

Provost Winningham's Faculty Senate Report

April 28, 2020

Faculty and Program Planning for Fall 2020

There is considerable uncertainty regarding how much Oregon and higher education will be opened back up this fall. According to [Governor Brown's plan](#), in order to have more in-person opportunities on campus, we will need to meet certain benchmarks or gating criteria (e.g., reduced trajectory of COVID-19 cases, adequate testing capabilities, adequate contact tracing) and receive support from our local healthcare partners (e.g., Polk County Health). Gating criteria will allow us to move from Phase 0 (our current situation) to Phase 1, then to Phase 2 and Phase 3. It is important to note that it is likely that after moving to Phase 1 or 2, we will have to go back to Phase 1 or 0 if local health conditions worsen.

WOU and other public universities in Oregon need to plan for maximum flexibility to respond to various scenarios at the beginning and throughout the fall 2020 term. Our choice of course delivery formats will provide some of that flexibility.

Course Delivery Formats

We have three types of course delivery formats: in-person, hybrid and online. It is important that we engage in thoughtful planning about which format will best serve our students in a dynamic situation. Although the Fall 2020 schedule has already been loaded, we can still make changes. We are likely to have more hybrid and online courses planned for the upcoming year, though we recognize that in many circumstances, online and hybrid delivery are not the best formats for faculty or students. For those who do choose to develop hybrid and online courses for Fall 2020, we are planning to offer expanded training and support during Summer 2020.

In-person Format. An in-person format may be chosen by faculty and programs if in-person instruction is critical. Some labs and studios are better suited for in-person instruction. However, faculty should keep in mind that if we are allowed to have in-person instruction at the beginning of fall term, we could be required by state or county directive to stop in-person meetings until the public health situation improves. Faculty choosing this option should be prepared to shift instruction to an alternative format on short notice should this happen.

Hybrid Format. Given the uncertainties for Fall 2020 and the flexibility of hybrid courses, this is likely to be the best option for the majority of courses. Hybrid courses have a scheduled meeting time (e.g., 2 hours a week at a set time and day) that is fewer total hours than an in-person course with the same credit hours, and utilizes asynchronous online/remote instructional methods for the remaining instructional time. The proportion split between instructional methods should be determined based on a ratio that will optimally meet course goals and learning outcomes. The ratio does not need to be 50/50. However, the originally scheduled time for synchronous participation must be adhered to throughout the quarter, even if delivery mode shifts from in-person to online/remote synchronous class sessions.

Benefits of the hybrid format, given the uncertain situation:

- Hybrid courses allow for in-person activities that are critical for many programs' learning outcomes. Many of our students express that they perform better when they have more in-person instruction. WOU is known for its personalized support, and that in-person time can be critical in maximizing outcomes.
- Hybrid courses have a set meeting time, so if we need to limit in-person instruction, faculty can schedule synchronous Zoom meetings at the set meeting time they were using for in-person instruction. Hybrid courses limit the need for facilities, enabling us to maximize the use of classrooms that are larger and allow for more physical distancing and an efficient disinfecting schedule.
- While hybrid courses have campus fees associated with them, they do not incur online course fees.

Online Format. Online courses at WOU have traditionally been asynchronous, with no scheduled meeting times. The online format may be attractive to students who are unwilling to move onto campus, who have no childcare options, or who have health-related concerns. We believe that online courses will enroll well for Fall 2020, and there will be the least disruption to online courses if WOU is required to cease in-person instruction because of a COVID-19 spike in our region.

Physical Distancing and Mitigation Measures

In the current draft of Oregon's plan to reopen, meetings will be limited to 10 people in Phase 1, and 50 people in Phase 2. If we are able to have in-person class meetings, we will need to maximize physical distancing. As much as possible, we will schedule in-person meetings in larger rooms to maximize physical distancing and we will be mindful of air flow and ventilation. Faculty can help these efforts by offering their courses in hybrid or online formats where possible.

Oregon's plan to reopen references the use of face masks and temperature checks. More details about those possible measures will be made available in the coming months. We have already implemented many procedures to maximize our community's safety and health (e.g., disinfecting rooms and high-touch surfaces, making changes to campus dining, and creating additional physical distancing in common areas and computer labs).

New Summer 2020 Program Supporting Development of Hybrid and Online Courses

Academic Innovation will be announcing a new Summer 2020 program to train and support individual faculty in developing or improving their online and hybrid courses for use in Fall 2020 and beyond. In addition, Academic Innovation will work with several programs to create and expand online pathways to graduation. When working with a program to create an online pathway, Academic Innovation will support a cohort of program colleagues to work on their courses over the summer.

Advising Students for Fall 2020

First and foremost, extend patience and grace. Both for yourself and for students. All of this change has been hard to keep up with this term and we are all feeling the stress. Given the large amount of information and communication that students have received, we recommend providing students with follow up emails, websites, or other resources they can go to to refer back to information discussed during advising sessions. Many of these resources are listed below.

Advisor Support. SSA has compiled a list of words of encouragement for advisors gathered from advisors across campus. They can be accessed here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Qdy8t0mKFyflU-mWsqUTIZU0kahw9_O5Ri_0XH0XXvw/edit?usp=sharing.

We have also created an Advising Connections group chat for advisors **to allow advisors from across campus to connect and discuss strategies for helping our students during this time.** If you would like to be added to the Google Chat, please fill out this request form: <https://forms.gle/Tv1fyvpqPybaFApq5>. Once added to the chat, feel free to post questions, concerns, ideas, etc for the group to review and provide responses.

Do you need a resource to easily find advising information and connect with students? If yes, the Wolf Connections System can be used to facilitate that. See more details online

at: <https://wou.edu/advising/wolf-connection-system-2/>. Please contact Lizzy Harman (harmanl@wou.edu) for more details and training.

Remote advising: How to connect with students. There are many ways to facilitate remote advising appointments. Phone, email, and videoconferencing are just a few strategies. What's most important is to clearly communicate with students (early and often) the methods you have available for advising appointments and questions. For details on using many of the tech tools remotely, you can refer to the Remote Work page provided by UCS: <https://wou.edu/tech/remote-access/>.

Practicums and internships. Given the uncertainties around our ability to have in-person instructional activities, it will be difficult to plan for practicums and internships for fall term. In some cases, students may be able to do a practicum remotely. Given the state's plan to reopen Oregon, we could get in a situation where a practicum would be possible in one area of the state (e.g., a rural area that has not seen many COVID-19 cases) but not in other areas (e.g., more urban areas).

Substitutions might be necessary based on courses that may have changed due to COVID-19.

- As needed, refer students to the General Education petition form: www.wou.edu/gened/petitions-form
- For additional General Education related questions, refer to the General Education website for advising resources: <https://wou.edu/gened/faculty-resources/for-advisors/>
- For students with questions about how the S*/NC option will impact their degree requirements, they can refer to this FAQ page: <https://wou.edu/provost/keep-learning/s-nc-grading-faqs/>

Help students understand the distinction between difference course formats and the expectations for each type.

Questions to consider asking students. Will the student be living on campus or in the Monmouth area? Students living off campus in the Monmouth area often need to pay rent over the summer. Given the uncertainty, some students may choose to not secure housing close to campus. In cases like that, faculty may be able to help students build a fall term schedule using online courses.

Do students have the technology/wifi/data to complete coursework remotely?

- If students have technology needs, refer them to the Library for technology checkouts: <https://library.wou.edu/coronavirus/>.

Does the student do well in online and remote courses? Do they need to improve their time management skills? Many students are aware that they do better with more in-person contact with their faculty and classmates. Advisors can discuss this with students and help them build schedules with more hybrid or fully in-person courses.

- If students need additional support with learning strategies for online/remote courses, SSA advisors and tutors are available to work with students to develop a plan for success. Students can schedule appointments online through WCS (located in the WOU Portal).
- Faculty can refer students for help from SSA/SEP/MSSP through WCS ([instructions here](#)).
- Refer students to utilize resources on this website: <https://wou.edu/provost/keep-learning/>
- Take advantage of the tutoring centers. More info is available at: <http://wou.edu/freetutoring>
 - Writing Center
 - Math Center
 - Science Center
 - Student Success and Advising Tutoring
 - English Tutoring Center
 - Computer Science Tutoring

How are the students doing economically? Have they submitted their FAFSA? Additional federal aid that is distributed because of COVID-19 will very likely require that a FAFSA has been processed.

- For students that haven't submitted a FAFSA or who experienced a change in employment that might impact their FAFSA eligibility, they can contact the Financial Aid office for additional support. Financial Aid is providing remote services and appointments may be scheduled through WCS.