



FROM THE PROVOST

October 1, 2021

Good morning, Colleagues,

The Pandemic/Endemic Planning Task Force transmitted its interim report and Phase I recommendations Wednesday afternoon, and President Shrum and I had an opportunity to review and discuss their proposal. We appreciate how quickly the task force worked through key issues related to the start of Spring 2022 and, with the endorsement of President Shrum and myself, their guidance is provided for your review in the attached document. The interim report of the task force and the recommendations are available for review at ([site](#)).

A key priority for the task force, co-chaired by Drs. Mindy McCann and Stephen Clarke, was to seek faculty guidance on approaches that could be used to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and complications for in-person courses.

In light of current cases and test positivity, the task force recommends OSU continues to monitor and follow CDC guidance and, if necessary, revise university-wide mitigation strategies as conditions warrant or new variants emerge.

In preparation for the Spring 2022 semester, the task force further recommends administrators provide flexibility and empower department/school heads to work with faculty to develop mutually agreeable solutions that address COVID-19 related faculty concerns not accommodated by the EO process. Potential options to reduce student density in the classroom include:

- Adding a separate synchronous online section that is cross-listed with the in-person section of a course.
- Utilization of a hybrid format. If a course is listed as hybrid, the class schedule should ideally specify when students should be in-person and when they should be online. It is ideal to build separate sections that specify when students should be in-person and when they should be online.
- Allowing faculty the ability to split one higher density section into two lower density sections.
- Allowing faculty the ability to split up one 16-week course into two 8-week hybrid sections that meet half-time in person in a standard timeslot and half-time online.
- Encourage colleges, schools, and departments to share locally-controlled spaces with other academic units to allow for more effective space utilization.
- Encourage the utilization of historically low-fill or low-enrollment time slots.
- Other options that are mutually agreeable to faculty and college administrators that provide appropriate accommodations that do not negatively impact overall enrollment, progress towards degree, or high-quality learning experiences.

Finally, to facilitate timely publication of the Spring 2022 schedule in Banner, units should submit to the Registrar's Office all changes no later than the close of business on Monday, October 11. It is critically important that units meet this deadline to provide the Office of the Registrar sufficient time to make changes. They are working on a very short timeline and we cannot guarantee changes made after October 11 will be in Banner prior to enrollment. The Office of the Registrar intends to publish the Spring 2022 schedule on Wednesday, October 20, and priority enrollment will begin on Monday, November 1.

For more detailed information, please see the attached document. Additionally, Ms. Rita Peaster, University Registrar, will be sending a separate communication with implementation details that will also address the online/hybrid approval process.

Again, my thanks to Drs. McCann and Clarke and members of the task force for their work to date and to the Registrar's Office team for their assistance in implementing Spring 2022 modifications to be received no later than the close of business on Monday, October 11.

Best regards,

Jeanette

Jeanette M. Mendez
Interim Provost and Senior Vice President