

To: Mt. SAC Community  
From: Richard Mahon, VPI  
Re: Planning for Summer & Fall

Colleagues~

As we begin our third week in the ‘new normal’ of all-online instruction, I say again how deeply I *appreciate* the enormous investment of energy and thoughtfulness faculty have made moving classes online. The School of Continuing Education has had an extraordinary challenge in that DL classes were not part of their offerings. Noncredit faculty and staff have transitioned 93% (!) of courses to TRI while also engaging in professional development to deliver high quality instruction to students.

In addition to faculty, administrators, staff, and students are doing new work, and doing it in unaccustomed spaces. The classroom is now the dining room; the science lab is a laptop; payroll and the crucial work that keeps the college moving is getting done on the kitchen table. This will be challenging for family members working around each other and take a different kind of toll on those who live alone. We need to support one another as we all work to support our students. I hope you have seen the Mt. SAC [ANNOUNCE]ments focused on our common need to remain well, and things you can do while are staying-at-home.



*Daylight savings time began Sunday, March 8 and I celebrated by walking the Mt. SAC cross-country course.  
We have a beautiful campus that we **will** return to in good time.*

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I also know many of us are wondering what will happen *next*.

No one knew we would shift to 100% online instruction when the semester began. As the pandemic grew, the Chancellor's Office provided blanket approval for us to move *all* classes online, and faculty (with tremendous support from FCLT and other staff) moved over 94% of our sections online to keep serving students.

For summer and fall 2020, we are better able to see what lies ahead.

Many health experts, Governor Newsom, and the Chancellor's Office *all* advise that we are likely to continue (at a *minimum*) under social distancing into the summer and very likely into the fall.

Therefore: I have asked the deans to work with chairs to revise the **summer** schedule to move almost all courses online. The summer schedule should emphasize courses which can and will do well in the online environment. Some of these courses may not *yet* be DL approved but should be strong candidates. If they are not yet Mt. SAC DL approved, they will qualify to continue online under the Chancellor's Office Temporary Remote Instruction (TRI) guidelines. I understand there are rumors I have asked us to limit summer offerings to DL approved or SPOT-certified faculty: this is not the case.

Planning for **fall** is more challenging: we don't know when we will be allowed a general return to campus. We would be wise to plan for *primarily* online offerings come August—knowing we have *many* courses that cannot be offered online. We should also expand the number of 8-week classes: this would allow us to offer many online 8-week classes from August to October and hope for a return to on-campus instruction in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week October-December term. No single plan will work for every discipline and we seek solutions that allow the greatest maintenance of the quality of instruction with the constraints we can anticipate. I will be meeting with chairs and deans this week for us to begin work toward the fall schedule that will best serve the needs of our students and programs in these uncertain times: none of us has a monopoly on good ideas to maintain the quality of our instructional programs.

A second challenge comes from the Chancellor's Office, which has mandated colleges review *every* class it wishes to offer in summer or fall for local DL approval by December 30, 2020. I have discussed the Chancellor's Office's expectation with Senate and FA leaders as well as President Scroggins and we all agree that we should urge the Chancellor's Office to allow an extension of the *temporary* remote instruction option for those classes that need to continue online *only* as long as the pandemic continues. I believe we should review new DL proposals from faculty and expand potential online offerings within the system Mt. SAC had in place before the pandemic—but we do so in order to plan for thoughtful growth of online offerings, not because the Chancellor's Office is making us do so.

What about faculty readiness? The administration and the FA have already agreed to extend the July 31, 2020 SPOT recertification deadline to December 31, 2020. Faculty are learning a great deal about Canvas, but that is not the same as learning the pedagogical tools for online instruction provided in the SPOT certification process. I know many faculty are struggling to keep up with current challenges and will need time to incorporate SPOT training into their calendar; this is an area where the Academic Senate leads and I anticipate the college will expand resources for faculty seeking SPOT and other online training over the summer.

**Finally, what about students?** I know faculty are struggling to see students not fall behind and are discouraged when their best efforts are unsuccessful. The Chancellor's Office has provided and the Mt. SAC Senate has taken advantage of regulatory flexibility *both* to award the EW grade *and* to change the grade option from letter grade to Pass/No Pass until much later in the term. You should have seen announcements from Senate President Uyeki and deans indicating that the P/NP option is now live and will be available to students in 1<sup>st</sup> 8-week classes, which end this week



It is not only instructional faculty who have reinvented their world. Mt. SAC's ongoing commitment to exceptional student support services has also migrated, and I urge you to review the following websites if you haven't already:

- [Thrive Online](#)
- [Student Resources | Mt. SAC Online](#)

I *so* appreciate the time many of you have taken to share with me your challenges and successes. We seek the solutions that will best serve as many of our students as possible. We will avoid unnecessary imposition of a one-size-fits-all solution. Please continue to share your views with your colleagues and me as we seek to meet these challenges together.