

TO: University of Idaho Faculty
CC: University of Idaho Staff
FROM: Diane Kelly-Riley, Interim Vice Provost for Faculty
Barbara Kirchmeier, Chair, Faculty Senate
Brian Smentkowski, Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
DATE: Dec 18, 2020
SUBJECT: Spring Teaching Details



We write with details to help you prepare for teaching in Spring 2021. First, we want to acknowledge the extremely challenging circumstances and the substantial amount of extra work that you did during Fall 2020. Your efforts in these difficult times are greatly appreciated, both in terms of your support of the institution and specifically your work with our students.

If you are a supervisor of instructors whose appointments begin after the new year, please share this information with them.

Relevant Dates for Teaching and COVID-19 Testing — Spring 2021 Calendar

Below are the relevant instructional dates for Spring 2021. Please note that instruction formats for March 22-26 are still to be determined. We do know Moscow-based students will be retested after Spring Break.

- Jan. 6-15: Moscow-Based COVID-19 Testing (note: free COVID-19 testing for faculty and staff will be available on Jan. 6 and 13-15, 2021).
- Jan. 7: WWAMI Classes Begin
- Jan. 11: Law Classes Begin
- Jan. 13: Spring Classes Begin
- Jan. 18: Martin Luther King Day — U of I Closed
- Feb. 15: Presidents Day — U of I Closed
- March 15-19: Spring Break
- March 22-26: Moscow Post-Spring Break COVID-19 Testing (note: a final decision regarding teaching format will be announced in January)
- May 3-7: No Exam Week
- May 3-14: Law Final Exams
- May 10-14: Final Exams
- May 15: Moscow Commencement

Course Formats

There are [five course format designations](#) for Spring 2021: Classroom meeting; HyFlex; Hybrid; Virtual; and Online. Please teach your assigned course(s) to meet the description of the course format. Students register and expect that their courses will be held in certain ways and there are other potential negative complications for teaching outside the designated format.

Teaching Resources

Many of you continue to teach in formats new to you. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) has a great deal of information to support teaching during these challenging times including [recorded workshops and online resources](#). CETL is also available for individual consultations.

CETL will host [several workshops and work groups](#) throughout the Spring 2021 semester.

According to the October 2020 faculty questionnaire, the HyFlex format presented the most challenges in the fall. There are several resources available to consult if you are assigned to teach in a HyFlex format:

- CETL's [HyFlex format discussion group held via Microsoft Teams](#)
- CETL's HyFlex [Course Delivery Resource page](#) and [HyFlex Classroom Technology](#).
- Colleagues in your department or college who had success with HyFlex — while this format presented challenges for some, many faculty also found that it worked well. Utilize the local expertise in your unit or college to see how they dealt with challenges in the format.

Attendance/Engagement

Student attendance and engagement presented challenges for many this fall. Faculty were encouraged to accommodate students as much as possible. In the spring, faculty should clarify their expectations for attendance and participation, especially for HyFlex courses.

You can make long-term arrangements with a student to complete coursework virtually at your discretion. Such arrangements are optional and are not required outside of the course format type. To document these arrangements (and possibly exempt students from COVID-19 testing requirements) a [Remote Instruction Override](#) must be in place through VandalWeb.

Faculty are not required to provide long-term COVID-19-related instructional accommodations outside of the assigned course format. Faculty can anticipate some shorter-term attendance disruptions due to illness, quarantine and/or isolation requirements.

Here are some considerations relative to attendance and engagement:

- Courses with clear attendance requirements had better student engagement with the course content. How might you articulate participation and attendance expectations to foster better student engagement that support your instructional goals and the course format?
- In your courses, consider having a conversation with students about working as a class to develop participation expectations and define what it means to actively participate in class. You may consider discussing with your students how engagement in their course will affect their learning/understanding of material.
- Consult with your colleagues about their attendance policies and what worked for them.

Testing and In-person Classes

To attend in-person instruction activities (classes, labs, exams, etc.), students need to meet the University of Idaho's COVID-19 testing requirements. These are detailed in the [Vandal Healthy Pledge](#). Students who test positive for COVID-19 will be contacted by Idaho Public Health and are under their direction.

Daily ineligible-to-attend-class lists will be sent to your email. These lists ensure that you are notified about students who have tested positive or who have not met the U of I requirements for COVID-19 testing and/or isolation/quarantine requirements.

The university adopted the newly-released CDC guidance for quarantine. You will see students out of class for shorter periods of time as quarantine (for possible exposure) is 10 days, but anyone showing a negative test on day five is considered clear and removed from the ineligible list. U of I plans to provide five-day testing.

Technology

ITS is making the following updates for Spring 2021:

- 140 new laptops were purchased to upgrade outdated equipment (80 to Extension faculty, 60 to regular faculty).
- Camtasia lecture recording/editing software has been purchased and will be available.
- ITS is working with faculty who have specialized software needs to place them in specific classroom locations.
- To assist with lecture recording and creation of other instructional materials, design for eight new lightboard studios and eight one-button studios is underway with planned opening for Summer/Fall 2021.
- New laptops, webcams, and headsets are in stock and available from ITS for department purchase.

Well-Being

This year has been extremely stressful given the pandemic and the multiple stresses it has placed on our professional and personal lives. U of I employees have access to our [Employee Assistance Program](#) that provides free, confidential resources to counseling and referral for family problems, substance abuse, stress/anxiety, legal concerns, personal relationships, finances, depression, workplace, grief, anger management, abuse and other issues.

Finally, if you feel that a campus community member is in distress or displaying concerning behavior and you would like to make a referral to the Dean of Students Office, file a [VandalCARE report](#). Once a VandalCARE report is sent in, a case manager reviews the report to determine what the best initial action would be for that situation. Sometimes this is an email or phone call to check in on the person, while other times it might be a meeting. Some reports may be referred to the VandalCARE Team for help in coordinating outreach or resources.

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