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Cc: [Elliq, Tracy](#); [Becker, Michael](#); [Singel, David](#); [Eitle, Tamela](#); [Heard, Julia](#); [Fastnow, Christina](#); [Kearns, Chris](#); [Campeau, Tony](#)
Subject: Communication Update: Monday Freshman Registration
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Dear Colleagues,

I was thrilled to learn about the communication session conducted by Tracy and Michael on Friday. I understand it was informative and received enthusiastically by Advisors and staff in Admissions. Thank you, Tracy and Michael!

This serves as a great example of the importance of frequent and regular communications, especially during these times of change, as we work together to provide high-quality flexible academic offerings for each and every student, both new and returning to MSU.

As we prepare for summer orientation sessions and the registering of new students, which begins Monday (about 40 hours from this moment in time) I encourage us all to stay diligent about communicating information in real time, and to recognize that in some cases the accurate answer to a question is: *at this time, we do not know, but our people are working on this and making plans to address the matter in question.*

By Wednesday, a comprehensive report will be available to the campus community that contains many details charting MSU's roadmap for Fall 2020. This report, developed by the Reconstitution Planning Committee in consultation with many others, will not contain all the answers to every question; but the document will provide detailed guidelines and information for many of the protocols and procedures we will be implementing for Fall 2020.

As we prepare for orientation and student registration on Monday, I provide below a summary of a few items associated with academic planning for Fall semester.

General course delivery modes

Montana State University students will have a significant in-person experience in Fall 2020. Some courses will be fully in-person and some sections of multi-section courses may be completely online. Most courses will be blended with an in-person component that is augmented with online instruction.

Specific details for Freshman students

Freshman Seminar and Freshman Writing courses will be offered primarily in-person for most students.

Math courses for Freshman will include in-person instruction with an emphasis on interactive

problem solving and hands-on work, and online recorded lectures that can be watched and re-watched by students. This is a flipped-class model that has increased student success in Math at MSU (its proven effective, even prior to coronavirus).

Advisors will guide students into the courses that they need. All necessary courses will be available, the same as past Fall semesters. This includes courses with an in-person lab, studio, recitation or field component. These may be offered virtually, in-person, online or in some mixture of those forms. These are not compromised offerings, but rather represent pedagogical improvements that will likely continue long after coronavirus is in our rearview mirror.

There will be online sections for those students who wish to attend MSU but will not be physically located in Bozeman this fall.

Registration

Registration for new students kicks into gear on Monday and students will be able to register for all the classes they need. We may not yet have information about the specific blend of delivery methods of every section of every course; but, **Freshman registering starting Monday and throughout the summer will have a full quiver of in-person classes available and will have access to register for every courses they will need.** If any kind of drastic shift occurs in a section, --for example because it is moved online as a result of a medical situation with the instructor-- then Academic Affairs and the Registrar will move students to another section, if the student prefers the in-person option.

Comments about ongoing processes

Please recognize the magnitude of simultaneously juggling several boundaries conditions in the midst of an iterative process, this includes: re-designing course delivery methods by faculty for most of the courses we will offer in the fall, reducing classroom capacities by about 60% for social distancing, upending the entire schedule of ~6,000 course sections, and adding additional large non-academic spaces for classroom instruction. All of this has occurred in the past two weeks and has involved many teams of individuals working together. It has been a remarkable process, and it will be successful, thanks to all of you.

The Registrar's Office, working with academic departments and colleges, and staff in my office, has done some heavy lifting and moved a significant percentage of courses and sections to different rooms and to different times. This is still a work in progress. Based on results from three audits conducted during the previous 10 days, we have adjusted classroom seating capacity to adhere with the social distancing guidelines recommended by local, state and national health authorities.

In terms of specific numbers, we have had to decrease available classroom seats from 7,449 to 2,872 seats for social distancing. Even with the SUB Ballrooms, Procrastinator Theater, and

300 seats in Shroyer Gym, MSU remains at approximately 47% of the available seats we had last fall semester. Extending the academic day will help, but we need to recognize that moving course sections into the evening may require changing the schedules of some students who have already registered.

In closing

Please work with your teams to assure the individuals who are interacting on a regular basis with students and their families are fully informed about decisions that have been made and about plans that are underway. Let's encourage questions and discussions, and ensure that we advance as a unified group.

By working together, we will absolutely get this done.

Thank you for all that you do for the students of MSU!

Best regards,
Bob.

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