

MEMORANDUM

To: Fort Wayne Senate

From: Bernd Buldt, Chair
Executive Committee of the Fort Wayne Senate

Date: March 31, 2021

Subj: Initial Report on creating a “Fall Opening Task Force”

In compliance with By-Laws 6.3.1, the Executive Committee (EC) wishes to share the following information with all Voting Faculty and the Fort Wayne Senate in particular.

Based on communications between the VCAA and the Educational Policy Committee, later joined by EC, the EC formed a task force to work on issue related to the “new normal” on campus after having lived through a year-long pandemic. The charge and two guiding documents are attached. Committee membership is as follows:

Registrar’s Office: Kari Smith	COLA: Farah Combs
Education Tech team: Adam Dircksen	COS: Mark Masters
SGA: Alexandra Backer	ETCS: Barry Dupen
Chancellor’s area: Jeff Malanson	DSB: Steven Hanke
IU Fort Wayne: Ann Obergfell	SoE: Rama Cousik
	VPA: David Steffens

On behalf of the EC,

Bernd Buldt
Senate Executive Committee, Chair

Fall 2021 Planning Task Force

March XX, 2021 // Virtual // Time

Task Force Membership

- Alex Backer, Student Government Association
- Farah Combs, College of Liberal Arts
- Rama Cousik, School of Education
- Adam Dircksen, Educational Technologies Team
- Barry Dupen, College of Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science
- Steven Hanke, Doermer School of Business
- Jeff Malanson, COVID-19 Point of Contact
- Mark Masters, College of Science
- Ann Obergfell, Indiana University Fort Wayne
- Kari Smith, Registrar
- David Steffens, College of Visual and Performing Arts

Task Force Objective

- To develop a series of recommendations that will be turned into guidance for the use of instructors, departments, and the university for the delivery of courses in the Fall 2021 semester, with a primary focus on how we can best support our students, broadly considered
 - Students in this case include graduate students, returning undergraduates who started at PFW prior to the pandemic, returning undergraduates whose only experience with PFW has been during the pandemic, and new Fall 2021 undergraduate students
 - Student success and retention—especially of first-time, full-time students—will be critically important in stabilizing university finances in the short and long term

Baseline Planning Scenario

To facilitate this planning process, a baseline planning scenario has been established. This baseline scenario represents the core expectations and assumptions for what the Fall 2021 semester will look like. It should be the foundation for all recommendations developed:

- Every instructor, staff member, and student who wants a COVID-19 vaccine will have access to one by August 2021
- Instructors who normally teach in-person courses will be back in the classroom*
 - Department modality distributions for Fall 2021 should be similar to Fall 2019
- Students enrolled in in-person courses will be back in the classroom*
- Re-densification will occur in classrooms and offices across campus
 - Event spaces (e.g., Auer Performance Hall and the Walb International Ballroom) will revert to their intended use and will no longer be used for large, socially-distanced classrooms
- Face masks will most likely still be worn by everyone on campus
- All assumptions and guidance are subject to change based on prevailing virus conditions and public health guidance in August 2021
 - *Self-quarantines and isolations will most likely still be recommended by the CDC for at least some people and are an understood exception to the expectation that instructors and students will be in the classroom

Guiding Planning Questions

The task force should develop recommendations on the following questions, as well as any additional questions it deems appropriate. Recommendations may also consider when exceptions should be made to the baseline planning assumptions (i.e., under what circumstances should we allow an instructor who normally teaches in-person courses to remain remote):

- Should instructors continue to livestream and/or record their course meetings?
- What level of flexibility should instructors continue to show and should students continue to expect with regard to attendance, due dates, etc.?
- Should we place a maximum capacity on the number of students permitted in any single classroom? (e.g., PWL has established a maximum capacity of 250 students in any single classroom)
- Should we maintain any restrictions on one-on-one and small group meetings in the classroom or outside the classroom?
- Should we continue to allow instructors to offer their classes in a hy-flex modality at their discretion?
- How can we properly understand and either meet or adjust the expectations of and for returning students, especially those for whom the 2020-21 academic year is their first at PFW?
- How can we properly understand and either meet or adjust the expectations of and for students new to PFW in Fall 2021, especially our first-time, full-time students?
 - What strategies should we employ to best understand what the educational experience for Fall 2021 first-time, full-time students looked like in their last year of high school? Understanding the proportion of students whose senior year was all remote, all in-person, or hybrid may impact the recommendations we develop for first-year courses, first-year advising, first-year support structures, etc.

In developing recommendations around the above questions (and others), consideration should be given to technology, facilities, communication (especially communication with students), human resources, and financial implications. Consideration should also be given to how these recommendations may impact IU Fort Wayne students, instructors, and employees (beyond those students enrolled in PFW courses).

Timeline

The task force should aim to deliver a final set of recommendations to Vice Chancellor Drummond by Friday, May 7, 2021.

While an exact process has not been developed, the expectation is that these recommendations will be revisited and, if necessary, updated by a task force of 12-month academic leaders to better reflect prevailing conditions and public health guidance, with a goal of issuing a final set of recommendations to instructors by Monday, August 2, 2021.

Date: February 24, 2021

From: Talia Bugel, on behalf of Senate FAC

To: Carl Drummond, Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Bernd Buldt, Executive Committee

Steven Hanke, Educational Policy Committee

What Senate FAC can contribute to the Task Force requested by the VCAA, charged to plan how PFW will respond to various scenarios for the school year 2021-2022, as campus comes away from the COVID situation. We understand the Task Force should be up and working by the beginning of March 2021 and it is being put together by the EC. The task force recommendations will be extremely important regarding how we move, from current practices, either back to “normal” practices or to a “new normal”. Thus, we believe it is essential that, besides Senators, other expertise be included in the task force such as that of:

- Jeff Malanson, given his experience during the 2020-2021 school year
- CELT staff, given their instructional expertise.

Senate FAC offers the following suggestions:

The **framework** for the Task Force needs to include:

- A set of baseline **planning** assumptions for how the 2021-22 academic year will play out based on current national information and projections and institutional expectations (e.g., that as many classes as possible will return to a face-to-face modality). Subsequent recommendations can then more easily note where exceptions to the baseline should be made (see the comment on the scenarios and teaching modalities below for an example of a baseline planning assumption)
- a **charge** for the Task Force
- **combinations of scenarios and teaching modalities** (online, hybrid, face-to-face) to be considered by the Task Force.
 - For the purposes of this planning exercise, it seems important to take for granted that COVID conditions will have improved from the 2020-21 baseline. Between improved compliance with public health guidelines, vaccine prevalence, and growing natural immunity, we have every reason

to expect that COVID-19 will be less present on campus and in our community during the next academic year.

- In the event that conditions are not significantly improved from the current year, current practices can always be continued.
 - It is also unlikely that COVID-19 would not continue to impact our operations in notable ways during the 2021-22 academic year, especially during the Fall semester.
 - All of this is to say that rather than building out complete recommendations around multiple different scenarios, a better approach for this exercise might simply be to note those issues/areas/considerations that could change the most based on specific variations in Fall conditions.
- some of the elements to consider for the combinations of scenarios and teaching modalities referred to above are
- expectations of faculty for remote/online work and flexibility
 - The current belief is that every faculty member who wants one will be able to be vaccinated by the start of the Fall semester. (Based on current national messaging, every staff member and student should have access as well, if not by mid-August then at least by mid-September.) Between vaccine availability and the ample evidence that we now have that COVID-19 is rarely spread in the classroom (especially from students to the instructor), the baseline expectation is that faculty who have historically taught in person will be back in the classroom in Fall 2021.
 - Recommendations related to ongoing accommodations to allow for online teaching should provide specific scenarios, rationales, etc. for deviating from this expectation.
 - risk factors
 - vaccine availability
 - acquired immunity
 - different treatments between vaccinated people and not vaccinated

- This should focus on people who have been unable to be vaccinated (due to availability or other factors) rather than people who have chosen not to be vaccinated. We do not want to inadvertently create incentives for people to not be vaccinated.
- student expectations (especially students getting accustomed to not being in face-to-face classes)
 - One specific area for recommended best practices should be livestreaming/recording of courses, expectations for voluntary virtual attendance and participation in face-to-face courses, etc.
 - Are these/should these practices be part of our standard operating procedure for student support moving forward (or at least for the foreseeable future), do we note them as options but leave it to instructor discretion, etc.
- instructional modalities
- combinations of student expectations and instructional modalities.
 - from different perspectives
 - students', faculty, combinations of student and faculty perspectives.-

MEMORANDUM

To: Alexandra Backer, Farah Combs, Rama Cousik, Adam Dircksen, Barry Dupen,
Steven Hanke, Jeff Malanson, Mark Masters, Ann Obergfell, Kari Smith, David Steffens;
Members, Fort Wayne Senate Task Force on Fall Opening

From: Bernd Buldt;
Chair, Executive Committee of the Fort Wayne Senate

Date: March 4, 2021

Subj: Charge to Develop A Set of Recommendations for the Fall Semester 2021

Dear Colleagues and Members of the Task Force:

Let me start out by extending, on behalf of the entire Executive Committee, a big “Thank you!” to you all for your decision to step up and to volunteer some of the little spare time you have left and do important work on this task force.

As you know, the Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Dr. Carl Drummond, proposed the formation of a task force to work on recommendations for the Fall Semester of 2021. We have reason to expect that, while the main impact of the pandemic will be behind us, by mid-August we are still not yet back to normal: many will be vaccinated but not all; most faculty will return to teaching face-to-face in-class but especially first- and second-year students might need a refresher on regular attendance after going through online and hybrid learning for so over a year; faculty need to readjust their schedules when meetings are no longer online; students might face more and greater distractions by having their social life back, etc. Etc. — the implications and ramifications are many.

The Executive Committee hereby asks you to work on the following charges:

- (1) Elect your own chair to help coordinate your efforts.
- (2) Develop a set a recommendations that will help to guide faculty and administrators as they prepare for effective and compassionate teaching during the fall semester 2021 (and maybe beyond).
- (3) Have your set of recommendations ready by Wednesday of Finals Week, May 5, at the latest so that the Executive Committee (acting on behalf of Senate as a whole) can have a final look at it before they get sent to the VCAA for further consideration and implementation.

While the primary goal of the recommendations is to support student success and retention, please, be also mindful of protecting the well-being of our faculty and staff. Moreover, while you work on the recommendations, feel encouraged to take a broad look from many different angles at the student experience in a (mostly) post-pandemic world and to suggest what under normal circumstances would be considered unconventional measures (e.g., for jump-starting social life on campus).

In order to give your task force a head start the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) and the VCAA's office have each produced a guiding document which is appended to this charge.

The Executive Committee appreciates the work that this will undoubtedly entail, and we are grateful in advance for the commitment that you devote to it. Your work is essential to ensuring that our success in serving our students is achieved in a mutual spirit of shared governance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bernd Buldt', written in a cursive style.

Bernd Buldt
Senate Executive Committee, Chair