

**UNKEA/FACULTY SENATE COVID-19 TASK FORCE:
RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS**

May 25, 2020

Dear Chancellor Kristensen, Dr. Bicak, Vice-Chancellor Watts, Dr. Falconer and Dr. Longo:

From May 14th to May 22nd thirty UNK faculty members from CAS, COE, the Library and CBT came together in different committees (or emailed us directly) organized by their respective disciplines and colleges to discuss the needs of faculty, our students and the larger university community in the face of in-person teaching in the Fall of 2020. The recommendations, concerns and proposals presented below are divided between broader issues raised by multiple committees *and* those concerns specific to a department, program, or college. UNKEA and UNK's Faculty Senate seek not only to share this information to the wider UNK community, but we also seek to have this information integrated into UNK's final plan for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in the Fall of 2020.

As the below indicates, these faculty took seriously their charge and raised several issues and potential solutions to some of the challenges that we will be facing in the Fall. Central issues, fears and recommendations raised include:

- That all faculty be given the option to stay online in the Fall as opposed to in-person teaching. This would be separate from any specific disability accommodation. The existence of this option is fundamental given the fact that it is doubtful that the UNK campus can develop, and more importantly, *maintain* the restrictions necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19 (such as universal mask-wearing, 6 ft social distancing, cleaning of all desks between classes, administration of regular COVID-19 testing, etc...). It is imperative that those faculty unwilling to take this risk, and/or risk the health of their families, be allowed to teach remotely. **This faculty concern is also made clear by the results of our recent Faculty Survey (see Appendix 1). In fact, this option should be given to *all* UNK employees who can reasonably accomplish their work from home.**
- That there are a significant percentage of course offerings that will be extremely difficult to deliver in-person *while* simultaneously maintaining safeguards against the spread of COVID-19. Laboratories in Biology, ceramic classes in Art or singing lessons in the Department of Music represent possibly insurmountable challenges. Furthermore, any effort to increase the number of sections that faculty must teach (beyond UNK Faculty Workload guidelines) requires the approval of UNKEA.
- That there is a lack of confidence in the capacity of UNK to enforce the necessary behavioral changes required to ensure the mitigation of the virus.

The faculty involved in this taskforce fully recognize the unprecedented nature of this pandemic and believe that UNK's administration is in good faith trying to meet the immense challenges before us. Related to meeting those challenges, this work is presented in the spirit of shared governance and with the goal of making Fall 2020 as successful, and as safe, for the UNK community as we can.

Respectfully Submitted,

Will Aviles, UNKEA President

Martonia Gaskill, Faculty Senate President

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS/REQUESTS/QUESTIONS

In the Classroom

- All courses that can be taught effectively online, should be taught online. Courses that are impossible to be taught online or would be majorly compromised if taught online, can be taught F2F with safety measures* in place. **We must decide sooner than later which will be online and which f2f to allow faculty to prepare and to ensure the best educational experience for our students as possible.**
- Courses that require only a few class activities should be offered in Blended/Hybrid forms to allow maximum online teaching to decrease traffic on campus. It also must be clear if such courses require synchronous or asynchronous delivery methods. Our faculty survey also makes clear that a supermajority of our colleagues are open to starting and ending the semester earlier in the Fall (see Appendix 1).
- If lectures are forced to be remote, we recommend that the administration pay for a lockdown browser with a camera monitoring system for exams. What we used for the spring semester was inadequate.
- The UNMC guidelines for classrooms recommend maintaining social distancing in the class and recommends a “hybrid” mode for classes above 25 students (pg.10). However, later on in the document the authors present their recommendations for on campus social gatherings, writing that “all meetings and social gatherings should be limited to 10 people or less, have made accommodations for appropriate physical distancing, and should not involve any off-campus participants for on-campus events” (pg.18). While both would require the splitting of classes, shifting to fully online and/or some type of hybrid the number of classes that need to be addressed differs significantly upon which criteria is used.
- Faculty should be given the flexibility to hold their tests at night or on the weekend in the larger rooms available on campus.
- Cameras should be put in each classroom for live streaming.
- Seats must be rearranged to accommodate social distancing.
- Classrooms must be cleaned after each class session. However, neither faculty, nor students, should be given the responsibility of cleaning desks after each class---let alone with the use of buckets of disinfectant and rags (at least one of the Chancellor’s Taskforce committee is considering the buckets idea).
- Students and instructors will not be able to hear each other well enough if everyone is wearing masks. Professors will need individual microphones (not to be shared).
- All faculty will have to institute a liberal attendance policy. Any student who suspects she has come into contact with someone who has contracted the virus or with minor symptoms cannot come to class. Faculty will have to make material available electronically for students who have to self-isolate if they develop symptoms or if they live with someone who develops symptoms.

In the Department

- All meetings should either be online or have a virtual option (faculty, college, committee, etc.)
- Communal areas within office areas need to be closed (kitchens & refrigerators), food needs to be kept in offices
- Advising should be done online via email and zoom
- Graduate instructors and adjuncts who share offices will need their own workspaces.
- Large supplies of PPE/Hand Sanitizers must be provided to all departments

On Campus

Faculty and Students cannot be required to report to campus. Faculty and Students should have the freedom not to be present on campus if they do not feel safe. **Overall, some faculty members strongly urge that faculty be allowed to make their own decisions about whether to teach in-person or online in the fall as presented in the UNO faculty senate resolution (UNO's Faculty Resolution appears as Appendix 2).**

- Construct a "Policing" Committee (or "roving monitors" of Student Ambassadors or a mix of faculty/staff/students) to reassure execution of the Rules across campus and each college. Code of conduct must be defined. Not following rules and misconduct must have serious consequences (to be determined). For all learner, faculty and staff "Code of Conduct" policies and procedures as well as community/state level requirements will apply and should provide guidance in event of intentional noncompliance.
- All students and faculty should be required to watch a video seminar on safety and use of materials in their respective concentrations. They should sign an agreement which verifies that they watched the video, and that they understand that compliance is mandatory. They should be aware that without compliance it releases the school and the employees of any liabilities.
- Social distancing must have priority at all times and in all circumstances. Wearing a mask should be mandatory for all individuals on campus. The type of mask and/or face covering that is considered acceptable must be made clear. - Students will not be allowed to eat or drink in the building or sit in the hallways between classes.
- Digital-based medical release system (to verify that students are healthy enough to return to class). This could be in the form of an APP that all students, faculty and staff must download to their phones.
- Establishing a Google doc spreadsheet to establish best practices and innovative ideas related to University experiences and COVID-19. This Google doc can be a collaborative document with a designated editor.
- All elevators need restrictions about the number of people who can use it at one time. There need to be separate entry points and exit points for each building.
- One committee strongly recommended a Duke University proposal for staff and faculty "Staff [and faculty] who have been instructed to return to the workplace must conduct symptom monitoring every day before reporting to work. You must be free of ANY symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 or have had evaluation and clearance by Employee Occupational Health and Wellness (EOHW) to be eligible to report to work."

- Extensive and regular COVID-19 testing of the UNK community must become a reality. Oximeter testing if other testing produces possible false negative.
- All students without access to a personal computer should be given a lap-top for the Fall semester to mitigate the use of computer labs and/or hallway computers.
- The university should establish various “shut down” plans at various points in the semester. For example, if we come back in August we should have a campus shut down plan for 15 September, one for Midterm Break in October, one for Thanksgiving, etc. All facilities, faculty, staff and admin should be aware of what these plans are and what things we will need to do to implement them as quickly, efficiently, and effectively as possible.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- Who, or what, will represent the clear chain of command and procedure when questions arise? Who do we go to that has the answers or a direct line to the person that will be making the decisions associated with the mitigation of COVID-19 at UNK?
- Availability of tests – if tests are not available, how can we possibly maintain a safe campus?
- -The UNMC guidelines states that we should “Limit off campus visitors and guests as much as possible.” How will “as much as possible” be defined at UNK? Will there be any criteria established to make clear who will represent exceptions to this policy? For example, can families see their family member perform at a music student degree recital?
- 6 ft social distancing and sections- For laboratory classes, this may mean we need 3X as many labs. Who is going to be teaching these and how do we go about rescheduling students who are already enrolled in labs into smaller sections? Is the administration going to provide resources to give faculty overload pay or hire more faculty? Any changes to workload requirements must have UNKEA’s approval.
- Asymptomatic students/faculty – carriers of covid-19 will continue to spread the disease
 - a. Will there be PCR testing or rapid antigen testing (saliva)-similar to tests for strep throat-to test asymptomatic individuals?
- What options can be given to students who do not feel safe (are vulnerable, live with a family member who is vulnerable, etc) to attend F2F classes?
- How can we support students who say they cannot do well in online classes? Can we offer them extra support? How? What? Who?
- Access to masks may be difficult for some faculty, staff and students. Would Recycling masks be an option?
- UNMC document refers to different “phases”---hypothetically, when does phase 1 (the first two weeks) start? The first day of the Fall semester? Earlier?
- Are sabbaticals for the 2020-2021 academic year going to be revoked? This is essential to know when planning.
- Who will enforce the wearing of masks? We, the faculty? Security Officers? I can see entrances being monitored but there is no physical way to force students to keep their masks on while in class, and the vast majority of faculty will not police this.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In our classrooms

- Field-based TE classes (and student teaching) – Partner with schools to determine how to complete these course requirements.

In our departments

- Contact NDE/Certifying Agency to establish the field/student teaching/clinical procedures as we move forward
- Department Chairs & Clinical Coordinators (for each clinic) need to devise Rules & Regulations to be followed by all faculty, supervisors, students and everyone who enter the clinic (Contact Departments that have Clinical programs (CDIS, KSS, School-Psych)
- A conversation with the NDE about modifying face-to-face requirements for observations and student teaching.
- Walk-in clinic (KSS) & Communications Disorders (face-to-face clinic) will need to ensure that appointments are scheduled with time to sanitize between clients

COE and Campus

- COE clinic doors (classrooms 125 and 120 are on the other side of this door) need to be closed to prevent unnecessary traffic through the clinic. Students will still be able to access classrooms.
- Band members can no longer have access to COE clinic bathrooms during their practice in the field west of the COE.

SOCIAL SCIENCES/HUMANITIES

In our classrooms

- Thomas Hall does not have classrooms that are large enough to accommodate 6 feet of distance between students. Class sizes would have to be substantially reduced to follow mandates on space, especially because English classes involve students speaking with one another.

In our departments

- A faculty member in Thomas wrote “I have been in Thomas Hall for 7 years now and every winter, have asked the HVAC to fix airflow so we have heat in the restrooms. I have continually been told it is done--and it never is. I have very little faith that it is fiscally or physically possible to guarantee fresh airflow in Thomas (let alone every other building). Half the time, our heat and air units do not function properly--how can we realistically expect the air flow to be changed to negative pressure only in time for classes?”

LIBRARY

- Dedicated three-door entry and exit point exists but must be used for both purposes. Might be possible to designate one door as entry, keep one closed, use another as exit, but non-contact barriers between doors and directional arrows on floor should be considered.
- Entire counter area should be enclosed. Use barrier material from countertop to existing overhead bulkhead with minimal pass-throughs or two-way drawers and voice amplification at service level.
- If building is opened to student use, book collection on upper floor and journal collection and curriculum collections on lower level should be isolated from general access, at least during the pandemic, by erection of 2x4 framing and plastic sheeting with staff only access via locked access doors.
- Remove chairs in open areas to provide only one chair at each table. Enforce this.
- The Library has empty hand sanitizer dispensers in several locations around the building. It has not been possible to obtain refills for these dispensers for a year or more.
- Library faculty are creating new online tutorials and will provide other online instruction for classes as needed. Classes should not need to come to the Library for instruction as in the past.
- UNK ID should be worn on a lanyard, or otherwise be viewable at all times without the necessity of extracting it from a wallet, purse, backpack or pocket. This avoids having to request that an individual show an ID.

ART/DANCE/MUSIC/THEATRE

In our classrooms

- Physical contact with materials and exposure of mouths is necessary to teach in Music, Dance, and Theatre. Changes to the way materials, and equipment, are used in art, instruments are handled in music, etc. should be based on best practice.
- The Music, Theatre, and Art departments have problems which make social distancing, masks, and even a daily cleaning ritual task unrealistic. It compromises everyone's safety.
- For the music department the act of singing and playing instruments includes the production of airborne aerosols that are impossible to control given the needs of instruction. These aerosols unlike normal speech linger in the air exponentially longer and carry for a longer distance.
- It is likely that aerosols are present in music offices/studios, practice rooms, classrooms, and particularly large rehearsal spaces utilized by vocal and wind-instrument ensembles.

In our departments

- The HVAC systems in the Fine Arts Building (FAB) has a long-documented history of inadequacy for their purposes, including in accreditation reviews by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). Further evidence of this may be seen in the window-mounted air-conditioning units in several faculty offices/studios. As a result, it would seem particularly problematic to achieve large-scale changes to HVAC systems before August when these issues have persisted for years, if not decades.
- Indoor rehearsal facilities-the current band room or recital hall seating area will likely not be acceptable for appropriate spacing. Current research recommends a distance of 10 feet between people when using woodwind and brass instruments.
- Sanitizing Instruments and other Equipment--Currently, we have multiple students that use the same instrument for various ensembles and education courses. We will need to secure additional sanitation and cleaning materials to allow the following to disinfect mouthpieces after each rehearsal/practice.
- From another committee member from music regarding the difficulty of cleaning:
"My biggest concern is disinfecting the percussion instruments. I worry that the chemicals available would damage the percussion instruments (mallet keyboard bars, drumheads, etc.)."
- Unless performances can be modified which require monologues, soliloquies, or some other form of individual single person exhibition, it makes it difficult to impossible to create performances for the public. Social distancing is possible but it will require some imagination and is not without cost. There can be no live performances. Audience feedback is often essential to student learning.

ART AND DESIGN

In our classrooms

- The concentrations of sculpture, ceramics, and glass require some use of community materials. Unless students are provided with their own clay, and or other materials for the other classes that are currently shared, then they risk infection. This is not as easy as wiping the materials down. Once they are used they cannot be reused in this situation. Recycling may no longer be possible which will add additional cost. Materials after initial use may have to be discarded.

In our department

- Prioritize procedures in the work areas of faculty and staff who are at a higher risk of infection (older, ill, pregnant, immuno-suppressed, etc.).
- Gallery space can be sacrificed to be use as classroom instruction to accommodate safe distancing but this sacrifices exhibitions that the students have come to expect.
- The classroom, regardless of UNMC precautions, do not take in consideration the use of computers in the design department. In addition, facilities do not have enough staff to wipe down the computers between classes. Asking students to do so may have inherent problems. The classrooms are not large enough to accommodate the social distancing requirements without altering or providing 'shifts' when classes meet.

NATURAL SCIENCES

Laboratories- Scenarios to consider:

Scenario 1: Typical teaching laboratories have sufficient equipment for approximately 8 groups of three students. For the sake of discussion, a lab holds $8 \times 3 = 24$ students. Students work in groups of three in close proximity to each other. The teaching laboratory is meant to be a collaborative, problem solving experience. The students collectively manipulate their equipment/apparatus, take data, and document observations. There are some occasions where the students must go to another part of the room for equipment, samples, etc. Frequently, the instructor must circulate to all groups to illustrate proper equipment usage or techniques.

Ideas/pros/cons/issues:

- i. Putting the students in a plexiglass cube/shield. Who gets the equipment? Also, there are safety issues of putting an apparatus/equipment inside this cube/shield. The other two students in the group do not participate.
- ii. Spread the students out. Similar issue to above-one student manipulates the equipment, the other two students just watch. Also, the teaching lab spaces (At least in 1st floor BHS) will not hold 24 students with at least a 2 meter separation between everyone.
- iii. Reduce enrollment in the room and spread the students out. Issue: increased lab sections and workload.
- iv. Reduce enrollment to 16: Now have eight groups of two. The two students STILL need to work in close proximity. Same issues as above.
- v. Reduce enrollment to 8: Now have eight groups of one. Everyone has his or her own equipment, working independently.
- vi. Increase the number of equipment stations available. Issue: cost\$\$ **Even if** each student had their own individual equipment there is not enough space in the teaching labs to separate them by 2 meters.

Scenario 2: Here are a couple of assumptions:

- vii. Everyone wears masks at all times.
- viii. Students who are back to back could be placed slightly closer than those facing each other.
- ix. Consistent student pairing in labs raises risk, but only slightly. Some of these pairs will have continual exposure to each other anyway in shared classes and perhaps living arrangements.

Laboratory question:

If a student was consistently paired with the same student for the whole semester, the risk is higher than not having a partner, but is this risk acceptable? If so, we might be able to increase lab capacities. In the example attached, I can maintain greater than 6' distances between pairs for any interaction face-to-face, and at least 5' spacing for back-to-back interactions and still have 22-24 person capacities. The student pairs would work in the area in one student's station. This lengthens the student-student distances by clustering the students.

General questions from Natural Sciences:

What about laboratory classes that occur in the field? There are a number of wildlife and ecology courses that have their laboratories in the field. How will students get to the site? Is this travel going to be approved?

APPENDIX 1-SURVEY RESULTS, UNK FACULTY

SURVEY PERIOD: MAY 23-MAY 27, 2020

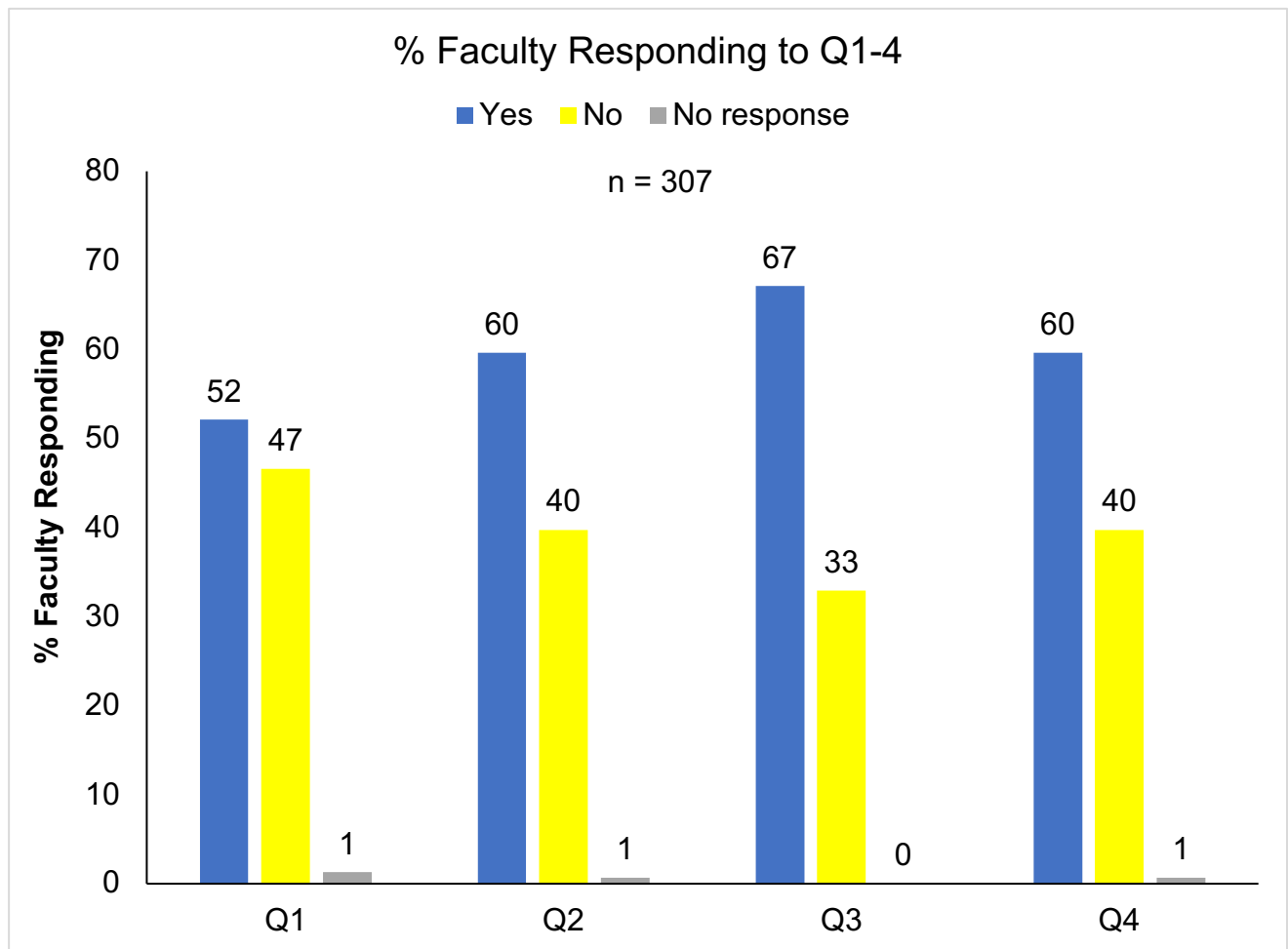
Q1: Considering the current COVID-19 situation in Nebraska and the US, do you feel comfortable returning to campus in the fall? YES or NO

Q2: If you are given the option, at this time would you choose to teach your course remotely for the fall semester? YES or NO

Q3: Creighton University is planning to reformat their fall semester by starting classes 2 weeks early, cancel Fall Break, and conclude classes at Thanksgiving Break. No students would return after Thanksgiving Break. Do you believe this is a viable option for UNK to adopt for the fall semester? YES or NO

Q4: The California State University system has made the decision to teach remotely for the fall 2020 semester. Do you believe this is a viable option for UNK to adopt for the fall semester? YES or NO

COLLEGES RESPONDING- CAS: 58%; COE: 24%; CBT: 16%; Library: 2%.



APPENDIX 2**UNO FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION, MAY 12, 2020****RESOLUTION: Investigating feasibility and logistics for safe campus reopening**

WHEREAS multiple faculty from the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and Information Science and Technology have contacted the faculty senate regarding concerns about safe and effective campus reopening procedures and logistics and transparent communication to students

WHEREAS class sections are beginning to be advertised as “in person” delivery following President Ted Carter’s NU-level announcement regarding the FA2020 session

WHEREAS classrooms that normally hold 30 students can now only accommodate 10 students given CDC and UNO physical distancing requirements

WHEREAS large auditoriums can only accommodate a small number of students, e.g. Mammel Hall Auditorium which usually normally seats 186 can only accommodate 44

WHEREAS enrollment caps for many classes have not been reduced to for physical room constraints

WHEREAS student enrollments have begun to approach section limits and these sizes exceed classroom space limits given social distancing requirements

WHEREAS some college buildings only have a few classrooms/auditoriums big enough to accommodate social distanced configurations with the number of enrolled students

WHEREAS classrooms and computer lab spaces and other shared-use facilities have many high-touch surfaces that need to be cleaned/sanitized between uses for safety, e.g. desks/tables, markers, dry-erase boards, keyboards, mice, light switches, projector remotes

WHEREAS these physical and safety requirements prevent classes from being held as they are being advertised and/or prevent some portion of students in the classes from attending in-person as advertised

WHEREAS guidance for person safety and pedagogical design measures for reopening – such as the requirement for the use of PPE, limits to person-to-person interactions, limitations on student grouping, etc. has not yet been presented, but is in development by campus administration to provide to faculty, students, and staff.

BE IT RESOLVED that the UNO Faculty Senate requests that all physical distancing requirements be followed to conduct safe in-person classes, even if it necessitates fewer in-person course offerings.

AND BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate requests that individual faculty be allowed to deliver their courses remotely if they have concerns about their own or their students' safety.

AND BE IT RESOLVED that the campus clearly communicate to students and faculty which classes will be delivered remotely, which will be delivered in-person, and how this will happen.

AND BE IT RESOLVED that the campus develop and make available a campus facilities sanitization and safety protocol for faculty, students, and staff to follow.

AND BE IT RESOLVED that the campus develop a facilities planning document to inform faculty, staff, colleges, and departments about classroom maximum capacities and utilization protocols.