Recommendations from the Scheduling and Instructional Delivery Working Group

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Executive Summary

The committee has explored various approaches to scheduling and delivering courses for the Fall 2020 semester. Providing safe teaching and learning environments is paramount, and each member of the UW community should be able to opt for what is comfortable to them. Thus, if a faculty member or a student wishes to teach or to learn in an online setting, those wishes should be accommodated. In short, under Scenario 1 (see Appendix A) we recommend each class be offered either purely online or in the HyFlex mode which provides both face-to-face and online learning opportunities. If a classroom could not safely accommodate all the students in a particular course then the instructor would implement a weekly rotation of different student cohorts for the face-to-face sessions. We recommend purely online delivery for either Scenario 2 or 3. In terms of scheduling, we recommend that Fall 2020 classes begin on the nominal start date of August 24 and end on December 04, one week earlier than currently planned. Replacing the two days of Mid-Semester Break and the three days prior to Thanksgiving with regular class days would recover the traditional 15-week semester. The week of classes after Thanksgiving Break as well as Finals Week should be delivered online. Similarly, to lower the risk of travel-related outbreaks, Spring Break should be canceled. To avoid the historical peak of the flu season, we recommend postponing the start of Spring 2021 by one week to January 25 and preparing faculty for the possibility of the first portion of the spring semester occurring online except where in-person experiences are critical.

Modes of instructional delivery

Two important issues should be considered. First, safety and flexibility are key. Some members of our UW community are immuno-compromised or are concerned about spreading the corona virus to friends and family who face serious health risks. Since distance education provides clear safety benefits as well as versatility, we recommend allowing faculty or students to be able to choose that their courses be offered online. Fortunately, ECTL and IT are committed to providing the necessary resources to optimize online learning (see Appendix C). Second, providing a face-to-face learning experience can be critical for student success and retention, and it removes many of the hurdles faculty face when proctoring exams. Our preferred model is two-pronged: each course is either purely online, or it follows a HyFlex format where faculty provide both on-campus and online learning opportunities. Key Concepts of HyFlex include:

- Students choose when/how to participate in the class: face-to-face synchronous, remote synchronous, remote asynchronous
- Each student's choices are fluid; students can move between contexts throughout the course
- Instructors create reusable, persistent learning objects for content delivery
  - students access and consume content prior to engaging in learning activities
- Synchronous class meetings focus on active learning
  - Instructors facilitate and engage students in synchronous activities, e.g., answering questions and serving as resources -- for both face-to-face and remote participants
- Asynchronous and synchronous courses have "identical" outcomes, assignments, assessments, and timelines

Though some faculty wonder if the HyFlex model requires twice as much work, there are relatively simple technological solutions, at least for the majority of (traditional) courses. And the ECTL is available to help with pedagogy. Lavalier-type microphones should be utilized to ensure adequate sound levels, especially for remote participants. Meeting "owls" should be installed where feasible.

For large courses delivered online, it is important to maintain student motivation. We support the research working group's recommendation for a *Recovery Teaching Scholar Program.* This program would provide a special pool for additional GTA/UGTA funding to assist faculty with developing and implementing online coursework. Another option to help make large online courses more personal is to hire additional teachers to run many small discussions sessions.

Scheduling

We recommend starting classes on August 24 as planned. Starting earlier in the hopes of finishing by Thanksgiving would place additional strains on students with respect to their summer jobs/internships and off-campus housing leases. An earlier start would also compress the transition timescale between summer and fall courses. Whichever mode of course delivery is adopted, we encourage UW to be completely online after Thanksgiving to maximize safety. We should remove the two days of Mid-Semester Break, Oct 15 & 16, and the three break days prior to Thanksgiving, November 23-25; having regular classes on these days would allow a full 15-week semester to finish on Dec 04 and Finals Week to occur over Dec 7-11. A full 15-week semester more easily provides the required number of hours for certain clinical courses and field experiences. There are other options for delivering the expected number of contact hours over a shorter time period, such as evening or Saturday classes, but the committee did not receive these ideas enthusiastically. If the academic calendar is altered to less that 15 weeks of instruction the office of Scholarships and Financial Aid must seek approval from the Department of Education. If approval is not granted no federal aid can be awarded for the academic year.

J-term courses are almost exclusively online or abroad. Any study abroad courses that will be offered during AY 2020-2021 need to be carefully evaluated for their safety implications.

We recommend that the spring semester be delayed by one week and start on January 25. Faculty should be prepared to deliver the beginning of the spring semester online as well. Cases of the flu typically occur during Dec/Jan/Feb, so delaying the face to face component of the spring semester will help avoid straining our health care system with two respiratory viruses simultaneously. Moreover, delaying the start of the spring term would also provide more time for the development of a COVID vaccine or treatment. Removing Spring Break would allow for a 15-week term to end normally on May 7 and provide additional campus safety by limiting travel-related outbreaks.

We do not recommend pursuing block scheduling. Having 4- or 6- or 8-week classes places severe constraints on large introductory courses with numerous lab sections (limited equipment, facilities, human resources, etc.). Block scheduling would also require the office of Scholarships and Financial Aid to monitor and disburse aid in a different sequence than is currently in place.

Maintaining safe environments

Proper social distancing in our larger courses can be achieved via "cohort rotation". For example, if a course regularly meets TR, one half of the students could attend in-person on Tuesday and the other half could attend on Thursday. Alternatively, faculty could provide a sign-up sheet for each class period, one that is limited to the number of seats safely available. To facilitate such decisions, Chris Maki of UW Facilities has computed for each classroom the maximum number of students that can safely attend (e.g.,

40 square feet per student). Current Wyoming Department of Health Guidance for Education Institutions states that "all efforts should be made to limit the number of people in one room or confined area to 25 or less."

Brent Pickett, Dean of UW Casper, has kindly offered classroom space for UW students from Natrona County (N~460) who may wish to remain home for the fall semester. These spaces are equipped with the latest in remote learning technology and could provide a safe and convenient option for learning while still reaping the benefits of having peers in the same classroom.

We recommend that cleaning stations, with detailed instructions, be provided within or near every classroom, computer lab, practice space, and artist studio. Students would clean their immediate surroundings prior to, or at the start of, each class or work session. We recommend students do not bring their own cleaning products since they may cause allergic reactions in their classmates. Jenn Coast, Deputy Director of UW Facilities, confirmed this would be feasible and the preferred method for helping to maintain safety in the classrooms.

The committee discussed lengthening the time between courses, but it was not deemed worth pursuing given the numerous logistical and registration hurdles (e.g., some departments are already teaching from 8:00 am to 9:30 pm). However, where possible, departments should fully utilize a full teaching day from 8 am to 5 pm, or later, and schedule classes so they do not meet back to back to allow time for cleaning, ventilation of space, and social distancing between classes.

We recommend masks be used by all faculty and students in classrooms and when transiting to and from class. Exceptions are necessary in certain situations like vocal/wind musical ensembles and dance classes.

Finally, we recommend that high traffic areas such as the Classroom Building be clearly marked with "travel signs" to encourage safe pedestrian flow. For example, the south and west (north and east) side doors could be exit (entrance) only.

Workload

The HyFlex model entails some additional work on behalf of the faculty. A potential solution is to provide additional credit for faculty who opt to teach in HyFlex mode. If, for example, a 3-credit HyFlex course is determined to be worth 4 credits of teaching, then effectively a 3:2 load maps to a 2:2 load, 2:2 maps to 2:1, and 2:1 maps to 1:1. Another potential solution is to provide financial incentives to faculty who adopt the HyFlex model and/or spend a significant portion of their Summer 2020 prepping for Fall 2020.

Curriculum

A portion of the incoming freshman class will opt for a gap semester if we go online. In response to this situation we recommend shifting some of the FYS courses from fall semester to spring.

Law School

Law Schools must abide by strict national accreditation guidelines and it is unclear if these will be relaxed for COVID-19. For example, the American Bar Association has restrictions on online teaching. We have recommended to the Law School administration that they pursue socially-distanced teaching and learning.

Technology Support

Certain tech issues will arise if many of our courses go online. For example, faculty will need to be trained how to capture video of their lectures and how to best post their electronic media online. Increased disk storage space will be needed to accommodate the increase in video recordings of lectures. Ideally, UW would select a single utilize proctoring software and provide the necessary tech support for that choice including responding to student inquiries. Additional considerations for instructional expenses and software through Distance Education also need to be considered (i.e., licenses for Nearpod, HonorLock, VidGrid, Camtasia, Zoom, Quality Matters, Filmora, etc.). Finally, as mentioned above, we recommend that UW invest in "meeting owls", lavalier microphones, tablets, etc. Appropriate technology support must be available to support students with accommodations/disabilities no matter what format is provided.

Appendix A: Recommended response to three different scenarios

1. Virus contained (best case) and moderate public health measures maintained

2. Virus resurgence (uneven recurrence, stronger preventative measures and caution warranted) -

3. Virus escalation (significant re-emergence, return to spring 2020 state or worse)

We recommend purely online course delivery for Scenarios #2 and #3, and online+HyFlex for Scenario #1. We recommend online delivery for both #2 and #3 since students would inevitably mix outside of class. One possible ramification of going online is a drop in our enrollment and a concomitant increase for the state's seven community colleges. A silver lining for such a situation is that we would be positioned to assist our community college colleagues by providing additional (online) teaching capacity.

Appendix B: Clinical/laboratory/performance course considerations

On 27 March 2020, the University proposed guidance for students in clinical/internship/field experiences. This guidance continues to be pertinent for AY 2020-2021 with the recommendation that departments continue to offer experiences as appropriate throughout the semester if allowed by the community agency and offered in a safe manner for students. In addition, departments/colleges/schools should follow the guidance and instructions given by their accrediting and licensing bodies in light of the current COVID19 situation.

Providing face-to-face educational experiences is fundamental for many educational settings. Clinical and science labs are particularly thorny for distance education. Performance and studio art courses face similar challenges. It is difficult for an online scenario to adequately replace hands-on/in-person experiences such as assessing the health of a patient, pipetting, learning the nuances of microscopy, building an electronics circuit, etc. A standard working solution, both at UW and elsewhere, is to capture video of instructors carrying out the mechanics of the exercise/experiment. Students are then provided with the data obtained by the instructors and submit reports based on those data. If adequate safety precautions can be taken, on-campus clinical and laboratory courses are preferred.

In the fine and performing arts, the act of rehearsing and creating art face to face cannot be replicated online. Ensemble learning is vital to synthesizing feedback for all students. Hearing and seeing what other students are doing is a crucial part of student success. Theatre, dance and music students can be rehearsed and recorded in small, socially distanced groups. These recordings would then need to be mixed and edited requiring additional audio/video technology (cameras, microphones, software, and

hardware) and resources to hire recording engineers to allow for sharing in an online environment. If deemed safe, small, socially distanced theatre, dance, and music ensembles could perform for small in-person, or remote WyoCast audiences. If students are required to rehearse or participate in class in isolation, adequate spaces for health and safety (proper ventilation, use of necessary equipment, sprung floor, obstacle free space, acoustic control) need to be provided in spaces on campus or in extension offices around the state. Participating in a movement class with a mask has been questioned by industry professionals. If there are underlying health concerns such as asthma, decreased oxygen uptake may be a concern. But even in healthy individuals, physical activity with a mask may cause dizziness until students acclimate to wearing a mask.

Art is considering the Hyflex model as a starting point. Art studio classes meet twice weekly for 2.5 hours each class. The studio courses are capped at 18 students, so the rotating cohort model would result in 9 students attending one day and the other 9 attending on the other day. Alternatively, some art faculty are considering having 9 students attending for the first half of each class period and the remaining 9 students attending the second half. To prepare students for this model, faculty would pre-record videos of lectures and demos, update their PowerPoints, and require students to watch videos and view the PowerPoints ahead of the day's class.

This approach still requires the faculty to have prerecorded lectures and online content, but also gives students much needed time in the studio, using equipment, and allowing the faculty to balance lecture and demo time with work days that give students time to put those demos into practice. Faculty would work the whole time allotted for their class and are at least able to interact, answer questions, and do some individual demonstrations in the classroom with them as well as provide much needed feedback on works in progress—it is much harder to assess a work if it has been uploaded, since the quality of the image suffers.

Appendix C: Instructional Design and Tech Support

If our AY20-21 courses will be online or Hyflex, enhanced tech and instructional design support will be needed. UW faculty stepped up after Spring Break 2020 and did their best to switch to online course delivery, but we can do better on behalf of our students if sufficient support is provided well in advance of the Fall 2020 semester. The staff at the Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning (ECTL) are eager to provide support for instructional design.

We strongly believe that student learning will benefit from courses that are developed and/or redesigned by *their own instructors*, mentored by UW instructional designers who are experts in educational development. Thus, the focus of these grants is on supporting faculty directly in rethinking and rebuilding their classroom materials and pedagogies. Recognizing the impressive and substantial time commitments that faculty have already made and will continue to make during COVID-19, we see these grants as a way to help reward and incentivize sustained efforts to prepare for the teaching environments UW will face in Fall 2020 and beyond.

We also believe that the more we utilize our *local* assets and talent to manage this transition, the better we can continue to deliver quality, cohesive education tailored to the needs of our student populations regardless of the circumstances. The ECTL employs a group of educational design experts who are united by the ECTL's mission: *to promote, support and evaluate the active pursuit of teaching and learning excellence for UW's teaching community through a broad range of research-based programs, services and resources.*

In pursuit of the ECTL's mission during this time of rapid change, we have agreed to coordinate efforts with faculty mentors at UW who are already local experts in online, hybrid and flexible courses. This cadre of experts, operating from one unified hub within the ECTL, can provide valuable guidance not only to redesign courses during this crisis, but to build sustained knowledge and capacity for using digital technologies for future coursework and programming as well.

Because we recognize that a "one size fits all" model will not work for all faculty or courses, we have designed a support model that should provide flexibility for faculty to choose activities that are best suited for their individual needs. Below is a menu of options meant to guide faculty to possible projects for improving their teaching. We envision that these grants will be administered through ECTL.

ECTL Faculty Support Grants

Summer 2020 ECTL Faculty Support Grants	Option 1 Course Redesign via ECTL Virtual Summer Institute	Option 2 *Quality Matters* Training	Option 3 GRAD 5910: Teaching Methods and Applications (online)	Option 4 Self-directed development, revision, and creation of materials for individual courses, programs, and divisions for AY20-21 course delivery.
	An intensive one-week redesign course with workshops, development time and expert mentor support. Eight separate sessions will be offered.	*Quality Matters* is a nationally recognized organization that provides guidance on developing and assessing online courses. This rigorous asynchronous course allows faculty, administrators, and staff to become familiar with the QM rubric and how the standards inform online course design.	This is a 3-credit S/U course (delivered asynchronously online) that will be offered this summer. It provides an overview of theory, plus best practices and strategies for developing and delivering well-structured and engaging courses.	Faculty who choose this option will be assigned a mentor and will be asked to develop a check-in schedule to allow them to provide updates and gain feedback from their mentor. This is a set-up grant so faculty will propose what they need.
Timeline	Eight options for one-week programs. June 15- Aug 15	Flexible, with August 15 end date	June 22 - Aug 14	Flexible, with August 15 end date

Grant amount	$3000	$3000 $200 registration fee per person (paid by DE)	$3000	Up to $3000 for stipend and/or supplies
Deliverable	Course shell ready for AY20-21 deployment	Course shell ready for AY20-21 deployment, with self-evaluation using QM rubric	Evidence of course site, materials, and/or assignment development	Evidence of material/ assignment development

Anticipated Local Investments in Faculty and Technology for this Model

Up to 300 $3000 grants = $900,000 ($377,000 fringe)

ECTL mentor and staff summer income = $200,000 ($84,000 fringe)

Grants Coordinator (summer GA) = $10,000 ($200 fringe)