

Greetings from Iowa State University!

We are writing today to share with you information about Iowa State University's academic programs for the upcoming semester, and to address a few of the questions we know you have as you prepare for the fall.

### **Fall classes offered in multiple formats**

One thing is for sure – the fall semester will not be “college as usual.” As you have seen in previous communications, we will be offering a mix of in-person and online instruction, including classes that meet primarily face-to-face, classes that meet completely online, and classes that feature a blend of each. While Iowa State has always taught in those three instructional modes, a greater fraction of our courses this fall will be online or blended.

**Face-to-face:** Classes offered in-person will be similar to those offered traditionally in other semesters, but multiple changes—such as physical distance between seats in classrooms, enhanced cleaning, and required face coverings—will be made to improve safety and mitigate risk associated with exposure or spread of the coronavirus.

**Online:** Classes offered online will be similar to the past. The online content may be delivered asynchronously (students may access it at any time) or synchronously (during a scheduled class time with real-time instruction, questions, and engagement). Online instruction may be supplemented with discussion boards, group work, online apps, and other activities.

**Blended:** Blended (also known as hybrid) courses will use a combination of face-to-face and online teaching, learning activities, and assessments. Online activities may include engagement with students and instructors meeting at the same time, and/or content delivered with participants accessing course materials independently. The particular mix will depend on an instructor's teaching strategies and the learning objectives of the course.

In some cases, students may be asked or required to attend an in-person class meeting one day, and participate in the next session online while other students experience the lecture in-person. This rotation will promote physical distancing, lower occupancy levels in classrooms, and student and instructor safety.

We are working daily to strike the right balance in course delivery. We have placed priority on preserving as many experiential learning opportunities as reasonably possible, including labs, studios, and other courses that use specialized equipment and spaces, while at the same time mitigating the risk of COVID-19 for you, as well as our faculty and staff.

### **Laptop computers now required for all students**

Beginning in the fall, all students will be required to have a laptop computer or other mobile device appropriate to their discipline and learning needs. This requirement provides two main benefits for students:

- *Improved access to online course content.* Personal laptops provide more consistent access to course content and sets up students for success in online and blended learning environments. In addition, if the current course delivery plan needs to be adjusted due to student or faculty illness, or significantly increased levels of COVID-19 activity in the city or state, the contingency will be in place for students to quickly pivot to greater online instruction.
- *Health and safety.* Personal laptops will help reduce the risk of accidental transmission of the coronavirus between students who otherwise would have shared computers in open campus computer laboratories, which will be closed this fall.

While the majority of students already bring their own computing devices to campus, students will have the opportunity to check-out equipment, on a limited basis, for the duration of the semester from the University Library or academic colleges, and we will provide additional information as it becomes available.

### **Class schedules available August 3**

Our academic departments and colleges are currently making individual decisions as to how each of our 7400 fall courses will be delivered. These determinations are being based on course size, room and instructor availability, and safety protocols to mitigate student and instructor risk.

As you can imagine, this work is detailed and time-consuming, and we appreciate your patience. Class lists will be available on AccessPlus beginning August 3. Classes begin on August 17, and students may make changes to their schedules without instructor and/or adviser approval until Friday, August 21.

### **Changes to class schedules**

In some cases, classes are being moved to a different meeting time and/or location based on the availability of classrooms.

In addition, starting and ending times for classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays have been changed to allow students and instructors more time to move between classes. On those days, the instructional day will begin 15 minutes earlier, and end 20 minutes later, than usual. The teaching schedule and passing times between classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays will not change, but classes on those days will be scheduled for 75 minutes.

While we minimizing such cases, one or more of your course sections may be canceled. If this happens to you, we encourage you to review the course schedule, as additional

sections may be offered at other times, and to consult with your academic adviser who will help you to explore other course options appropriate to your degree path.

### **Choosing online courses**

Some students, particularly those who may be at a higher risk for COVID-19, may prefer to take all of their fall classes online. Those students are encouraged to review the updated schedule of courses when it is released, and consult with their academic adviser to determine how best to maintain satisfactory academic progress, as not all classes (including most laboratories) will have an online option.

### **Completing coursework in quarantine or self-isolation**

We want students to stay home when they are sick. It is likely that some students may need to self-quarantine or self-isolate during the semester. Many classes will have an online option for students to stay current with the course work. For classes that do not, instructors may provide alternative options for classes and assignments that are missed.

### **Academic support and learning services**

We will continue to offer a complete menu of academic support and learning services for students.

Academic and Career Advising. We encourage you to schedule virtual appointments which enhance safety and create greater flexibility for both students and advisers. We are working to update our scheduling systems to enable students to specifically request virtual or phone appointments. In-person advising meetings may also be scheduled in advance and will depend on available space to meet with proper physical distancing.

Learning Communities. We will encourage virtual learning community meetings, whenever possible, to enhance safety for both students and instructors. In-person opportunities will be included when feasible, following appropriate guidelines for room capacities, physical distancing, and face coverings.

Services of the Academic Success Center. Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and academic coaching will continue to be offered, virtually in most cases and with some in-person sessions. A catalog of “Coaches’ Corner” sessions will be recorded and made available to students to view online.

### **Accommodations for students concerned about their risk for COVID-19**

Students at a higher risk to develop severe illness from COVID-19 based on their age or underlying medical condition, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control, will be given preference for placement in online courses. Additional information on this process can be found on the [Dean of Students website](#). However, it is important to note that we will not be able to offer all scheduled courses with an online option in cases such as labs where students use special equipment, or courses that feature a unique instructional experience.

While we know this is a lot of information, we do want to keep you up-to-date as we prepare for the fall semester. Please check ISU's [COVID-19 Planning website](#) for additional information and updates. If you have questions or need additional guidance at this time, please contact [COVID-19@iastate.edu](mailto:COVID-19@iastate.edu).

In the meantime, best wishes for a safe and healthy remainder of your summer!

With warmest regards,

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President

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