TO: All Faculty  
FROM: Jill Dolan, Dean of the College  
RE: Fall Teaching  
July 7, 2020

Colleagues, President Eisgruber’s announcement of our plans for reopening will allow us to make decisions about fall teaching with a bit more certainty. We’re working hard to help you proceed with undergraduate education in these highly unusual and challenging circumstances. Thanks for your patience as we work all this out together.

Let me offer some information I hope will be helpful as you think toward your fall courses and independent work advising. I apologize, once again, for the length of this memo.

**Course formats.** The McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning has built new course design templates, with best practices for online teaching and learning. These include guidance on organizing your instructional time, building classroom community, and choosing digital tools. I also invite you to consider their list of summer workshops on digital pedagogy. You’ll find their information (and their redesigned site on teaching online) very helpful as you plan to teach remotely.

Let me also call your attention to the new guidance on recording class sessions within the context of FERPA and other FAQs for faculty. You’re welcome to be in touch with Kate Stanton, associate dean and director of McGraw, as you plan your fall teaching. You may also wish to consult with a McGraw Center undergraduate learning consultant on designing or redesigning your fall course.

**In-person instruction.** Should you wish to teach in person on campus, your course must be expressly for either first-year students, juniors, or both, but cannot include sophomores and seniors, who will not be on campus in the fall.

In-person teaching must follow all state public health guidelines and University policies. For instance, under current state guidance, a 15-student seminar must be taught in a 45-person classroom to provide enough room for appropriate social distancing. Students and faculty must wear masks at all times and movement around the classroom is discouraged to preserve necessary distance. Entering and exiting the classroom and the building will take extra time.
Should you want to explore in-person teaching, please be in touch with your department chair or program director and then with my office (feel free to email me directly).

In general, we’re discouraging “hybrid” teaching (in which some students learn in person and others remotely, while the faculty member teaches in person). But how to handle a mixed population (in residence and at home) of students, should faculty want to teach in person, will be important. For example, if eight students are on campus and one is a student studying remotely, technology might help accommodate the one off-site student, should they wish to continue to be enrolled in your course. We’d like to be equitable; at the same time, we’d like to offer in-person instruction where possible for students who are able to be in residence this fall.

Our plan is to implement a new August add/drop period and then assess these (and other) complications. First-year students will select courses on August 25; you might want to decide whether to teach residentially before that date. In the meantime, should you wish to teach in person, we’ll try to help you make it work.

If you prefer to teach remotely but you know that some of your students are on campus, electing to see them outside of the official teaching period might be equally helpful. Staging office hours in a way that’s safe but in person; inviting them to in-person discussions; encouraging them to work in small groups if they can do so safely in person are all strategies you might employ even if your teaching remains remote. We’d appreciate creative thinking about how to take advantage of the partial undergraduate presence in the fall and the spring.

Of course, some students might elect to stay home or conduct their coursework from elsewhere; international students might not be able to travel. In addition, Princeton’s Office of General Counsel is studying the new rules released yesterday by the Office of Homeland Security regarding international students in the U.S. and prohibitions regarding their online learning. We’ll keep you informed as we learn how to address this new rule.

**The Course Schedule.** The Registrar will republish Course Offerings on July 20. The revised offerings will include the additions, deletions, or other changes submitted by each department. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors will add/drop during the first week of August (again, first-years enroll August 25). Please contact your department undergraduate administrator about any necessary modifications to your course and its enrollments before the July 10 deadline to enter changes in the system.

We hope that by early August, students will decide whether or not to remain enrolled. If they’re invited to be in residence in the fall, we also hope they’ll have decided whether or not to come to campus or learn remotely. We won’t be able to entertain student requests for one-semester leaves because we’ll need to limit the on-campus population in the spring and manage
enrollment patterns for subsequent years. We’ll keep in close touch with you as students confirm their intentions for next year.

We’re hoping to open the 4:30 – 7:30 time slot for additional precepts, tutorials, and/or course meetings, depending on the status of fall sports and athletic competitions. We’ll let you know this decision shortly.

**Grading Policy.** The following policies for a fall 2020 semester with remote instruction were approved by the Faculty Committee on Examinations and Standing on June 4, 2020:

- In recognition of continued access concerns, students will be permitted to elect the P/D/F option for all undergraduate courses. (Faculty will retain the option to elect the P/D/F-only grading option for a course.)
- The number of P/D/F courses taken during a remote learning semester will not count towards the total allocation of P/D/F elections normally available to a student.
- Departments will generally require regular grades for independent work, as well as for courses taken to fulfill pre-requisites and departmentals.
- The final deadline for students to elect the P/D/F option for a graded course or to drop a course will revert to the end of the 9th week of classes.
- The regular University deadlines for independent work will be reinstated.
- The last day to withdraw from a semester in progress is the last day of classes.

**Undergraduate Course Assistants (UCAs).** UCAs may not formally lead precepts, but they can facilitate problem-solving sessions under the direction or supervision of the faculty member and/or the course AI. For instance, students assigned to a particular precept may be broken down into smaller groups led by a single UCA. Those students might review or discuss course material, practice problem-solving skills, engage in Q&A with the UCA, or complete course assignments with support from the UCA (if permitted by the course policy on collaboration). UCAs should be supervised by, and are responsible to, the course instructor.

**FAQs for students.** We’ll regularly update the FAQs for students on the University’s Fall Term 2020 website to respond to students’ questions about next fall, spring, and summer. Students will also have questions about their independent work: junior seminars, junior papers, and senior theses, especially. I encourage you to be in touch with your advisees as their plans and yours begin to gel for the fall. The more you can communicate with them on a regular schedule, the better, whether by Zoom, phone, or in person. Your advisees will appreciate your input and your attention in these very trying and unsettling circumstances.

If your advisees approach you about taking a leave-of-absence, direct them to their residential college deans, who will have the most relevant, up-to-date information on the process for requesting a leave. In general, if you can in all good conscience do so, encourage your students to persevere. We don’t know how long this virus will linger or whether the future will be better or worse, from a public health standpoint. Inviting your advisees to
continue toward their degrees and reassuring them that you’ll work with them closely, regardless of whether they’re on campus or elsewhere, will help temper their anxiety.

**Seniors.** We’re allowing some seniors to return to campus in the fall for hands-on, experimental thesis research. This will include ~100 seniors conducting thesis research in experimental laboratory or studio settings.

We’ve contacted the subset of departments in which some students’ thesis research needs to be conducted in a lab and, as a result, must satisfy the stringent constraints established by the Dean for Research and the University for resuming lab work. Each of those departments has decided whether or not to allow all or subsets of their seniors to return according to their own clear reasoning. The University hasn’t established a central policy and instead encourages faculty and students to respect each department’s decision. We won’t accept appeals from seniors who haven’t been carefully vetted and approved to return by their departments.

All other seniors whose thesis research requires them to be on campus—to use the libraries, the Museum, or potentially, labs—can apply to return for the month of January, prior to the spring semester’s start. Please consult with the chair of your department or your program director if you have any questions about your senior advisees.

**Academic integrity.** As you know, Princeton’s long-standing Honor Code tradition is based on a strong community ethos in which students take exams without proctors and in which they attest that their work is their own. In the spring, we noted an increase in academic integrity violations. As you plan your fall teaching, I encourage you to rethink your assessment practices in ways that will make it more difficult for your students to cheat.

Forms of assessment that circumvent students’ temptations to circulate exams or to copy others’ work are worthwhile investments when our pedagogy, of necessity, must change to accommodate new formats and arrangements. Staff at the McGraw Center would be happy to suggest alternative assessment options for your course. I can’t stress enough the importance of the faculty’s partnership in upholding Princeton’s Honor Code.

**Finally, childcare and other family care responsibilities.** We know that plans for reopening K-12 schools in the fall remain uncertain. If you have childcare responsibilities, Dean of the Faculty Sanj Kulkarni and I urge you to consult with your department chair as you formulate your teaching plans.

A variety of options and resources might help you address childcare, family care, and other challenges, including co- or team-teaching; pre-recording lectures; adjusting class schedules; and reducing your course load by taking on more advisees or other departmental duties. Departments can also request additional AI support for courses as needed. These options are available for any faculty with significant familial responsibilities, whether childcare,
eldercare, or other pressing needs. Sanj and I hope this will help faculty manage their overall workload more effectively and efficiently, given the exigencies of the fall.

As chairs prepare their department’s teaching plans, we’ve advised them to be supportive of faculty with significant childcare or family responsibilities, as long as requested schedule or teaching load revisions don’t impose an undue burden on other faculty colleagues or excessively compromise the department’s curriculum or our students’ educational experience. We hope these options and additional resources will help as you navigate the complexities of the current crisis.

Now that Princeton’s plans are public, we’ll work with you and our staff and our students and their families to plan the best way forward during a pandemic whose trajectory remains highly unpredictable. Questions proliferate and answers too often seem provisional.

We have so much to do and need to accomplish everything in extraordinary, unprecedented circumstances. Please let me know how the Office of the Dean of the College can help. We’ll think creatively with you and try to come up with the best solutions we can during these complicated times.

That’s my information for today. I’m sure I’ll have more to share soon. In the meanwhile, I hope you continue to be healthy and safe, in body, mind, and spirit.

Thanks for your partnership and, as always, your patience.

Warm best,