UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE

SCENARIO PLANNING WORK GROUP
Final Report | May 26, 2021

As we approach the Fall 2021 semester, there is still uncertainty about the course of the pandemic and the public health conditions that will exist at the start of the semester. In January 2021, the Scenario Planning Work Group (SPWG) recommended a strategy that would offer the greatest flexibility to react to either improving or static conditions with respect to the public health situation. The strategy was to build the course schedule around a roughly normal mix of modalities (e.g., F2F vs. online) and wait until there was more certainty about the public health situation before committing to a scenario for the Fall. For context, this strategy was developed just as vaccines were being approved and there was considerable uncertainty about their widespread availability and when substantial parts of the population could be vaccinated.

The SPWG report for Fall 2020 took a comprehensive view of possible scenarios and, although we have learned much during the last year, the basic foundations of that document continue to be relevant to the conditions in 2021. Therefore, we will present the Fall 2021 SPWG report as a continuation of the Fall 2020 report, focusing on the key elements of decision-making for Fall 2021.

The strategy adopted in January flows into the two versions of what, in the Fall 2020 report, the SPWG named Scenario 1: Scenario 1A (mostly F2F) and Scenario 1B (mostly online). For academic year 2020-2021, UWM has operated under Scenario 1B because 6-foot social distancing and other mitigations forced the majority of courses online. Currently, the Fall 2021 strategy is aimed at Scenario 1A; any subsequent decisions focus on the possible need to pivot to Scenario 1B in case public health conditions deteriorate.

This document will begin with an overview of the current situation followed by abbreviated descriptions of Scenarios 1A and 1B, including the key decisions involved in their implementation. Next, analyses of those key decisions are presented. During the spring semester, the SPWG again conducted a survey of student opinions about the fall 2021 semester and their desires in terms of modalities, accommodations, and other factors that may need addressing in preparation for the fall semester. Appendix A contains a summary of the survey data collected from students. Appendix B contains the Provost policy on instructor-initiated switches in course modalities.

Current conditions
The campus continues to operate in Scenario 1B. Campus COVID-19 cases have been low in spring 2021 with an average of roughly 10/week. Vaccinations are widely available and survey work, albeit at

modest response rates (particularly among students), suggest that ~85% are vaccinated or intend to be vaccinated. The CDC has recently relaxed mask mandates on vaccinated individuals and the City of Milwaukee is planning to roll back many restrictions in June.

The survey of continuing students in spring 2021 mainly paralleled the surveys sent out in the previous two semesters. The major change was the addition of questions asking students about COVID-19 accommodations that were implemented this year and that students would like to see continue post-pandemic. Key survey findings are listed below.

- As in past surveys, there are students with a strong preference for F2F and students with a strong preference for online. The data suggest an overall preference for F2F, but not by a large margin.
- When asked about a number of accommodations made while in Scenario 1B, two of six stood out as ones that students would really want to utilize in post-pandemic operations. A significant majority of students were interested in lecture capture and online options for F2F courses.
- There was about an even split in preference for synchronous vs. asynchronous online instruction.
- Over 20% of the students indicated that their decision to return in the fall depended on modality, with 8% demanding a mainly F2F schedule and 13% demanding a fully online schedule.

As of mid-May, we have reached about 40% of a normal enrollment build for the fall. Unusual features have been a slower-than-normal overall build in enrollment and an unusually high demand for online instruction. Although most enrollments have been in F2F sections, the ratio is much smaller than the ~2.5:1 ratio of F2F to online seats. It is also noteworthy that only 25% of students to date have fully F2F schedules (as opposed to nearly 50% last year), with nearly 15% having a fully online schedule (about 60% have a mix of F2F and online). This shift is leading to issues with online capacity in some units.

Scenario 1A Majority F2F – Current Class Schedule

Attributes
- Offers near "normal" fall semester and requires no scheduling changes
- Aligns with system target for modality mix
- Offers the most flexibility for meeting student modality preferences

Challenges
- Depends on improved public health situation, creating uncertainty
- Staff/student safety concerns may not change with improved public health situation

Key Implementation Decisions
- Accommodations for students and instructors
  - Video lecture capture
  - Parallel online options for students
  - Instructors switching to online teaching

Key Implementation Decisions - Scenario 1A Majority F2F

While plans for fall 2021 were initiated early in the year with the development of the course schedule, moving to Scenario 1A will require the return of furniture to classrooms and commons areas, as well as other facility changes. The facilities team has indicated the retrofit will take weeks, and a firm commitment to Scenario 1A is best made as early as possible and no later than July 6.

Accommodations for students and instructors - Scenario 1A Majority F2F

Video lecture capture
The survey this semester indicated that the great majority of students anticipate that they would use lectures captured on video. This was also borne out in the many comments provided by the students. It was viewed as a means for students to go back to review parts of the lecture that they did not immediately understand or missed for some reason rather than an alternative to attending class. Lecture capture also benefits students with accommodations who can use its captioning functionality. The technical demands of providing lecture capture are modest and funding appears to be available for broad installation of the needed technology. It is acknowledged that lecture capture will not be as useful in settings that have little lecture component, such as discussion-oriented courses, but there are many courses where it would offer value to students.
- ***It is strongly recommended that when practical, instructors should make lecture capture available to their students in Canvas.*** **It is not recommended that this be mandatory.**

Parallel online options for students
The survey this semester also indicated that the great majority of students anticipate that they would use online attendance options if they were available. This is a much larger commitment than lecture capture and is effectively a fully functional online alternative to F2F attendance. This was a requirement in most courses in Scenario 1B during AY2020/21 (labs and studios were excluded). It is very labor-intensive and can be viewed as teaching two courses at once. Previous survey data from instructors has highlighted the added demands of teaching in

Scenario 1B and this accommodation was likely a major contributor. Although this option offers students extreme flexibility, it is not sustainable for instructors.

- ***It is recommended that the campus no longer require online options for F2F courses as it moves to Scenario 1A.***

Nonetheless, flexibility in attendance requirements will continue to be important to student success and safe campus operation. Student comments highlighted that attendance flexibility was important to them for successfully navigating the semester during the pandemic. This is particularly important because we anticipate that there will continue to be some COVID-19 cases on campus in the fall. It is acknowledged that this flexibility could be misused by students and limit their success, so careful messaging is needed.

- ***Instructors are encouraged to continue to offer as much flexibility as possible for students who are unable to attend F2F or synchronous online classes and not require medical documentation for absences.***

Instructors switching to online teaching

Since Fall 2020, the Provost has had a policy on instructor-initiated changes in the modality of courses. The most recent update of the policy is in Appendix B. It relies on an independent group, currently a sub-group of the Monitoring Core Group (MCT), to make recommendations to the Provost. The MCT serves multiple functions in the UWM COVID-19 response and currently has one member who is a part of the faculty without an administrative appointment. Given the sensitivity of the issues going into Fall 2021, there would be value in adding at least one additional faculty member and an instructional academic staff member to the team delegated with making recommendations to the Provost.

- ***It is recommended that the MCT sub-group delegated with making recommendation on modality changes be augmented with a second faculty member and an instructional academic staff member.***

Scenario 1B Majority Online – Option if pivot needed

Attributes
- Allows for extensive social distancing constraints

Challenges
- Does not meet System modality mix target
- Does not align with student preferences in UWM and other surveys
- Could put UWM at competitive disadvantage if other schools are able to take advantage of improving public health conditions.

Key Implementation Decisions
- Prioritization of classes for F2F in class schedule pivot
- Online fees for classes flipped from F2F to online
- Accommodations for students
    - Video lecture capture
    - Online versions

Key Implementation Decisions - Scenario 1B Majority Online

Prioritization of classes for F2F in class schedule pivot
> In the Fall 2020 SPWG report, a prioritization team and protocol were established. This was successful and could be utilized in case a pivot is needed.
> - ***It is recommended that if a pivot is necessary, the Fall 2020 SPWG protocols be used.***

Online fees for classes flipped from F2F to online
> This falls under the responsibility of Financial and Administrative Affairs (FAA).
> - ***As in fall 2020, it is recommended that FAA take the best interests of students into account in their negotiations with UW System on fee issues.***

Accommodations for students - Scenario 1B Majority Online

Video lecture capture/Online versions
> As discussed above and in the earlier SPWG report, lecture capture and parallel online courses are viable and essential options for continuation of instruction during pandemic-restricted operations.
> - **In the event of a pivot, the Scenario 1B recommendations on student accommodations should be continued.**

# Fall 2021 Survey Summary

Scenario Planning Working Group

Overview

- Survey launched in early April with a message from Dave Clark to all students; Deans followed up with encouragement to fill out the survey. See appendix for the list of questions.
- 2633 responses, with graduate students somewhat overrepresented (about 600 of the responses).
- Results report and raw data are available here: https://panthers-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/dclark_uwm_edu/Esh2D7mQEGhBoVBpj4fWlMkBKtYdc5aGQZY33KOcVM_OCA?e=tVGwzQ
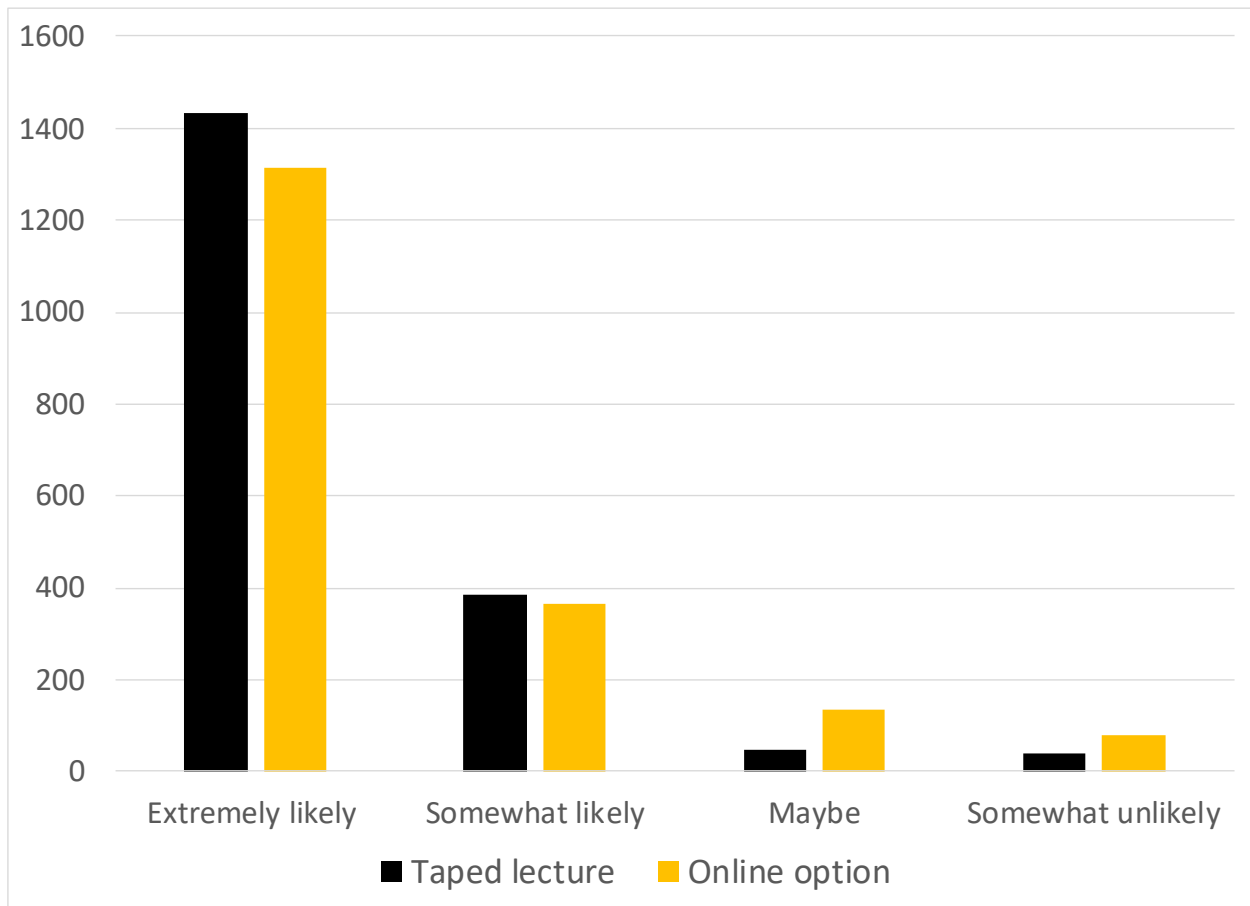
Key Takeaways

Respondents are split between an interest in F2F courses and online courses, with strong feelings in both directions.

Modality preference: Undergrads
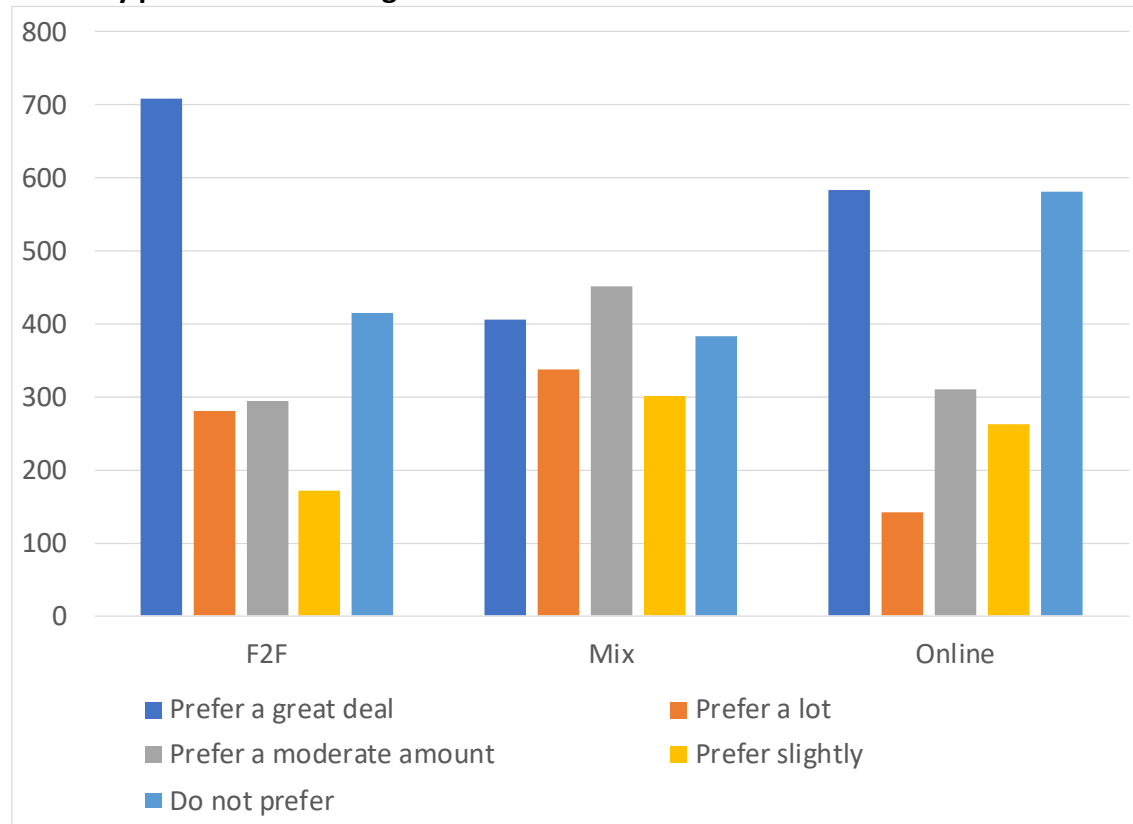
Students strongly advocate for continuing some of the accommodations we built out during the pandemic; lecture capture in particular is extremely popular.

Respondents contributed many, many comments in response to this question:

> Q22: Please list any other COVID-related changes you'd like to see continued after the pandemic (themes highlighted in yellow)

A qualitative analysis of these comments found 11 broad themes. Each theme is presented below with illustrative quotes.

Continue higher number of online classes
A majority of comments indicated a preference for having more-than-typical online course offerings for Fall 2021. Reasons for this preference included
- Ability to balance school, family, and work commitments

"I like the flexibility, I'm a working parent and student so it allows me to have more freedom to study around my life."

- Convenience

"I thrived with having my classes online. Especially since I live an hour from campus."

- Health concerns

"The option for online courses is HUGE for me. I cannot attend classes in person due to being high risk and even with the vaccine, I do not plan to come back to campus."

- Perceptions that it's the future of education

"Physical-attendance mandatory classes seems almost archaic at this point (outside of instances like labs where physically being present is needed)."

Return to face-to-face preferred
While fewer in number, students who would like a "return to normal" were strongly in favor of face-to-face classes.

"literally nothing is working I am learning nothing"

"this sucked"

"The only changes I want are the one to put UWM back to normal. No masks, No Covid test, In person classes, regular campus life."

Learning benefits of recorded lectures
Lecture capture was highly valued by students, and there was strong support for continuing and increasing this practice.

"I just want to use this box to reiterate how much I would adore the ability to review online recorded classes.

"Since the pandemic started, all of my lectures have been made available online. Not just lecture slides, files and announcements, but video-recorded lectures proctored by an instructor and posted on canvas. Moving forward, lectures should be recorded live and posted on canvas. This simple use of technology has made lectures available to me to review and master. Even in-person lectures should be recorded and posted. This simple effort will be inextricably linked to better outcomes. Having the lecture slides is very useful, but having all of the dialogue from a fast-paced lecture holds real value for learning. The video recording technology in lecture halls will show value in more ways than posting lectures. It's a smart investment that will directly impact educational outcomes."

"Having lectures available online is amazing."

Asynchronous online options preferred
While some students indicated a preference for synchronous, live online lectures, most students preferred asynchronous delivery that enabled them to access course content when it fit into their lives.

"I like the asynchronous online classes. If I am signing up for an online class it's because I have a busy schedule already. Making online classes synchronized makes it harder to keep up with the work and put your best effort due to all the other busy classes."

Input on Improving Online Courses
Students offered a variety of tips for improving their online course experience, including having greater consistency in navigation across courses (e.g., assignments located in the same place and all placed on the Canvas calendar); online orientation to Canvas for all students as part of new student orientation; greater instructor presence/interaction; open note exams; continuing a hybrid approach to lab sessions.

"Instructors have been using Canvas much more effectively since the switch to online instruction. I hope instructors continue using Canvas as they are now even with in-person lectures. For example, Canvas pages for each week of class with a list of assignments, homework assignments as Canvas quizzes instead of paper assignments."

"Alternating labs in person vs online (every other week). It was really helpful because typical labs used to be crowded and chaotic with 30-40 students and it was hard to understand or get work done properly. The labs being online every other week was helpful because the class was split and we learned a lot more."

"It is frustrating when you go to a course within Canvas to work on a class and you have to search for an assignment or rubric because it may be in Assignments, or Announcements, Modules or in the Syllabus (which may also be located in multiple locations)."

Concerns about the return to campus
Students expressed concerns about exposure to COVID-19, stressing the need to keep cleaning protocols in place. There were some suggestions to mandate vaccination.

"I'm nervous to go back in the fall. I don't know what to expect I don't even know what is normal anymore. "

"By still allowing the option for classes to be online, especially large lectures. I think myself and other people are still worried about going back fully in campus while others may be anxious to get back to in-person immediately. Giving each student the choice to choose without penalty would be the best option in my opinion. Having hand sanitizing stations all over campus would also be a great thing to continue."

Remote access for meetings/support services/events
Students want to retain the ability to meet virtually, particularly for short meetings with advisors and faculty members. They appreciate being able to access services such as tutoring

online, and would like to continue online access to forms and other services. However, they really want the Library and the Union to open more fully in fall.

Hyflex
The Hyflex mode (classes available on campus and live in Canvas simultaneously) was also popular.

> "I do like this online aspect where if you can't, for whatever reason, can't make it to class you can still attend because of the online format."

Flexibility in attendance policies
Students would like class attendance policies to remain flexible.

> "I would like to continue to see a continued level of understanding and concern when students, faculty, and family members are sick. If people are not feeling well or have immediate family that they need to care for, they should not feel obligated to compromise their health or the health of their classmates by coming into class just so they do not miss anything. Understanding (within reason) should be afforded to students to revisit lectures or extend deadlines in the event they fall ill."

Mental health issues
Students have experienced increased stress, anxiety and depression over the past year, and they would like increased access to counseling services (including telehealth services).

> "All staff at UWM should receive trauma-based training over the summer as the pandemic was a lot for all of us and learning how to work with students who dealt with trauma is different from your average student whether they be adults or not."

> "Continue to offer and expand mental health/therapy related services. I don't know where I'd be without them."

Kindness
Appreciation was expressed for UWM as a caring community, and students want that heightened empathy to be an essential aspect of UWM's campus culture.

> "I hope that this has shown instructors and professors who didn't already know this that the world outside the classroom is a major determinant of classroom performance. The culture of kindness that grew in some ways as a result of the pandemic should continue. Reasonable expectations, genuine offers of support, checking in with students and graduate instructors to genuinely listen to their concerns and experiences."

> "Professors have been so helpful and understanding, during this! I transferred in Fall 2020, and I have felt very well supported by the UWM community as a whole. I hope this is something that continues throughout my time here and wasn't/isn't just because of the Pandemic."

Survey Tool

Q1 What is your school/college or advising unit?

▼ College of Engineering & Applied Science (138) ... Zilber School of Public Health (153)

- -

Q2 What year in school are you in this semester?

▼ High school (29) ... Graduate Certificate (34)

- -

Q14 What is your current mix of online vs. face-to-face courses?

▼ All online (1) ... Half online, half face to face (7)

- -

Q16 Where is your permanent address?

▼ Milwaukee/Waukesha area (and surrounding counties) (1) ... International Student (4)

- -

Q15 Where do you currently live?

▼ Living in university housing (1) ... Living with family outside the Milwaukee area (7)

- -

Q21 Some changes that were necessary because of the pandemic might continue. If these options were available how likely are you to take advantage of them?

	Extremely likely (23)	Somewhat likely (24)	Neither likely nor unlikely (25)	Somewhat unlikely (26)	Extremely unlikely (27)
Lectures made available online so you can go back and review material (28)	○	○	○	○	○
The option to attend courses in person or online (33)	○	○	○	○	○
Virtual events/virtual access to live events (34)	○	○	○	○	○
Online access to college support resources (35)	○	○	○	○	○
Expanded hours of student services-related departments (40)	○	○	○	○	○
Online organizations or clubs (42)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22 Please list any other COVID-related changes you'd like to see continued after the pandemic?

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_____

_____

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_____

Q17 How can UWM better support you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q18 Please indicate your preference for fall instruction.

	Prefer a great deal (17)	Prefer a lot (18)	Prefer a moderate amount (19)	Prefer slightly (20)	Do not prefer (21)
Face to face courses (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Hybrid/mix of online and face to face (8)	○	○	○	○	○
Online instruction (2)	○	○	○	○	○

Display This Question:

If What year in school are you in this semester? = Master's courses

And What year in school are you in this semester? = Master's research

And What year in school are you in this semester? = Doctoral courses

And What year in school are you in this semester? = Doctoral research

And What year in school are you in this semester? = Graduate Certificate

Q20 Please indicate your preference for summer and fall research if you are defending a thesis or a dissertation.

	Prefer a great deal (17)	Prefer a lot (18)	Prefer a moderate amount (19)	Prefer slightly (20)	Do not prefer (21)
Face to face (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Hybrid/mix of online and face to face (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Online (2)	○	○	○	○	○

Q28 For online course offerings, do you prefer synchronous meetings (set virtual class meeting times with the instructor) or asynchronous meetings (no set meeting times)?

○ Synchronous (4)

○ Asynchronous (5)

Q9 What are your plans for the fall 2021 semester?

○ Definitely continue at UWM (10)

○ Continue at UWM, but only if my courses are exclusively online (5)

○ Continue at UWM, but only if my courses are primarily face to face (8)

○ Have not yet decided on my plans for next semester (3)

○ Do not plan to continue at UWM (4)

○ Graduating prior to the fall semester (2)

Skip To: Q13 If What are your plans for the fall 2021 semester? = Do not plan to continue at UWM

Q23 Do you plan to get a Covid-19 vaccination once you are eligible?

○ Yes (21)

○ No (22)

Q25 If you have not received a Covid-19 vaccination before the Fall 2021 semester starts, would you be interested in getting one after arriving on campus?

○ Yes (18)

○ Maybe (19)

○ No (20)

Q27 Please share something you enjoyed pre-COVID at UWM (an activity or community) that you really hope is in place when campus is fully open.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q22 Please share concerns you have about the fall semester.

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_____

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_____

Q26 Please share why you are uncertain about your fall plans.

_____

Q13 Please comment on your plans for the upcoming semester. If you are transferring, please let us know to where you're transferring.

_____

Q11 Name (optional)

_____

Q12 Email address (optional)

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

**Guidelines for Considering a Change in Instructional Modality
from In-Person to Online-Only or Hybrid
UWM – Fall 2021**

The Scenario Planning Work Group has recommended that Fall 2021 instructional modalities strive for a curricular array that gets closer to pre-pandemic normalcy with a goal of 75 percent of courses occurring in-person. For this document, in-person courses are those with a modality designation of P or Hybrid 1 (H1). Consistent with UWM's 2030+ plan to be a radically welcoming campus, instructors wishing to change modality from in-person instruction (P or H1) to online-only or hybrid (W, H2 or H3) must follow the guidelines and process detailed below in order to best serve students and guarantee that courses are delivered as advertised in course schedules.

Guidelines and Process

1. The authority to approve changes in modality results from a collaborative dialogue between the instructor, the department chair, associate dean, dean, and provost's office. Once a modality is published in PAWS, students use that information to schedule their semester. We encourage academic units, to the best of their ability, to maintain the originally planned instructional delivery mode and continue the mix of modalities for licensure and accreditation purposes, pedagogical factors, as well as student preference. These factors as well as those following are part of the dialogue in changes to modality. In addition, we recommend for courses where licensure, accreditation, and federal requirements for international students require in-person instruction that back-up instructors be assigned to that course in case a staffing issue arises.

2. Many students sign up for a particular course for that course's advertised modality. It may be the student learns better in that instructional modality, or they prefer the social community provided in the advertised modality. In any case, please confer with students prior to initiating any changes in modality, even changes from synchronous online to asynchronous online.

3. Academic units may identify a need to shift in-person courses to online in order to meet student enrollment trends and demand (e.g., an online course is fully enrolled and there's a need to add another online section and shift staffing accordingly). These changes are at the discretion of the academic unit and no review is required in addition to consultation with and approval from one's department chair and dean.

4. Factors justifying temporary or permanent changes in instructional modality for Fall 2021 include, but are not limited to, the following:
a. Pedagogy: Instructors may request change in modality for pedagogical reasons.
b. Course Requirements: Courses whose accreditation, licensure, or pedagogy require in-person instruction may be considered for changes in modality. However, such changes will require increased justification that all students and program needs are served by the change in modality. Increased scrutiny will also occur for in-person courses with international student enrollments, since visa requirements may require these students to be enrolled in in-person courses.

c. Health: Instructors who have changes in their health situation may request a change in modality to accommodate these health changes. It is recommended that instructors with existing health conditions that are risk factors for coronavirus opt to teach purely online. For courses where in-person instruction is required for international students, licensure, or accreditation, changes to modality will be considered only after all back-up instructor options are exhausted.

d. Close Contact, Infection, or Care-Giving: Instructors who have been identified as a close contact, become infected, or have a family member who requires care can request a change in modality. As in 3.c., back-up instructor options should be considered first.

e. If an existing course has a defined meeting schedule (e.g., MW, 9:00 am – 9:50 am), it is recommended that the same meeting time be maintained, including for moves to a purely online modality. Any changes to a course's meeting schedule should be indicated in the submitted justification.

5. Process for requesting a change in modality for Fall 2021:
   a. Instructors teaching in-person who wish to move their class to online should first contact their department chair, associate dean, and/or dean to discuss the situation.
   b. In collaboration with the department chair, associate dean, and/or dean, the instructor should provide detailed justification for moving the course from in-person delivery (P or H1) to online only (WW) or hybrid (H2 or H3). In addition to addressing the above factors, instructors should include the course and section number, current enrollments, student attendance at in-person sections, anticipated impacts on students in making the change, and any other relevant facts related to the course.
   c. Students with certain accommodation plans may need additional considerations:
      i. If your course has a student with an accommodation plan (or if you are not sure), please contact ARC prior to submitting a request for change in modality: MKE: archelp@uwm.edu, 414-229-6287; CGS: sjthor@uwm.edu, 414-251-6087.
      ii. Depending on the accommodation plan, ARC may have to change staffing schedules, find new ASL interpreters, or cancel existing contracts. Depending on the course and student, additional planning and preparation may be required to meet student needs. The more time ARC has to plan, the better the student is served and the less impact it has on schedules and budget.
      iii. Justification for making a change in modality should address efforts to address students' accommodation plans.
   d. Department chairs, associate deans, or deans should submit the instructor justification to Stephen Schmid, schmids@uwm.edu. In addition, the submitter should indicate whether they and other leads in the academic unit support the change in modality request.
   e. After review by the Review Team and approval of the Provost's Office, the submitter will be informed of the decision. The Registrar's Office will initiate any changes to the course modality in PAWS and the students' tuition.