

POST-COVID OPPORTUNITY SCAN

The College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences Council of Chairs met on February 9, 2021 and discussed Post-Covid Opportunity suggestions. Listed below is a brief summary and rationale for these suggestions.

- 1. Flexibility:** The chairs expressed the greatest need for flexibility in making any future plans with regards to course scheduling, in-person and hybrid classes, as well as staffing on campus. Because there is so much “unknown” with regards to availability of vaccines (in addition to the restrictions on mandating vaccines at places of employment), we need to provide options for students, faculty, and staff in F2F interactions. Even when the time comes when we can operate more fully in F2F mode, we might want to consider what a curriculum plan would look like for hybrid-only instruction as well as fully online programs. The frustration that chairs and faculty feel is that we are having to make plans 6 months in advance when we don’t know exactly what things will look like in the future.
- 2. Infrastructure Support (IT and physical building spaces):** At the same time, the lack of a full population on campus means, deferred maintenance can be conducted with less interruption of classrooms and buildings. Elevator upgrades should be considered in Art, Micklejohn, and Music buildings. In addition, roofing in some of the Art facilities/studios may need attention. IT support should continue with robust support in equipment, wireless accessibility, and support of remote learning. Zoom camera-ready instructional classrooms so that instructors can meet in person as well as with remote students.
- 3. Instructional Support for Faculty:** There is a range of technical skill levels among faculty. Thus, faculty need support in “re-tooling” of their instructional methods, either hybrid, F2F, and fully remote learning. In addition, we need to establish support for large online selections of courses if we continue to operate on the model of balancing large and small courses and FTES model of funding in the college.
- 4. Review Funding Formulas for CLASS courses:** When the college went to remote instruction, this changed the capacity of a number of larger section classes, which enrolled fewer students per section, thus meant hiring more instructors. In addition, the college bears the majority of General Education courses, many of which are capped at 30 students (both lower division first-year students, as well as upper division GE courses). The results of capped courses resulted in offering more sections of courses in order to accommodate more students—and hiring more instructors—our greatest cost. Post-Covid opportunities will need to look at our college’s share of General Education and how we serve the students across the university besides within the college majors. The results of this year’s pandemic costs have placed CLASS into a budget deficit.
- 5. Hiring Processes:** Consider hiring processes for student assistants/student employees that does not involve Presidential approval. Hiring processes for permanent staff, faculty, and MPP positions would best be handled in each academic unit by the Vice Presidents of the unit.
- 6. Review the charge and function of the Emergency Operations Committee (EOC):** There were many questions throughout the early weeks of the pandemic. There was a feeling that there was no one person to get answers from in order to deal with campus operations. Because the EOC operates as a committee, which is good for input for all of the stakeholders, there were often questions that we could not always find the answers to. Example: Who was paying for the PPE? How do we get PPE? Can faculty come to campus? Can faculty take their ergonomic desks home? Most of these questions were resolved, however, it would be a good chance to review the current Emergency Operations Plans for currency with a 360 review and input from the campus stakeholders.

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