

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
(Final; Information)

EP.20.161 Partial List of Challenges Arising From COVID-19

This memo attempts to identify some of the issues of general educational policy associated with COVID-19 and the novel coronavirus pandemic. Recommendations offered are more an outline of possibilities than final or comprehensive suggestions. The list is surely incomplete, but actions to address these issues undoubtedly would increase chances of success in our educational mission for both students and faculty members.

1. Faculty and students have engaged in creative and heroic efforts to teach and learn through remote education in spring 2020. Their efforts are to be commended and celebrated. However, it is unrealistic to expect such emergency efforts to yield the same results as normal campus teaching would have. Advanced courses, depending on material taught in spring 2020, may in future semesters become much more challenging than usual because material expected to be covered in basic courses may have been weakened or lost.
 - Faculty dependent upon such material having been covered in prior courses should identify their courses to their units, and extra campus resources — additional teaching assistants, support for extra office hours, creation of tutoring centers, etc. — should be considered and, if created, remain in place for at least two years.
 - Units should make robust, systematic efforts, possibly aided by additional campus funding, to identify and reach out to those whose socioeconomic status or personal circumstances exacerbated difficulties in learning.
2. Remedial work similarly may be required for new undergraduates entering in fall 2020 and beyond. Attenuated standards for advanced placement testing in spring 2020 will surely yield some over-estimation of capabilities by students enrolling in advanced courses. Pass/fail grading employed by many high schools in spring 2020 and difficulties associated with standardized testing may lead to erroneous admissions decisions in 2021 for the class of 2025.
 - Use of campus resources to create special tutorial centers for new undergraduates, supporting and expanding already existing efforts in colleges and departments, should be considered.
3. Allocation of online investments and revenue should be re-examined. Changes in instructional modes this spring and summer, and possibly beyond, surely will affect campus finances. Efforts are under way to develop new programs that might attract additional

enrollment at the graduate level. Such efforts are to be praised. But with these efforts come challenges. Experts warn that emergency measures to institute remote teaching are not the same as deliberate investment in online learning. Moreover, only some types of courses and programs are likely to benefit from expansion online.

- The Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning should develop a set of best practices for common evaluation of online courses instead of merely perpetuating the status quo of emergency measures adopted this spring.
 - The campus should consider altering its policy on allocation of resources to and distribution of revenue from online courses in recognition of the fact that revenue-raising graduate programs are not available on the same terms to all curricula and disciplines and do not always serve our diverse student body equally.
 - The campus should consider setting aside a portion of any money generated by the addition of new online programs to support development of pedagogically sound online coursework in undergraduate programs, to support other programs that cannot move online without diminished educational outcomes, and to support students, especially underrepresented students and students from less affluent households, who otherwise could find themselves caught behind an aggravated digital divide.
4. Spring 2020 has given all faculty members and students at least some experience in remote teaching and learning in what can be described as a natural experiment. Instructors have created and experimented with different tools and techniques. Students have been the subjects of these experiments.
- Establishment of an ad hoc committee charged to capture “lessons learned” from the experience through grading data, surveys, brown bags, and campus conferences should be considered. The Student Senate might wish to create a parallel committee to capture student experiences, and the two committees could work together to yield suggestions for pedagogical improvements, which then could be reported to the Provost and to the Senate.
5. In a semester of mixed face-to-face and remote teaching, teaching evaluations will lack validity with respect to previous semesters. Administration of ICES online has distinctly different response and measurement properties than face-to-face administration. Instructors also have had different and unique personal challenges in working remotely.
- If ICES is administered for courses taught remotely during the COVID-19 crisis, consideration should be given to making administration completely voluntary on the part of instructors and to not recording scores centrally or including them in promotion and tenure packets for any member of the teaching faculty.

- Alternative measurement tools developed by instructors and departments, possibly with the assistance of CITL, should be considered, but it may be strongly advisable to limit administrators' access to these results to aggregated data not identifiable by instructor.
6. Teaching faculty have shown integrity, creativity, and courage in moving their courses to remote formats. In their creativity, they have created considerable intellectual property in lectures, presentations, media, and the like, using Zoom, Compass, and other technologies. Although university policy on this matter may seem clear, apprehension continues to exist among some regarding ownership of the intellectual property created.
- The campus should consider making a clear statement that instructors own all rights to any teaching materials created during this semester of remote teaching, including materials created with Zoom or other campus technologies; that the use of such materials requires the instructor's permission; that the use of the instructor's visage always will require a personal release; and that such release cannot be obtained as a condition of employment or under threat of sanction.
7. Teaching faculty have used personal technology and personal resources from their homes, at their own expense, for instructional purposes. University property has not been accessible to them. In many cases, if employees use university equipment or services for personal business, they are expected to reimburse the university. Turnabout is fair play.
- The campus should consider awarding a \$1,000 stipend to each instructional faculty member (tenure stream, specialized, adjunct, emeriti, graduate and postdoctoral student, etc.) to compensate for personal expenses incurred during remote teaching. No documentation would be required to receive this stipend.
8. Now that all faculty members have had at least some exposure to the challenges of online teaching via remote learning this spring, each faculty member now has a much clearer idea of what the benefits and drawbacks of online education might be. Online no longer is an unknown to be rejected solely because it has never been experienced.
- The choice of whether a course or instructor translates well into the remote or online format remains a choice of academic freedom of the individual instructor. Strong consideration should be given to creating a procedure whereby instructors, except in extreme emergencies, are free to decline, without consequence, assignments to teach online if they earnestly believe that their course or their pedagogy would suffer.
9. With new delivery modalities, new challenges have emerged for both students and faculty members with disabilities. While experience has provided time for the university to work on needed accommodations in traditional course delivery, remote teaching presents a range of new challenges that are only beginning to be understood.

- Colleges and departments must continue to reach out to students with disabilities (current and incoming, if disclosed) who may need changes to their accommodation plans provided by Disability Resources and Educational Services.
- The Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning and Office of Access and Equity should coordinate with departments to provide a proactive process for faculty instructors with disabilities to determine reasonable accommodations and adjustments to enable them to perform instructional duties.

Respectfully submitted,

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

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