



Provost's July Update

Dear Faculty,

I wanted to take a few minutes and update you on the University's progress in planning for Fall 2020 semester as we approach the end of July. We are living in a time of uncertainty, as states across the nation grapple with the pandemic and rising COVID-19 numbers. As a University, we continue to plan for face-to-face and hybrid courses for Fall 2020, and we continue to work closely with local and state health officials as we monitor the environment and create plans with the health and safety of the campus as our priority.

I thank you for your patience, support and community spirit during these very challenging times. I have been so impressed by your commitment to our students and to each other. My commitment is to support you and to ensure that we have the planning and flexibility we need to meet the challenges of the fall term.

COVID-19 Protective Measures

The Employee, Instruction, Student, and Public Health groups are working in concert to address concerns for faculty, staff, and student safety. Our goal is to provide faculty and students with a safe learning environment. The latest [Stage Four Employee Operations Guidelines](#) address many of the issues associated with public interaction. Face coverings, room sanitization, travel restrictions, and other requirements are explained in the guidelines. In August, the University will be providing each faculty member with two face coverings. The University will also be offering alternatives to face coverings, such as "windowed coverings," to better support instruction in the classroom.

Courses that are unable to achieve social distancing requirements and must remain face-to-face, such as some labs and technical instructional environments, will require an approved [Health Exception Request](#) prior to the beginning of the semester. Submit Health Exception Requests to ISU's Health Committee at covid@health.isu.edu. You can refer your questions to either covid@isu.edu or 208-282-2705.

The Roaring Back Employee Operations Group has developed extensive guidelines for faculty and staff returning to work at ISU. The [Roaring Back webpage](#) has links to support materials such as the [Roaring Back Stage 4 Employee Operations Guidelines](#) and [Face Covering Tool Kit for Faculty](#), as well as many others.

Communication/Health Updates

Provost Office communications are posted on the Academic Affairs [website](#) if you want to know more information regarding operations occurring within Academic Affairs and throughout the University. Please feel free to reach out directly to the Provost's Office as well.

Our Health Committee has identified a new and helpful website for tracking purposes. It can be accessed at the [Global Epidemics webpage](#). I encourage you to utilize this site when planning summer activities.

Fall Semester Scheduling Update

Every day we grow closer to Fall semester and a "new normal." Facilities has completed the daunting task of evaluating all existing and ad hoc classrooms on ISU's campuses. In conjunction with the Instruction Group, the Registrar and Scheduler are adjusting classroom locations and schedules to accommodate the room requirements. All face-to-face sections will be socially distanced using a 6-foot standard that takes into account an individual's own space, as well as the space required for

entrances and exits. Many sections will be transitioned to a hyflex environment. This has been a complex process, but is slated for completion by July 18. If you have any questions, please contact your associate dean, who serves on the [Instruction Committee](#), or for questions related to your own program, to your chair or program director. The link also contains a partial List of Action Items.

International Student New Restrictions

As most of you may have heard, the U.S. Department of State will not issue visas to students enrolled in schools and/or programs that are fully online for the fall semester, nor will U.S. Customs and Border Protection permit these students to enter the United States ([ICE Announcement](#)).

Enrollment Management is working with the Registrar and the Scheduler to identify those international students affected by this policy change. Upon identification of an international student not meeting the criteria laid out in the announcement, Enrollment Management will coordinate with the students, programs, and the Graduate School to identify solutions for students. Student Affairs will be working to re-issue I-20's, the student visas, between July 20th and August 4th; they then plan to place holds on international student accounts so that these students cannot change their schedule without working with the International Programs office. This action will help to ensure they remain in good standing.

I ask that faculty members work with Enrollment Management to identify methods to ensure our international degree-seeking students have the opportunity to come back to ISU this fall.

Technology

ISU has purchased more than 250 OWL cameras to support synchronous, distance-learning sections. Additionally, ITS ordered 100 Dell Laptops for faculty and 350 Chromebooks for student use. They should all be in place before the beginning of the semester. Faculty members can receive video [training on the OWL systems](#).

To support the change in the academic year regarding finals week, ISU has procured online proctoring for all faculty who wish to use it throughout the semester. Although the plan was initially to only support finals week, it is recommended that faculty allow students throughout the semester to experience the new testing format. This may lessen their apprehension during their semester final.

New Faculty Orientation

We will be holding a virtual New Faculty Orientation via Zoom on Tuesday, August 11, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. During this orientation, new faculty will receive all of the traditional information from units on campus via pre-recorded videos and expert panels. We will communicate more information about this orientation event to new faculty in a letter towards the end of July, but please, communicate this to them in your department and college communications as well.

Conclusion

This is a difficult time for Idahoans and our nation. The most important thing we can do is take care of ourselves and one another, and continue to be a statewide leader in the Coronavirus response. It is important that we remain united and continue to support our communities, the University, and, most importantly, each other. Thank you for all you do and for the sacrifices you continue to make to ensure the success of our community.

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."
Winston Churchill

Stay safe,

—Laura

Laura Woodworth-Ney
Executive Vice President and Provost