

Graduate Community Town Hall

with

- Doug Doren
- Mary Martin
- LaRuth McAfee
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- Michael Alexo
- Elizabeth Salisbury
- Caitlin Hutchison (moderating)



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
GRADUATE COLLEGE

Guidance for this Town Hall

Participants will be muted. Please ask questions through the chat feature.

Caitlin will ask questions, Doug and Grad College staff will respond.

Questions will remain anonymous when read. If you would like to remain anonymous to all, please use the private messaging feature and direct your question to Caitlin Hutchison.

If your question is highly-specific, i.e. you do not think it would benefit the group to ask, or of a personal nature, please email grad@udel.edu and we will respond later.

Agenda

- Planning for Fall Semester
- Survey Results
- Social Justice
- Q&A

Planning Classes for Fall 2020

- September 1 start of classes (not official yet, but expect announcement soon)
- Late departure for Thanksgiving (classes through Tuesday or Wednesday)
- Online only after Thanksgiving
- All classes are hybrid or online to have adequate capacity with physical distancing



3/2-A/B scheduling (details TBD)

- Courses taught in three two-day blocks (3/2) either Monday/Thursday, Tuesday/Friday, or Wednesday/Saturday, for 75 minutes per session
- Classes run 8 am to 7:15 pm (2:15 on Wed/Sat), with 25 minutes between classes
- Courses are taught on two different schedules (A/B).
 - Courses on the A schedule will meet in-person during weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15 and online in the alternate weeks.
 - Vice versa for courses on the B schedule
 - Alternating A/B schedule does not apply to courses assigned to special rooms (e.g., labs, studios). Plans to be developed directly by units, in alignment with general guidelines (e.g., 6 ft separation between individuals)

Hybrid vs Online

- Graduate sections of 10-24 students will fit the 3-2 hybrid plan *unless the instructor needs the course to be online (synchronous or asynchronous)*
- Graduate sections with 25-49 students will be online
 - Units may swap a graduate section for an undergraduate section of equivalent size based on the *unit's priorities & instructor preference*
 - Departments decide on priorities – *you can advocate for your program*
- All classes of >49 students will be online
- Grad classes of <10 students will be able to use smaller rooms, but will still be hybrid
- Departments have tracking sheets to say which class will have each format



Even Hybrid Courses will be Online

- All classes should expect to offer an online-only option
 - Quarantined students, or those with underlying conditions, may not be able to come to class
 - International students may not be able to come to the US, but may be able to enroll remotely (see below)



Incoming Students

- Current admission numbers slightly ahead of last year
 - “Summer melt” and requests for deferrals likely to be higher than usual
- Communications
 - Students want to know what their experience will be like this Fall
 - Will classes they take be online?
 - Will classes they teach be online?
 - Will they have access to labs?
 - See Research ramp-up guidelines
 - Answers are still evolving – but inform students as you make your plans



Orientation

- Grad College Orientation will be online, modular, tailored to specific student needs (professional vs. research based, international vs domestic)
- CTAL will do online TA training
- OISS may add modules
- Great foundation for future orientations
 - More focused on specific needs of students
 - Must find another way to introduce GSOs, have in-person interactions, Resource Fair
- Date TBD – need to coordinate with departments



International Students

- Consulates are not scheduling appointments for student visas
 - First-year international students will probably not be able to come to Newark in time for the start of fall semester
- International travel restrictions continue
 - May delay return of continuing students



Online Option for New International Students

- If graduate programs offer online courses for the first semester, this creates an option for international students to start on schedule even if they cannot get to campus.
 - New students not in US (without visa) can get credit toward degree for online courses

BUT

- Tuition-paying students may not be willing to pay full tuition for an online program, and may withdraw or defer
- First-year students who are not on campus until spring will not be eligible for CPT experiences, so will not be able to earn money off-campus in the summer.

Online Option for International Students with Visas

- New temporary policy is expected that will allow students on active F and J visas to count an unlimited number of online courses toward their course of study in Fall 2020 (this mostly affects students who have been in the US and are now out of the country)

BUT

- Waiting on clarifying guidance from Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP, the Federal agency governing F visas) and the Department of State (DOS, governing J visas) on the **hybrid** model.



Online Option for International Students with Visas (cont'd)

- For example, if the university has in-person and online classes, is it OK for an active F1/J1 student to do NO in-person classes? In Spring 2020, it was allowed because most universities were 100% online so that was expected. Do these students need the “physical presence” requirement of at least 1 in-person class to keep their record active?
- SEVP has said they will provide additional guidance as we get closer to the fall. We assume DOS guidance for Js will be similar.



Continuing Students with Stipends, Living Abroad

- Current HR policy is that students on assistantships cannot be paid stipends if they are not in the US. This largely has to do with complications of compliance with tax laws in the students' home countries.
- This policy may change, but HR and OGC need to explore options and costs in more depth.
- If students do not have a stipend, they may need to work and not be able to enroll, even if online classes are available to them.
- Even if students can take online classes and get by without a stipend, they will need a tuition scholarship.
 - This can be granted by deans, but the impact on their budget in the new model needs to be clarified.

– At present, we think this can be managed.



International Students – Looking Ahead

- If students can take online classes in the fall, we hope they can come to campus in Spring 2021
- If they cannot take classes in the fall, some programs may not be able let them start in the spring
 - Spring courses often depend on prerequisites taught only in the fall.
 - Programs could advise students to defer for a year. Of course, some students will decide not to come at all.
 - Programs may want to consider whether they can redesign their curriculum to allow students to start in spring.



Continuing Students

- Keep in touch with your students
- Many will remain off campus
- Maintain normal co-curricular activities
 - Seminars, TA training, social events (even if remote)

Delayed time to degree completion

- Programs can make accommodations as appropriate to help students complete
- Grad College provided summer support to about 25 additional students this year
- Funding needs for fall appear lower than initially feared
 - Undergrad teaching may require small breakout groups, lab sections, some incoming students may defer
 - Mitigates need for additional funding for students whose graduation has been delayed
 - Potential demand for more Tas
 - Grad College and Provost's office can provide some additional support
- Internal job board set up to match faculty who need to hire RAs/GAs with students seeking support



Grad College Newsletter

- News, grad student highlights, calendar of events, survey
 - Every other week, Sunday evening
 - Send ideas for stories to grad@udel.edu
- Survey to get regular input from students, track changes



Survey #1

- Distributed 4/26/2020
- 132 responses
- 40% masters, 60% doctoral
- 70% in years 1-2, 30% years 3-5



Survey #1

- **Do you feel as though you are getting sufficient information from your program(s) or faculty on the revised expectations for academic and/or research progress?**
 - 72% Yes
 - 28% No
- **What are the most frustrating/undesirable aspects of being remote for you?**
- **What have you enjoyed about being a remote student?**



Survey #1 Open Response - Concerns

- Not able to do planned work, no access to labs, library, etc.
 - Time to degree
 - Funding
- Lack of informal interactions, community
 - Hard to ask questions, learn from others
 - Isolation, loneliness
- No separation of work, home
 - Work-life balance, conflicts of family and work responsibilities
 - Limited space, distractions, motivation



Survey #1 Open Response – Positives

- No commute time
- More independence, flexibility
- Fewer interruptions, greater productivity
- Can review recorded lectures



Survey #2

- Distributed 5/10/2020
- 209 responses
- 40% masters, 57% doctoral
- 64% in years 1-2, 36% years 3-5



Survey #2

- **Do you expect your degree progress to be delayed as a result of the current situation?**
 - 45% Yes
 - 55% No
- **How delayed do you think it will be?**
 - 67% 1 semester
 - 28% 1 year



Survey #2 Reasons for Delay

- Inability to collect data for thesis 45%
- Poor job market 20%
- Funding uncertainty 14%
- Necessary classes not offered 5%
- Other (see below) 16%



Survey #2 Reasons for Delay

- Unable to have access to lab, library, archive, etc. – *Currently ramping up*
- Clinical rotations delayed --- *Policy in late stages of development*
- Stress, lack of concentration
- Work environment
- Family/childcare issues
- Health



Survey #2

- **Physically, where are you now?**
 - 61% in New Castle County
 - 91% in DE/PA/NJ
 - 1% out of country
- **How have you found ways to be socially/emotionally close to people while still practicing physical distancing?**
 - Phone, Zoom, Facetime, living with family/significant other



Survey #3

- Distributed 5/24/2020 (Memorial Day Weekend)
- 50 responses
- 35% masters, 61% doctoral
- 63% in years 1-2, 29% years 3-5



Survey #3 Open Response

Are there any Graduate College events or resources you would like to highlight as being especially useful? We would like to continue offering these.

- Grad College Staff – Mary Martin
- Professional development workshops
- Diversity panels
- Social events
- Travel support



Survey #3 Open Response

How do you feel the Graduate College could better meet your needs? Please describe below, including resource or event ideas you would like to suggest.

- More awareness of resources and events
(only consistent comment)



Survey #3 Open Response

Is there anything you've learned about yourself or have been able to develop over the past few weeks of physical distancing? (i.e., new hobbies, ways to destress, a family member's habit that really annoys you when you're around them 24/7, etc.)

- Many positive responses – new hobbies, time to reflect, healthier lifestyle
- More adaptations to new work environment
- Tired of online classes, zoom meetings



Survey #4

- To be distributed 6/7/2020
- Campus reopening – questions, plans, concerns
- Social justice issues – open response: what are you experiencing, what can we do to make your experience at UD positive
- Future ideas
 - Well-being resources – what do you need?

Social Justice and Graduate Education

- Our students are dealing with fear, anger, and a recognition of injustice
- We need to listen to them, and use the power that we have to support them and make their experience at UD more positive
- We face a long path, but we need to act
- Please share with us what you hear from students about what they need



Your Questions and Concerns

- Please write questions in chat. All questions will remain anonymous
 - If your question personal or highly-specific please email grad@udel.edu



Thank you!