Dear Colleagues,

The Academic Scenario Planning Committee and the Coordinating Committee have been meeting for almost a year now: we coordinated the pivot to fall 2020, then focused on spring 2021, and for the last six months have been planning for fall 2021. In January, we asked the academic units to plan for a return to a course schedule much more like fall of 2019 than fall of 2020. We are not unique in that decision: as the COVID-19 vaccines become increasingly available, most universities with which we compete for students have already announced their decisions to “return to normal.” These institutions include UK, WKU, NKU, Bellarmine, Indiana University, and a majority of the ACC and SEC universities that have already announced their decisions.

In our case, a return to normal means we expect to offer students a robust residential experience with in-person classes and fully staffed student services again. Most of us miss the vibrancy of student life on campus, the interactions between students, faculty and staff, and we look forward to a mostly in-person schedule for fall.

Here is the main message we will send to students soon that outlines our expectations:

- **The fall 2021 schedule includes face-to-face and 100% digital course designations.** While most of our courses will be in person, many students have told us they enjoy being able to take a combination of in-person and online courses that accommodates their learning styles and schedules.
- **In-person courses may incorporate some online expectations.** While we’re excited to get back to in-person courses, we plan to implement some of the great benefits that online tools provided students in 2020. For example, in-person courses this fall will have a majority of classes scheduled on campus with the instructor, but there may be times when the instructor uses hybrid tools, such as scheduling virtual, small group breakout sessions or flipping the classroom.
- **Any combination of in-person and online courses may be taken for the same resident or nonresident full-time rate.** We did this last fall, and we will continue that practice for fall 2021 to give more students the option of taking online courses where preferred.
- **We will be prepared to flip some in-person courses to online or hybrid** if the pandemic continues into this fall. We certainly hope this will not be the case, but as we learned to do this past year, we will be ready to adjust quickly if necessary.

Because many students and faculty find the hybrid designation confusing, and because we do not expect to be required to physically distance to the same extent as this year, all courses will be marked as either face-to-face or 100% digital.

We are proud that during this difficult year, not a single COVID-19 case was contact-traced to a classroom. As always, our priority this fall will be to keep faculty, staff and students safe on campus while providing a first-class, in-person education for students. And if the course of the pandemic requires it, we will be able to transition to hybrid and online more easily this fall.
Finally, I want to reiterate how proud I am of the hard work and dedication you have shown and continue to show. As I’ve said before, for many of us, this past year has been the hardest in our careers and I thank each of you for persevering with us.

Best, Beth

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