

From: Provost and Vice-President Academic
Sent: May 22, 2020 6:22 PM
Subject: Information for Instructors for Fall 2020

To all instructors teaching in the Fall 2020 semester:

Following the President's announcement last Friday that courses and final exams will be offered primarily in an online format in the Fall semester, I am writing to provide more detail on course design and delivery and the guiding principles for decision-making.

Guiding principles

1. In all our planning for the Fall term, we are keeping the health and safety of our students, staff, and faculty front of mind, following provincial requirements, local health unit guidelines, and physical distancing protocols while safeguarding the continued quality of the student learning experience. We want to ensure that our students will be able safely and successfully to pursue their academic goals, and that our faculty and staff will have sufficient time to prepare to help them succeed.
2. By announcing in mid-May, we are giving instructors 3 months to prepare their courses for online delivery. Details on support for course development are below.
3. The primarily virtual approach aligns with that of most Ontario and Canadian universities and offers students the most stable and flexible avenue for engaging with academic opportunities and new experiences during this uniquely challenging time.
4. We will imagine new and innovative ways to continue the strong faculty-student relationships, peer collaboration, and community service partnerships that have always been an integral part of the UWindsor experience.
5. On any given day, the University of Windsor, counting all students plus staff and faculty, is a community of 20,000 people. To borrow an analogy from math professor Stan Yoshinobu in his persuasive essay "The Case Against Reopening," that is the equivalent of a major sporting event or rock concert every day.[\[1\]](#) Currently, that size of group is neither responsible nor permitted: the Premier's latest announcement has confirmed that groups of no more than 5 people are allowed, and thus for the foreseeable future we need to find alternatives to face-to-face interaction.

Course design and delivery

1. Courses, including final exams, will be offered primarily in an online format for Fall 2020.
2. Any requests for exceptions to the online format must be approved in writing by the Provost, based on the recommendation of the Dean. Exceptions will be approved only in rare circumstances, and proposals for individual courses will be considered only when identified by the Dean as needing to be taught in a face-to-face format, and when course enrolment is restricted to a specific program, and is not required by and does not impact any other program on campus. Any exemptions must still follow provincial requirements, local health unit guidelines, and physical distancing protocols. AAUs should be aware of the numerous limitations and mandatory procedures likely to be involved in face-to-face efforts. These may involve additional responsibilities for instructors. Your courses will be online unless the Dean has discussed the possibility of a face-to-face offering with you and the Provost has given written approval.
3. It is too early to make a definitive announcement regarding the Winter 2021 semester, but we will continue to monitor developments with COVID-19 and plan accordingly.

Support for Fall course delivery

1. Myth-busting: Online courses are not cheaper for the University to offer. All courses are time- and resource-intensive to design, deliver, and support. Online courses also require additional investments in infrastructure and learning support.
2. Support for course redesign and online course delivery has been significantly expanded. A description of current resources including links to materials and registration sites can be found [here](#).
3. A website – fall2020 – will be launched in the near future, providing a one-site location for accessing these instructional resources, which currently include: 5-day courses, half-day courses, workshops, short sprints, faculty- and department-specific sessions, daily drop-ins, web-based resources, and one-on-one consultations. These supports are tailored to meet the needs of instructors who have never taught online before, all the way up to experienced online instructors who have specific needs for their course. FAQs are in development and the preliminary collection will be posted on the University's [COVID-19](#) site early next week. They will be moved to the fall2020 website once it is launched.
4. Behind the scenes we have many talented people working extremely hard under difficult circumstances – frontline instructors, department and faculty support staff, technical crews, educational developers, instructional designers, and academic administrators – who are dedicated to maintaining and delivering a top-notch University of Windsor degree.
5. We want to extend a big thank-you...to the instructors and instructional teams on campus for all the work they are putting in to make sure that UWindsor students complete their programs, succeed academically, and receive a world-class UWindsor degree...and to our colleagues in the Centre for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Open Learning, IT Services, and the Office of the Provost for their support of those efforts. I also want to give a shout-out for the creative efforts

of the Office of Enrolment Management in bringing students virtually to our front door and the Office of Student Experience in developing robust and innovative modes of virtual student engagement in Head Start, Welcome Week, and student services for the Fall term. The entire University community is truly pulling together as we face this challenge. Thanks to all of you.

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¹ Prof. Stan Yoshinobu, Associate Professor of Mathematics at California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo, received his BA in Mathematics from Wilfrid Laurier University and his PhD in Mathematics from UCLA. See “The Case Against Reopening,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 14, 2020. An earlier version is available on the Academy of Inquiry Based Learning’s website [here](#). Yoshinobu makes a compelling argument against going f2f this Fall. Worth reading.