

September 24, 2021

To: Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Directors

From: Pamela Cheek and Bill Stanley, Associate Provosts

Re: Teaching Modalities for Spring 2022

As we look ahead to the spring 2022 semester, the Office of Academic Affairs seeks to promote the health and safety of the entire UNM community, while providing UNM students with opportunities for academic achievement and success. Central to this effort is UNM's current vaccination requirement. In spring 2022, students who do not have a qualified exemption or proof of vaccination will not be allowed on campus. Confirmed vaccination rates among faculty are above 94%, for staff above 86%, and for students above 75% -- and rising rapidly as the September 30 deadline approaches.

There have been questions about teaching modalities for spring semester. Our goal for spring 2022 is to match and exceed the proportion of face-to-face instruction offered in fall 2021. Currently, UNM main campus is offering 66 percent of courses in-person, 22 percent as Online Max, and 12 percent as hybrid and branch campuses are offering a significant proportion of in-person sections. This mix of modalities, combined with UNM's public health measures, have brought our campuses back to life. We recognize that faculty who are well-trained in online teaching and who have benefited from working with online course designers can meet the needs of specific student constituencies, including working students and students who are parents.

We seek the assistance of department chairs and program directors in ensuring a continued strong line-up of in-person courses to meet student needs. Surveys of UNM students, and examination of failure and drop rates, show that many do not thrive in remote courses, and significant numbers of students left UNM following the heavily remote 2020-21 academic year. There are concerns that some of those students may never return to higher education. It is critical, therefore, that UNM maintain robust in-person course offerings, supplemented by online and hybrid courses for those situations in which those modes of delivery better meet student needs.

Considering the likelihood that the COVID-19 pandemic will persist to some extent into the Spring 2022 semester, we anticipate that some faculty members with certain medical conditions may seek Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-based accommodations through the Compliance, Ethics, and Equal Opportunity Office (CEEEO) to teach remotely. Because a course's modality cannot be changed without a cancel / reschedule once students begin to enroll, it is critical that any instructors who see a need to apply for an ADA accommodation do so immediately, so that they can develop and prepare to teach an approved Online Max course.

Remote teaching must be done through established Online Max modalities managed by UNMOnline. Handled improperly, remote teaching can cause significant educational setbacks for students, as well as accreditation problems for the university. Federal and state governments, as well as accrediting organizations, allowed UNM to use emergency measures during the 2020-21 academic year, such as the “Remote Scheduled” category of courses. These emergency measures are **not** available for the current academic year, and the only options for remote teaching will be through UNMOnline (details follow).

While engaged with CEEO in the ADA interactive dialogue process to identify reasonable accommodations, effective Spring 2022 semester, for faculty, part-time, and graduate instructors, please bear in mind the following:

- 1) Remote course development and approval is managed through UNMOnline.
 - a. Only UNMOnline can approve an online course for inclusion in the course schedule.
 - b. UNMOnline, along with the Digital Learning course designer group at the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), ensure that remote courses meet the standards set out by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), as well as accrediting agencies, and that offering a given course online meets demonstrated student needs.
- 2) The most appropriate options for a remote teaching accommodation proposed by CEEO are:
 - a. teach existing Online Max courses currently in the department’s course list
 - i. first completing at a minimum the Regular and Substantive Interaction [RASI] training, and preferably also completing the 6-week Evidence Based Practices for Teaching Online [EBPTO] course, which begins October 11, 2021
 - b. propose new online courses for the spring (<https://online.unm.edu/admin-resources/online-course-proposals.html>), which can be either Asynchronous Online, or “Online Synchronous” or “O-Sync.”
 - i. Instructors for these courses must complete the EBPTO training that begins October 11, 2021. The deadline for course development with a stipend for spring 2022 has passed, so **no stipend** will be paid for the development of these courses.
 - ii. The CTL Digital Learning course designer team has limited capacity to support additional course development beyond those already scheduled for Spring 2022, so the option to apply late for new course development will be limited to instructors who have, or where the department chair certifies that they are likely to have, CEEO-approved accommodations to teach remotely for spring 2022.
- 3) Hybrid courses are not an option creating *de facto* remote courses, and are **not** an appropriate arrangement for faculty members for whom CEEO proposes remote teaching as a reasonable accommodation. Nor should hybrid courses be treated as a default option for faculty members who are anxious about in-person teaching. Half of the learning in hybrid classes is

face-to-face, and the face-to-face meetings must be on a fixed schedule that is maintained throughout the semester. For fall 2021, a few sections of hybrid courses were scheduled with annotations that they would in fact meet remotely on a schedule. That practice will not be repeated in spring 2022; all remote teaching must be done through UNMOnline-approved courses. Hybrid teaching is generally more challenging than either online or in-person. Faculty members who plan to teach hybrid courses must complete the Regular and Substantive Interaction (RASI) training in [Learning Central](#), and should seek assistance from CTL to develop multiple active learning and student engagement strategies for both the online and in-person portion of their courses. Departments should only schedule courses as hybrid where this modality best meets the needs of students.

4) Courses that are scheduled as face-to-face or hybrid must be delivered throughout the semester in accordance with modality descriptions in the UNM Office of Registrar’s [“Schedule Type Glossary.”](#) In the absence of a university-wide directive to switch to remote teaching following state public health orders, faculty members may not switch modalities after a course begins, and department chairs and program directors should not permit “silent” modality changes to occur. For example, a hybrid course should not be allowed to shift to all-remote delivery. Delivering a course in a manner other than the one announced on the schedule bars students from educational access. Switching modalities can cause significant disruptions and setbacks if, for instance, a student cannot pay for high-speed internet during a given semester and suddenly faces a class delivered via Zoom.

Thank you for considering these factors carefully in building your Spring 2022 schedules. Please see also the memo sent 9/24/2021 by Elisha Allen on synchronous online instruction, which provides specifics about how to schedule these courses.