

Post-COVID Task Force

Preliminary Report and Recommendations
to the Academic Senate
Monday May 2, 2022

FRESNO STATE

Discovery. Diversity. Distinction.

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Membership of Task Force

Faculty

- Katie Dyer (COSS, Chairs Council) – Chair
- Katy Tarrant (JCAST) – Vice Chair
- Jim Mullooly (COSS) - Secretary
- Marcus Crawford (CHHS)
- Lizhu Davis (CSB)
- Amanda Dinscore (HML)
- Ray Hall (Senate)
- Zoulikha Mouffak (LCOE)
- Karl Oswald (CSM)
- Lorin Lachs (CSM, president appointee)
- Virginia Patterson (CAH)
- Kathleen Rindahl (CHHS)
- Yuleinys Castillo (KSOEHD)

Students

- D’Aungelique Jackson
- Caroline Alvarez
- Kalyan Madoori
- Anou Vang

Staff Assembly

- Deb Reba
- Belinda Munoz

Administrators

- Jim Schmidtke (Faculty Affairs)
- Bernadette Muscat (Dean of Undergrad Studies)
- Honora Chapman (Dean of CAH, provost appointee)
- Bryan Berrett (IDEAS)

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The Charge:

- To what extent does our accreditor, the Western Association of State Colleges, require us to teach in person versus online teaching?
- To what extent do students want largely online courses and office hours (with little in-person contact with faculty)?
- Should students be permitted to pursue degrees that are entirely (or almost entirely) online?
- To what extent can course content and effective teaching be done without in-person contact with students?
- Are there inequalities in workload that might develop among faculty if some faculty rarely (if ever) come to campus?

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To what extent does WASC require us to teach in person versus online teaching?

- WASC has changed its “counting” system, so that all of GE is now “distance education” which means, by default, that every single Fresno State degree is, essentially, a “distance education degree program.”
- All of our programs will soon be approved as distance education programs. Therefore, there is no longer an accreditation barrier.
- (But we may need a new mechanism for the Senate to review proposals for fully online programs.)

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To what extent do students want online courses and office hours?

Student Ratings Data

Fall 2021						
Number of Students	Respondents	Response Rate	Prefer F2F %	Prefer Zoom %	Prefer hybrid %	Prefer Online %
107264	48266	45%	58%	12%	16%	14%

Office Hours: We have no data directly on the question. But students have a clear preference (demonstrated through scheduling) for academic advising online. Only 4% of advising meetings F2F in Fall 2021.

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Should students be permitted to pursue degrees that are entirely (or almost entirely) online?

No.

14/15 Task Force members agreed to this statement:

While students may benefit from flexibility in course modality and effective online coursework is possible in some classes, the education of a student at a comprehensive regional campus must also involve participation and inclusion in the building of a vibrant and diverse campus culture, which requires students to be physically present on campus and in the local community for a meaningful fraction of their coursework.

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The "fully online" experience was very difficult for most students

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:



*Reverse-coded item

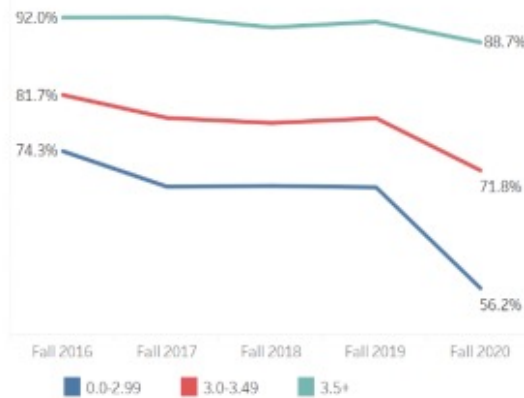


Rapid Response Surveys
– Sept, Oct, & Nov 2020

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And was not successful for our most vulnerable students

Course Passing Rate by HS GPA



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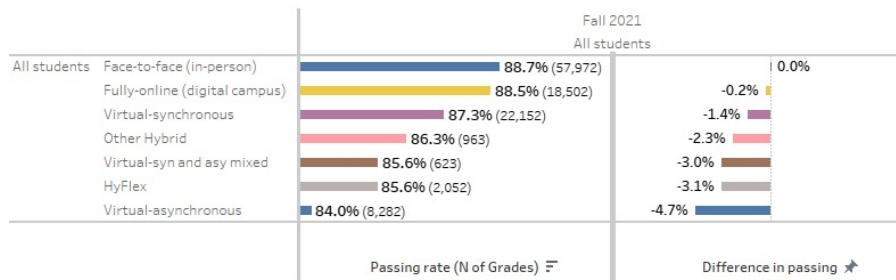
To what extent can effective teaching be done without in-person contact with students?

Student Ratings – optional questions about factors causing difficulty with classes (% mostly or totally true that it “made it difficult for me to complete required coursework”)

	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	TOTAL
Trouble finding a private and quiet workspace	n=5831 24%	n=3980 20%	n=2193 14%	21%
Caregiving responsibilities	n=4622 21%	n=3633 19%	n=2390 16%	19%
Internet connectivity issues	n=5441 16%	n=3875 13%	n=2104 10%	14%
Employment obligations	n=4141 18%	n=3451 17%	n=3097 14%	16%
Emotional health	n=4512 28%	n=3927 27%	n=3639 22%	26%
Motivation	n=4559 35%	n=3432 32%	n=2698 24%	31%

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Course passing rates by course modality



Conclusions:

For 80%(ish) of students, it works fine. (Especially when their instructors are well-trained and experienced with online teaching.)

For 20%(ish), it is deeply problematic.

For 3%(ish) it is not effective.

We need to continue to explore how to make it work better.

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Are there inequalities in workload that might develop if some faculty rarely (if ever) come to campus?

- Yes.
- 14/15 Task Force members agreed to this statement:

While teaching and committee work can sometimes be achieved remotely, tenured and tenure-track faculty bear primary responsibility for creating and maintaining the intellectual community of the campus, and they can only do that if they are physically present on campus and in the local community for a meaningful fraction of their workload.

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Primary Recommendation: Majority Position

At least 2/3 approval by
members of Task Force

- A new university-wide policy is required whereby faculty (not admin) will establish limits on class modality assignments.
 1. Full-time tenure-track faculty may only teach x% of their instructional WTUs in a distance modality. (To create an on-campus requirement for TT faculty, to protect workload equity.)
 2. Departments may only offer y% of their instructional WTUs in a distance modality. (To prevent us from drifting too far toward online degrees.)
 3. A class may only be offered in a distance modality if it is also available F2F. (To protect the students who may not have the resources to succeed in them.)
- All departments must maintain a list of courses that may or may not be taught online.

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Alternative Recommendation: Minority Position

- Departments must each create their own policy to establish limits (or not) on class modality assignments.
 - Limits on individual faculty members
 - Limits on department offerings
 - Limits on courses

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Other Recommendations

At least 2/3 approval by
members of Task Force

- We support the MCJ recommendation to match office hours to the modality of the class (APM 338).
- We support policies that would allow remote work for staff for those offices where this makes sense, rather than a one-size-fits-all plan.
- We request that the Bulldog Test Center be allowed to resume providing services to instructors of online classes.

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What Next?

- We have only clarified some questions, and put some evidence on the table regarding each one.
 - Our final report will include a list of specific policies that need consideration with some suggestions. Senate committees now need to craft and debate policies.
- Some major remaining “post-COVID” issues are not necessarily policy ones.
 - How we as a campus might address the collective trauma of the past two years?
 - What we have learned that will change how we do business in the future. *How* we teach, hold meetings, conduct searches, manage offices, etc.?