

GUIDANCE TO FACULTY ON ACADEMIC RETURN TO CAMPUS PLAN

In June, President Birge announced that MCLA students would return to campus this fall. Courses will be taught in Blended format, and all courses will switch to fully-online at Thanksgiving. During the month of June, a group of faculty, staff, and administrators (referred to as the Course Logistics Subcommittee) met several times to more finely tune a plan for students to return to classrooms on campus this fall. The subcommittee members are Anthony Daly, Justin Golub, Chali Nondo, Diane Scott, Deborah Currie, Cindy MacDonald, Gerol Petruzella, Ely Janis, Gina Puc, and Adrienne Wootters.

In order to attempt to create an environment on campus that will be as safe and healthy as possible for in-person instruction, we need to make some dramatic changes to the way that we operate in the classroom during the fall semester. The changes recommended below address a variety of requirements, including: establishing social distancing in the classroom; providing for potential contact tracing if necessary; limiting the number of people in buildings and hallways at a given time; and allowing for the important in-person interactions between students and faculty that are an integral part of a MCLA education.

Our return to campus plan remains fluid. Over the course of the summer, the administration will continue to monitor local, statewide, and national data and emerging best practices to guide our work at the campus level. This may result in substantive changes to the recommendations that follow. Your patience and flexibility as we navigate this set of unprecedented circumstances together will be necessary and greatly appreciated!

CLASSROOM LOGISTICS

Course Structures

The subcommittee spent a great deal of time discussing potential recommendations for course structures which will support the Blended Learning model. The subcommittee was also very careful to provide guidance to faculty without being too prescriptive or limiting in these recommendations. There will be several courses that have unique elements or requirements that will require further conversations between faculty, department chairs, and Academic Affairs over the next few weeks. Academic Affairs is committed to working with faculty to meet their needs but there will most likely be limits to what we can provide for classroom requests for the fall semester.

The subcommittee has tried to anticipate and respond to potential academic and classroom scenarios that will need to be addressed. This is not an exhaustive list and will need to be developed more fully over the summer. We welcome faculty input on potential issues that are not currently addressed in this document.

Facilities has confirmed that the typical classroom in Bowman, Murdock, and most other classroom buildings can usually hold 12-13 students with the recommended 6-ft of social

distancing between classmates and between students and the faculty. There are also a limited number of spaces on campus that can accommodate social distancing guidelines for larger groups of students.

The subcommittee offers the following recommendations for course structures in the fall:

- Typical classes of over 12-13 students (contingent on classroom assignment) will be divided in half into Group A and Group B by the Registrar. Course A/B divisions will automatically be made by the Registrar and submitted to faculty by early August. Faculty may review and revise initial student division within one week, if desired. If no revision is desired, no action is needed.
- In specific and unique circumstances this plan can be varied in cooperation with the professor, their chair, and with Academic Affairs' consent.
- For TR and MW courses, professors will meet one day in person per week with Group A and one day in person per week for Group B.
- For MWF courses, the Registrar will also assign the days that courses will meet in person (i.e. MW, WF, MF). For MWF courses, the Registrar will also divide students into Groups A and B. Assigning meeting days is a necessary step in order to meet the limited classroom space available for the fall because of the need for maintaining social distance in classrooms. Academic Affairs has not yet determined the formula for how these course meeting day assignments will be made.
- For MWF courses, professors will meet one day in person per week with Group A and one day in person per week for Group B. Academic Affairs recommends that their third day meeting be done online. There is the possibility, however, (based on classroom availability) for MWF classes to meet with Group A and Group B on the third day in alternating weeks. If a professor would like to do this, they should direct their request to their department chair and to the Registrar to see if classroom space is available to meet this request.
- TR and MW courses with fewer than 12-13 students will meet as one group in person as scheduled. MWF courses with fewer than 12-13 students will meet in person as a group at least twice per week and will be assigned a meeting time and days by the Registrar. If a professor would like for their MWF class with fewer than 12-13 students to meet in person three times a week, they should direct their request to their department chair and to the Registrar to see if classroom space is available to meet this request.

For all non-standard courses (1 credit, labs, 4 credits, studios, 1-day a week, etc.)

- The professor and department chair shall determine course schedule and division (if needed) within the parameters of social distancing. Meeting structures for these courses must be approved by Academic Affairs and submitted to the Registrar by July 20th. A Departmental Course survey has been sent to department chairs to identify such courses in their department and return to Academic Affairs.

Course Scheduling and Student Schedules

The subcommittee offers the following recommendations in the fall for course scheduling:

- It is necessary to maintain a record of all in-person classroom meetings so individualized information will be readily available for contact tracing if needed.
 - The Registrar will keep track of what students are on campus on what day by assigning each group in a course its own Course Registration Number (CRN): i.e. Group A has one CRN and Group B has a different CRN for the same course. For cross-listed courses, there may be more CRNs assigned as well. The Registrar will inform Academic Technology of CRN changes so that they can work with faculty preferences for setting up their course Canvas pages.
 - Student schedules will appear similar to those for hybrid courses; both the class meeting day and the “online” day will be listed. Thus, assigning these CRNs will also provide clarity to students on where they should be on what time and day.
 - Assigning CRNs to each group will also identify clearly to the student that they must be available during the scheduled course time, regardless of whether they are reporting to campus or learning online. The schedule will also emphasize to students that they are obligated to be engaged in the course during each scheduled class period. **Faculty should not schedule synchronous course meetings for students outside their assigned class meeting times.**

Department Chair survey

- Academic Affairs has asked Chairs to complete a survey only for courses that are not “standard” based on typical classroom space used, typical classroom equipment needed, or a typical schedule of MW, MWF, or TR. In this survey, department chairs were asked to confer with their faculty to identify any courses they prefer to divide into groups themselves, rather than having the Registrar create the student groups. Department Chairs will identify such courses in their department and return the survey to Academic Affairs.

First-year students

- The Registrar’s office will place all incoming first-year students into a full course schedule. The class rosters will then be broken into groups in the same fashion as other courses.
- Building these schedules is on hold as Admissions gathers incoming first-year students’ courses preferences and until after Academic Affairs knows which courses will only be offered online, which will be determined by the faculty who apply for and receive exemptions.

- First-year students will be placed in a First Year Cohort course along with a companion course that will share the same cohort. Their remaining three courses will be registered based on the department preferences that were given to Academic Affairs.
- Welcome Week Academies and the First 8 Weeks programming are being worked out logistically. Some of the content will likely be online.

Add/Drop

- The Registrar's office is working to create a Dynamic Form to facilitate the add/drop process.
 - All of us must adhere strictly to the cap for number of seats in a class
 - We cannot exceed physical limitations of the classroom spaces
 - The Registrar will have access to data about how many seats are physically set up in each classroom
 - Academic Affairs will work to communicate and familiarize students and faculty about this new process for the fall semester.

Classroom setup

- Classrooms will be set up to follow social distancing guidelines of 6 feet between individual students as well as the faculty member.
- Tape markers will be put on the ground to signify where desks should be and also to signify an area at the front of the room that is reserved exclusively for the faculty member. Though faculty might like to arrange the desks and classroom furniture differently for legitimate pedagogical reasons, **Academic Affairs will mandate that faculty and students cannot move classroom furniture into other arrangements because of our need to strictly adhere to social distance guidelines.**
- MCLA is installing 50 pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras, microphones, and computers into classrooms in various buildings across campus. The cameras will arrive in mid-July and Information Technology and Facilities will be working to install them as quickly as possible. As these classrooms are outfitted with these cameras, Academic Technology will provide opportunities for faculty to make appointments to test them out and provide training. The majority of classrooms will be equipped with these PTZ cameras. In the limited circumstances where they are not installed, Information Technology will work with faculty and department chairs on alternate solutions for these spaces.
- For a beginning introduction to the capabilities of these new cameras, please click on this [link](#) to watch an introductory video produced by Academic Technology.
- For classroom settings with special needs (i.e. labs, studios, performance spaces) Academic Affairs will do its best to accommodate individual faculty requests, but there may be limits to what is possible.
- For classes that are larger than 25 or that cannot be split up easily, there are a limited number of spaces where these classes will be scheduled.

- **It is important to note that Fall 2020 semester classroom assignments may change from previously published locations in response to logistical and scheduling needs, and faculty may be placed in classrooms that do not match their original classroom requests.**

Classroom Cleaning

We are finalizing our cleaning protocol based on guidance provided by DCAMM (Division of Capital Asset Management) and other entities and will be publishing a cleaning FAQ shortly. The current working model is for classrooms to be cleaned 2-3 times per day by facilities based on conversations within the cleaning/operations subcommittee, which included faculty representation. Separate provisions will be made for lab spaces in consultation with CSI faculty. Spray bottles of disinfectant will also be placed in classroom buildings.

CLASSROOM RECOMMENDATIONS

Accommodations for Students

Students have been informed that since MCLA will be fully open this fall, they should expect to be on campus and in the classroom. However, students who are immunocompromised or meet other criteria for exception may want to take all their courses online. Other students might desire an all-online schedule because they are anxious about being in the classroom or they simply do not want to leave their home.

Work is underway to create a uniform process for student exceptions to be reviewed by a committee of appropriate departments and to work with the students individually. Students may request to take only the scheduled fully online courses. Special consideration will be given to those who are immunocompromised, a member of another high-risk category, or presenting with a disability making on-campus study under planned conditions a challenge. While we stand ready to accommodate students who are at higher risk than others to ensure they can continue to learn, it is important to note that the number of online courses available will be limited. Academic Affairs (including the Registrar and CSSE) will work to accommodate extenuating circumstances, but they cannot guarantee a completely remote schedule that will maintain a student's timeline of scheduled graduation.

Some students will have difficulty managing the Blended Learning format. If you have any questions about adjusting your course materials or delivery to accommodate students with diverse needs, please contact Gerol in Academic Technology or Cindy MacDonald in CSSE for advice and support.

Students may have technology or connectivity challenges. If so, please direct them to the Help Desk. You are encouraged to build into your courses options for students who cannot fully participate due to these issues. (For example, if you have a synchronous

portion of your course, please make accommodations for any student who is unable to get online at that time.)

Attendance Guidelines for Blended Teaching

It remains within the purview of faculty to determine their course attendance policy and practice, within the constraints of MCLA's Policy on Class Attendance and MCLA's reporting obligations under federal law. Academic Affairs strongly encourages faculty to use Canvas attendance to record their students' attendance. Having this information easily accessible could potentially be very important for contact tracing.

In addition, MCLA's Online and Hybrid Policy states that attendance in a hybrid course is measured proportionally to the stated percentage weight of both course components. While attendance in a physical classroom is widely understood, the concept as applied to digital presence is less well defined. **Faculty should clearly define, and articulate to students in the syllabus, what standards and behaviors they will use to measure attendance within the online and in-person portions of instructional time.**

Given the unpredictable nature of the current situation, we strongly recommend that faculty plan to be as accommodating, and flexible, as possible in applying policies such as attendance.

Recommendations for Office Hours, Department Meetings, and Advising:

The subcommittee recommends that as much as possible, faculty office hours, department meetings, and student advising should take place virtually and by appointment. This will require moving away from the drop-in culture for students that we are familiar with for the fall semester to ensure social distancing and other safety protocols are adhered to. More direct guidance on office hours and advising will likely come from impact bargaining between the MSCA Union and Council of Presidents. While the possibility of meeting with other faculty or students face to face exists, it is imperative that social distancing guidelines be observed by both faculty and students at all times. Student lounges and department conference rooms can still be used, **however, it is not possible for facilities to sanitize them after every use. It will be responsibility of users of these spaces to follow social distancing guidelines and to clean the area after each use with cleaning materials provided by the college.**

Academic Affairs Statement on Faculty Intellectual Property

As we are being forced by the COVID-19 pandemic to alter our pedagogies and to incorporate new technologies to meet the needs of our students, Academic Affairs believes it is vital to make the following statement in regards to faculty's intellectual property: Any course developed for the Fall 2020 semester remains the sole intellectual

property of the faculty member. The College shall not use faculty intellectual property without the express written consent of the faculty member.

Addendum to Academic Honesty Policy

The subcommittee recommends that the following language and contract between student and instructor below be included in every faculty member’s syllabi for the Fall 2020 semester:

Media Recording

A college is a community of students and faculty interested in the search for knowledge and understanding. Essential to that search is a commitment to honesty and integrity. A component of this is the distribution of materials and technology used in MCLA courses. Sharing materials (documents, video and audio files, online materials, etc.) without the written consent of the course instructor is a violation of academic honesty. Violations will be reported to the Registrar, and appropriate sanctions will be applied.

.....
I understand that my access to video and audio recordings in this class is for my personal educational use only. Class lectures, as presented, are the intellectual property of the instructor; comments made by other persons are their own intellectual property. I agree that I will not share or transfer recordings of such content by any method currently available or any method that may become available in the future. I agree that I will not provide copies of such recordings to others; upload, link, embed, or otherwise post them via file-sharing, social media, or other sites or services; enable anyone to view or hear them who is not currently enrolled in the course; or share them in any other way.

Statement on Student Consent for being Recorded

This class may use video or audio recordings of instructor and students, both online and in person, to better support learning in a blended format. Such recordings are for personal educational use only. Recordings which include student names, voices, or likenesses are educational records protected under FERPA, and must be available only to individuals currently enrolled in the class, unless permission is expressly granted otherwise. Recordings of Microsoft Teams video meetings are automatically access-controlled to participants only when posted in Stream.

The instructor will always inform you when course activity is being recorded. By accepting this policy, you give your consent to be recorded in this class. You may withdraw your consent to be recorded by informing your instructor in writing.

Expectations for Students in the Classroom related to COVID-19

In order to help provide for the safety of all faculty and students while in the classrooms, all students are required to engage in safe behaviors to help avoid the spread of COVID-

19. All students must adhere to the classroom policies. Refusal to comply with the classroom policies will result in dismissal from the current class session.

All students are expected to comply with the following classroom or lab policies:

Face coverings. The CDC recommends wearing a face covering in public settings; therefore, **face coverings will be required for all students and faculty while in class no matter the size of the space.** By following this guideline, we can help minimize the transmission of the virus to others, which we know is spread between people interacting in close proximity through speaking, coughing, or sneezing.

Social distancing. While in the classroom, students and faculty are required to maintain a safe distance from one another. Social distancing is defined as six (6) feet between individuals. Classroom furniture has been set up to comply with the six feet social distance, and students or faculty **may not move the chairs or desks in classrooms or common spaces.**

BEST PRACTICES FOR BLENDED LEARNING

The following are minimum recommendations for building your blended course. Beginning August 3, the Center for Academic Technology will announce a schedule of resources and events to explore these recommendations.

- Publish a Canvas course which includes: your syllabus, schedule, and assignments with due dates.
- Run the UDOIT report on your Canvas course to ensure minimum accessibility to all materials and activities.
- Identify which course outcomes, activities and materials require synchronous delivery, and which ones can use asynchronous delivery.
- Since technology infrastructure is supporting a greater part of your course, plan proactively for technology problems students may encounter: for example, by providing clear steps for students to follow.
- Plan to include a high degree of flexibility around policies, dates, and methods of communication; at the same time, clearly articulate the boundaries and constraints of your flexibility.
- Incorporate regular opportunities to check in with students and build a sense of shared community.
- As you assess the structure of your course activities, strive to ensure that students in your digital space do not have a "second-tier" experience relative to students in the physical space.

Opportunity for Faculty Feedback and Questions

Adrienne and Ely will hold a Faculty Virtual Town Hall on **July 9 from 12-1:30PM** to discuss these guidelines and to solicit feedback and answer questions from faculty. It will be similar in format to President Birge's town halls. An invitation to attend will be sent out to all faculty on July 6.

Follow this [link](#) for the event. (It will be live on July 9.)

Observers can submit written questions during the town hall. Adrienne and Ely will do their best to answer as many questions as possible during the scheduled time. For questions that they are not able to answer, they will work to provide written answers to those remaining questions soon after the town hall. Please note, however, that there are likely to be questions that they will not be able to answer during the town hall because more planning still remains and we will be continuing throughout July to work on the details and logistics of our reopening plans.