

We, the undersigned faculty members, express our deepest concerns regarding the University's plans for resuming in-person instruction during a pandemic. COVID-19 is a lethal, highly contagious, and still poorly-understood disease that thrives in crowded environments like college campuses, the effects of which we have seen in meatpacking factories and nursing homes. There is no effective vaccine in sight. The treatments available only cut down days of hospitalization and are not cures. Reopening poses a serious medical and life risk to the Texas State community. There is also an underrepresentation of faculty and administrators with experience in epidemiology and occupational health and safety on the different work groups. We believe that faculty--as faculty, not administrators--have been underrepresented on Texas State's Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Work Groups.

As the professional educators on campus, we are particularly concerned with the need for greater faculty input into the Continuity of Education Work Group. We write in the spirit of constructive engagement to facilitate a response to the pandemic that will allow for the greatest pedagogical integrity and physical safety upon resumption of classes in Summer II and Fall 2020.

We urge the University to reconsider the blanket policy of returning to face-to-face instruction in all but exceptional cases. A uniform approach to classroom instruction and continuity of education cannot account for the complexities of teaching multiple disciplines across a campus of nearly forty-thousand undergraduate and graduate students. We are convinced that the faculty themselves are the most able to find the balance between the benefits of face-to-face instruction and the need to protect the safety of faculty, students, and staff, while ensuring that the students receive quality instruction. It is the faculty who will be directly responsible for following CDC and WHO guidelines for social distancing, wearing masks, sanitizing facilities, and so on in the classroom. It is also the faculty who, along with the students, will be at most risk of infection. It is the faculty and their families who will have to make careful calculations as they prepare to return to teaching.

We propose, then, that instructors decide, in consultation with colleagues, chairs, and deans, how to best prepare and deliver their classes amidst COVID-19. An informal poll of over twenty faculty members revealed a wide array of approaches, with some faculty choosing to teach face to face, some preferring remote teaching, and a majority combining the two approaches. Their choices will likely involve a creative combination of a variety of in-person, remote, and synchronous/asynchronous approaches, based on university infrastructure, class size and content, course level, student preferences, health risks, and other personal and professional considerations. Faculty with current classroom responsibilities are best suited to decide on the optimal solutions for their own courses.

This more democratic approach to the crisis will offer important benefits to the University and its community members. Particularly in the case of a surge in the virus (Scenario 3 for the Working Groups), those faculty who choose to teach online, especially in large and mid-size sections, would create continuity for our students by avoiding contagion, subsequent quarantining, and quite frankly, the very real possibility of death of instructors and students alike (38,000 students, 10,000 faculty and staff / 50% infection / 20% hospitalization, 1% case

fatality rate [optimistic] yields 2,300 hospitalizations and 112 deaths, not counting the disparate impact on different ethnicities and people who are particularly vulnerable because of preexisting conditions). Faculty choice would also liberate valuable space on campus for faculty who decide to teach in person, thus increasing the chances of practicing effective social distancing and helping to avoid a Texas State outbreak and return to isolation mid-way through the semester.

The approach we propose would, in sum, allow for context-specific implementation in different teaching circumstances. Moreover, faculty would not have to disclose any medical information in order to justify their decisions, another point of concern we have about the proposed policies. If this approach were to be adopted now, faculty and students could begin planning for their summer and fall courses immediately. For all these reasons and more, faculty views of what is pedagogically responsible or even possible in this difficult learning environment ought to be the starting point of the University's considerations on how to reopen our campus.

In their current form, the recommendations for continuity of education place an undue and unreasonable burden on faculty already facing extraordinary personal challenges and obstacles to the progress of their research agendas. With the requirement that multiple versions of each class be prepared, the added task of creating "multi-modal" delivery, and even the responsibility of developing a full online version for each class that may never be used, these recommendations raise serious concerns about undue additional faculty workload (much of which will fall on the most vulnerable of our faculty). We believe, therefore, that the University must consider limiting this additional workload by consulting with faculty on how to prepare courses for unknown contingencies. Moreover, the University must recognize and compensate this additional work in meaningful, tangible ways.

We also believe that the ongoing health crisis provides an opportunity to promote and strengthen a culture of wellness among all members of the Texas State community. We call on University leaders to model the necessary changes to our routines, demeanor, and interactions that the COVID-19 emergency demands. The wearing of masks, proper social distancing, and proper sanitizing should be mandatory for all members of the University community, including faculty, students, staff, and administrators. The University, therefore, needs to provide all members of the Texas State community with high quality masks, hand sanitizer, and other necessary supplies. We also want a discussion of on-campus testing, high-quality filters, and ventilation to lower the risk of airborne exposure. In addition, faculty who are back on campus again in Summer II and Fall 2020 expect the University administration to lead by their physical presence in the public areas of campus. Standing together--at the appropriate distance--faculty and administrators can create a culture of unity and wellness in the face of the pandemic. Such initiatives should be presented as what they are: a service to the community at large emanating from social and public health awareness, in accordance with our institution's shared values of civility, compassion, fairness, respect, ethical behavior, and service for the public good. Simply put, we must all take care of each other while providing meaningful choices for faculty and students on how we shall provide for continuity of education.

1. José Carlos de la Puente, History
2. Jessica Pliley, History
3. Peter Dedek, History
4. Joaquín Rivaya Martínez, History
5. Margaret Menninger, History
6. Jeffrey Helgeson, History
7. John Mckiernan González, History
8. Thomas Alter, History
9. Shannon Duffy, History
10. Carlos Abreu Mendoza, World Languages & Literatures
11. Ellen Tillman, History
12. Anadelia Romo, History
13. Carole Martin, World Languages & Literatures
14. Trace Etienne, History
15. Cory Holland, Chemistry
16. Joel Gray, Chemistry
17. Lisa Haegele, World Languages & Literatures
18. Yasmine Beale-Rivaya, World Languages & Literatures
19. Deirdre Lannon, History
20. Whitney Webre, Chemistry
21. James McWilliams, History
22. Nancy Berlage, History
23. Russell G. Moses, Philosophy
24. Geneva M. Gano, English
25. Jitendra S. Tate, Engineering
26. John P. Tiefenbacher, Geography
27. Edwin Chow, Geography
28. Emily Miller Payne, Education
29. Patrick Smith, Education
30. Colleen C. Myles, Geography
31. Minda Morren López, Education
32. Gail Dickinson, Education
33. Antonio Gragera, World Languages and Literatures
34. Joseph Etherton, Psychology
35. Yolanda Peca, Education
36. Crystal Oberle, Psychology
37. Krista Howard, Psychology
38. Harold Stern, Engineering

39. Maria Czyzewska, Psychology
40. Amitai Abramovitch, Psychology
41. Amber K. Lupo, Psychology
42. William R. McKelvain, Psychology
43. Mark Wistey, Physics
44. Rebecca Deason, Psychology
45. Millie Cordaro, Psychology
46. Lori Czop Assaf, Education
47. Amy M. Meeks, Psychology
48. Roque V. Méndez, Psychology
49. Jennifer Jensen, Geography
50. Araceli Martínez Ortiz, Education / Science & Engineering
51. Brenda Scheuermann, Curriculum & Instruction
52. Cathy Newman Thomas, College of Education
53. Kristen Tooley, Psychology
54. Brittany Vinciguerra, Chemistry
55. Azucena Rangel Mayberry, Psychology
56. Luz A. Murillo, Education
57. Carol Delaney, Curriculum & Instruction
58. Ana M. Juárez, Anthropology
59. Leah Renold, History
60. Jessica Pierson Bishop, Mathematics
61. Brandon Lunk, Physics
62. Holly Lewis, Philosophy
63. Sarah Blue, Geography
64. Patricia Schiaffini-Vedani, World Languages & Literatures
65. Louie Dean Valencia-García, History
66. Alba Melgar, World Languages & Literatures
67. Audwin Anderson, Sociology
68. Nieves Pujalte, World Languages & Literatures
69. Denise Blanchard, Geography
70. Sergio Martínez, World Languages & Literatures
71. Noha Mohama-Akkari, World Languages & Literatures
72. Gloria Velásquez, World Languages & Literatures
73. Juanita Silva, Curriculum & Instruction
74. Yuri Porras, World Languages & Literatures

75. María Diocares, World Languages & Literatures
76. Michael Conner, World Languages & Literatures
77. Injeong Jo, Geography
78. Hiro Lee Tanaka, Mathematics
79. Valérie Masson, World Languages & Literatures
80. Luann Williams, World Languages & Literatures
81. Carolina Wilson, World Languages & Literatures
82. Luz A. Maldonado Rodríguez, Education
83. Anton Dochtermann, Mathematics
84. Leah Schwebel, English
85. Debra Armentrout, Curriculum & Instruction
86. Christine Lynn Norton, Social Work
87. Joanna Gutt-Lehr, Mathematics
88. Vera Ioudina, Mathematics
89. Nicole Taylor, Anthropology
90. Astrid Schwalb, Biology
91. Yihong Yuan, Geography
92. Yumeng Li, Health and Human Performance
93. Sarah Fritts, Science & Engineering
94. Yanan Li, Geography
95. Weston H. Nowlin, Biology