



January 3, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

As we prepare to open the spring semester, I hope that you have had an enjoyable break. Faculty and staff continue to make remarkable efforts to advance our academic mission while also sustaining our campus community health and well-being.

This letter focuses on procedures for the classroom environment and modes of teaching and links to a more [detailed set of classroom guidelines](#) for the spring semester.

Support for Faculty

It is frustrating and difficult to face another round of COVID challenges, but I am heartened to do it with experienced and caring colleagues. Faculty and staff have done a tremendous job supporting students and each other. It is important in the coming semester that we all make well-being a personal priority and seek help where needed. The Faculty Hub is ready to assist in teaching or scholarship. In addition to support you may receive from your health care provider, mindfulness practices, exercise, or other approaches, please also consider opportunities offered on campus through the Weinstein Center, the Well-Being Center and the assistance and tools available at UR's [Behavioral Health page](#).

Mode of Teaching

As in the fall, students will be primarily in the classroom with their peers and the instructor. Full courses will not be taught remotely unless that was an existing arrangement prior to COVID-19 and/or the program of instruction in that school (e.g., SPCS) is based on remote teaching. Also continuing from the last semester, the University will not support blended teaching in which most students engage in the classroom and some engage on Zoom simultaneously.

Faculty have the ongoing flexibility to teach remotely for limited periods when, for example, they are unavoidably away during class time or it serves a pedagogical purpose for a particular class session. For instance, if particular classes have an excessive number of student absences and the teaching and learning would be best served by temporary remote teaching, faculty can hold some class sessions on Zoom. This decision is made by the faculty member, based on the nature of the class session, number of student absences, or the faculty member's own ability to be present in the classroom due to COVID-related circumstances. Typically, this would be

limited to not more than two weeks of classes to be held on Zoom. Faculty who are experiencing more severe challenges should consult with their respective Dean. Faculty who have questions or require additional support for pedagogical alternatives to holding a limited number of classes on Zoom should consult with the Faculty Hub.

Supporting Absent Students

There will be a continuing need to support Covid-related student absences this spring just as faculty have done so well over the past three semesters. The Faculty Hub has [these recommendations](#) for teaching when students are absent from the classroom. Please also [reach out to the Faculty Hub](#) for a 1-1 consultation to brainstorm unique solutions for your particular course learning goals.

Vaccination Status and the Classroom Experience

The student body and campus community are highly vaccinated. The University will continue to report the rates of vaccination and numbers of active cases and positive tests in our campus community. As in the fall the University will also continue to treat individual vaccination status as a matter of personal privacy. The current requirement that employees and students upload their vaccination status is accompanied by an assurance that the University will keep this personal medical information confidential.

Collecting Data for Contact Tracing

Please continue to provide seating charts for the purpose of contact tracing. [Detailed instructions](#) on how to file your seating chart no later than Jan. 17 or the second in-person session of your class can be found [here](#).

Thank you for all your efforts on behalf of students and our campus community and best wishes for the spring semester.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeff".

Jeffrey W. Legro
Executive Vice President and Provost