About Spring Semester. Please continue to communicate frequently with your students to help reduce the uncertainty and fear they are facing. It is important to connect with students and reinforce the desire to have them return to UAH and complete their programs of study with us. Please encourage them to register for Spring semester if they have not already done so.

Develop a Continuity Plan for Spring Semester. We ask that faculty develop a continuity plan for their course and include a statement in their syllabus that outlines what you would do in the event of a sudden change (temporary or long-term) in how the course is delivered. To that end, ETL has set up a web page with an example, resources, information, and worksheet to help faculty develop a continuity plan.

<https://www.uah.edu/etl/training-resources?view=article&id=14769:instructional-continuity&catid=919:enhanced-teaching-and-learning>

On-Campus Courses. It is important for us as a university to fully engage our students, help our students learn, and, whenever possible, bring them to campus for these important interactions. Hybrid courses give us the opportunity during the COVID-19 pandemic to meet the students face-to-face and engage them directly. For students to learn and connect with their peers, faculty, and the campus, it is important for faculty teaching hybrid courses to conduct them in person in the assigned location on the scheduled in-class days. Class meetings in hybrid courses should only be converted to online for pedagogical or health/safety reasons (e.g., the university has to go online because of a substantial increase in the number of COVID-19 cases or the instructor is ill or quarantined). Every hybrid course should meet on campus for 80% or more of the class meeting days. Varying from this expectation requires approval from the faculty member's department chair and dean.

Classroom Upgrades. The Academic Technologies group within ETL, along with over a dozen volunteers from across the campus, have begun working to upgrade classrooms for the Spring semester. These upgrades are in response to faculty requests for additional cameras, monitors, and audio equipment to better serve students. In order to provide the badly needed upgrades in 116 classrooms across our campus, as well as set-up six (6) recording studios for faculty, before the end of December, the group is working tirelessly over nights, weekends, and holidays. These classroom upgrades are funded by the CARES Act which is federal funding and requires all purchased equipment to be installed and fully operational by December 30. We were notified in late September that we had the opportunity to spend \$1.336 million dollars to improve our classrooms and enhance remote learning. The process of acquiring, receiving, and installing this equipment is multi-step and takes time. Installation began during Thanksgiving week and will continue until it is completed on or before December 30. We apologize for any inconvenience this effort has caused.

Summary of COVID-19 Health and Safety Rules for Spring Semester as of December 3, 2020. Please remember that these rules may change.

- Faculty and staff must complete Healthcheck every three days.
- Students must have a Healthcheck green passport to attend class on campus.
- All faculty, staff and students must maintain a social distance from the next person by at least six feet circumferentially.
- All faculty, staff and students must wear a face covering when inside a campus building, unless in an individual office/workspace with the door closed.
- All surfaces with which faculty, staff and students come into contact must be disinfected by the individual in the space prior to the start of class and after the end of class.
- Faculty, staff and students must not come to campus if they are ill.
- Please remember to continue with personal hygiene of frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.
- If at all possible, please participate in sentinel testing when called upon.

There will be no re-entry testing for faculty and staff at the start of Spring semester. Only students living in the residence halls and student-athletes will be required to have re-entry testing.

Each of us needs to be personally responsible and minimize our contact with others outside of our work. It is important that we continue take all necessary precautions to minimize our exposure to COVID-19 so that we do not bring COVID-19 onto campus and expose our students and each other.

Reporting Exposure to COVID-19. If you test positive for COVID-19 or if a faculty, staff, or student in a university building notifies you that the individual has had an exposure (close contact) to a positive COVID-19 case or has a positive COVID-19 lab result, notify the university as soon as possible. Provide information on when you or the individual you are reporting was last on campus, in which buildings, the areas in the buildings you or the individual spent more than 15 minutes, and whether you or the individual was wearing a mask. Provide any information available about the other members of the university community with whom you or the affected individual had close contact.

To make these notifications,

For faculty and staff, please contact Associate Vice President for Human Resources, Ms. Laurel Long, at longl@uah.edu or 256-824-6545 (email preferred). If you are the affected person, please call the Faculty and Staff Clinic at 256-824-2100. If you are reporting another faculty or staff member, please encourage that individual to call the Faculty and Staff Clinic at 256-824-2100.

For students, please contact the Dean of Students, Dr. Ronnie Hebert, dos@uah.edu or 256-824- 6700. Please encourage the student to contact the Student Health Center at 256-824-6775, Ext 3.

Please follow HIPAA rules. Only disclose the identity of the person you are reporting to the official receiver of the information who is listed above. Do not disclose that information to anyone else. For a full list of HIPAA guidelines, visit the US Department of Health and Human Services [website](#). Please note that guidelines can change.

This information is given in the Notification Protocol at <https://www.uah.edu/return-to-campus/health-and-safety/reporting-exposure>.

Contingency Plans for Spring Semester. If the COVID-19 cases continue to be at a high level, if our hospital system becomes inundated with COVID-19 patients, or if other factors exist that affect the health and safety of our faculty, staff and students, UAH may need to take further precautions. The most likely precaution would be starting Spring semester 100% online and staying online for a rolling two weeks. If we have to start the Spring semester 2021 online, we will notify you on January 6, 2021, that we will start the semester online for two weeks. On January 20, 2021, we will notify you if we will stay online for another two weeks or if we will resume in class operation as of January 27, 2021. We will continue to notify you every Wednesday as to whether we will stop the totally online delivery the next week or continue it for another two weeks.

Cc Darren Dawson, President