

Good Evening,

As we come to the end of the summer semester, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your hard work during this extraordinary time. While it has not been easy, I appreciate your continued flexibility, dedication, and compassion as we go into the fall semester. This email serves as one of several August Office of Instruction Updates. As indicated in my first Office of Instruction update/email, the goal is to provide consistent communication that is timely and relevant. There will be another update next week with specific information about the Return to Campus protocols and process in preparation for the start of the fall semester.

As we prepare for the start of the fall semester, you will find updates and reminders about:

- Fall 2021: Face Mask Update
- Fall 2021: Attendance and “No Show” Students
- Fall 2021: Schedule and Enrollment Update
- Preparation for Return to Campus
- Flex Day (August 20)
- Student Withdrawal from Classes (W and EW)
- Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Grading Options Continued
- Parking and Construction

Fall 2021: Face Mask Update. Due to the increased transmission of the Covid-19 Delta variant, masking indoors is mandated by the county, with few exceptions, such as when wearing a mask is dangerous for work, medical exceptions, and if an individual is working alone in a private cubicle or office. When an effective mask is worn properly by a contagious person, it reduces the transmission of the virus and protects the broader community. This mandate applies to all on campus at Mt. SAC, students, faculty, staff, and the public.

Fall 2021: Attendance and “No Show” Students. Adding and dropping “no show” students in a timely manner, by the census date for the class, is important for several reasons. First, the sooner students’ class schedules are confirmed, the sooner they can get started with learning. Next, for students who receive financial aid and who may be eligible for additional relief funds, getting their classes confirmed can reduce the time they would wait for their funds. Additionally, the college needs to ensure that student attendance is timely and accurately recorded for purposes of maintaining our eligibility for federal and state financial aid.

The option to and timeline for choosing a grading option varies by CRN. For more information refer to [Spring 2021 Term Excused Withdrawals \(EW\) and Pass/No Pass \(P/NP\) Guidance](#). We appreciate the faculty’s commitment to on-time grade submission as this enables student Augusts sufficient time to make-grade option and scheduling decisions, receive transcripts for transfer and scholarships, and qualify for financial aid.

Fall 2021 Schedule and Enrollment Update. As we get closer to the start date fall 2021 semester, the Instruction Leadership Team continues to monitor enrollment and make modifications based on student demand and enrollment trends. The data is showing that some departments are experiencing higher enrollment in face-to-face classes while other departments are experiencing higher student demand in online course sections. While we realize that some faculty may be frustrated with the schedule modifications, we appreciate your continued flexibility and understanding regarding schedule

modifications due to our enrollment trends. The Instructional Leadership Team will continue to work closely with the department chairs as we make these schedule modifications.

Preparation for Return to Campus. We have heard many of your questions for the fall semester and appreciate that the Academic Senate has also shared questions and concerns regarding our return to campus. We are currently working on providing answers and information as quickly as possible and will be posting updated information of the Mt. SAC Instruction website that will include an interactive place for your questions, and our answers. More information to come! We have also scheduled three (3) Informational Sessions next week via Zoom for faculty teaching face-to-face class(es) in the fall semester. Information has been provided directly to those faculty by division deans.

Fall Faculty Virtual Flex Day: Return and Renew. Flex Day will be held on Friday, August 20, from 8 am to 3 pm via Zoom. Registration is still open and you can register using this link: [Register for the opening meeting, lunch session, and breakouts at this link to receive Zoom access](#). To register for a virtual Flex session, be sure to download the Zoom app (if you haven't already) and register individually for each session and remember that each individual session has a unique Zoom link. The keynote this year will be provided by our own Dr. Mica Stewart, Professor of Sociology and you are also encouraged to register for the lunch session for a preview of Mt. SAC Theater Department's production of *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* by Qui Nguyen. Full-time faculty must attend the entire day of workshops and department/division activities to be credited for the six mandatory flex hours. We look forward to seeing you on August 20!

Student Withdrawal From Classes. Effective Fall 2021, Mt. SAC will return to the college's regular processes of both the awarding of the traditional W and requesting EWs. For the key information/dates related to their registrations, students are advised to view their "Schedule Receipt" or Number 11 in the portal on their student tab.

Excused Withdrawals (EW) processes for Fall 2021 will return to pre-Covid processes because the Chancellor's Office did not extend EW exceptions for Fall 2021.

Background:

- (Pre-COVID) In Fall 2018, Mt. SAC implemented a Excused Withdrawal (EW) process that consisted of a Petition for Exceptional Action (PEA) with supporting documentation to the Office of Admissions & Records for review. This process did not refund fees, and there was no timeline associated with the document submission. This process was separate from the regular Withdrawal (W) process that was available to all students and faculty (via their portals) from 20% - 60% of the scheduled course meeting time.
- During COVID, with authorization by the Chancellor's Office, the college removed the regular W process and replaced it with a modified EW process through the end of Summer 2021. This new EW process was automated and resulted in the refunding of student fees (where appropriate). Additionally, the window to receive an EW was widened until the last day of instruction in some cases.
- As the Chancellor's Office authorization on the EW process does not extend into Fall 2021, the college must revert to our existing regular process for EW. While the Academic Senate recommended to extend this until the end of the year, it was determined is not feasible to

implement the Academic Senate recommendation to extend EW exceptions for Fall 2021. Students may petition for EW by following the processes outlined on the [Financial Aid website](#).

An EW mark will not count toward the limits on how many times students can repeat a class. In addition, it will not impact progress status. However, an EW may have implications for students receiving federal benefits (including veteran's benefits) and students planning to transfer. Therefore, students are encouraged to speak with a counselor about their options before withdrawing from classes.

Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Grading Options Extended. The date to choose Pass/No Pass (P/NP) as a grading option for eligible classes has been extended to 5 pm, Thursday, October 21 for first 8-week classes. For full-term 16-week classes, the deadline for changing grading option is 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 16. For all other classes, students are advised to check their student portal for specific deadlines. Students can choose their grading option by signing into the Mt. SAC Portal, clicking on the Student tab, and then choosing "Change Class Grading Option." Only eligible classes will allow students to change from "Letter Grade" to "Pass/No Pass." In all eligible classes, including letter grade only, students who receive an F will have their grade automatically changed to NP, which will not affect their GPA.

Choosing Pass/No Pass may have implications for students. Students transferring to the University of California should take caution in using this option and meet with a counselor or a transfer specialist in the Transfer Center. Students receiving Financial Aid should be aware the NP option affects their completion rate for Satisfactory Academic Progress, but doesn't impact their GPA. For Veterans, a NP may be better option than the EW, because it shows that the student completed the course. All GI Bill® students should speak with a Veterans Resource Center counselor for advisement. Students may speak with a counselor to review their options.

Parking and Construction. As you return to campus, you will see a lot of construction occurring, especially around Temple Avenue. While these construction projects will impact both road closures on Temple and parking, we want to be sure you have the most current information to help you navigate to campus. In addition, parking lot D2 (in front of Building 26A-B) is closed due to construction. Parking lot D (west of D2) will be open for employee parking and has some designated employee parking. Please check this [campus map](#) regularly for updates on parking lots and open walkways around closed off construction zones so you'll get to your classes on time; you may want to share this advice and link with students. I will provide you with additional updates as they become available.

Reminders:

- **Senate Annual Planning Retreat – Thursday, August 19, 2021, 9 am to 12 pm.** All faculty are invited to join the Academic Senate for our annual planning retreat the day before Flex Day. At the retreat we will review our progress towards this year's goals and plan Senate priorities for the 2021-2022 year. Zoom information to follow in August.
- **Parking Permits.** For the Fall 2021 semester, the 2020 Staff Parking Permits will continue to be valid through December 2021. New staff can obtain a 2020 Staff Parking Permit by contacting Police and Campus Safety during regular business hours at (909) 274-4555.

As we start the fall semester, I want to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation for your dedication to our students and their success. And I want to also extend a thank you to Academic Senate President Chisa Uyeki and Faculty Association President Emily Woolery for their input and insight as we navigated

these unprecedented times. While there are conditions that continue to change on a daily basis, I am committed to providing you the most up-to-date and relevant information as it becomes available. If you have questions, please continue to work with your division dean or associate dean for resolution. If you have concerns that cannot be resolved with your dean or associate dean, feel free to contact my Executive Assistant, Laura Martinez, to schedule an appointment with me.

I hope you had a wonderful and relaxing summer, and I looking forward to seeing everyone soon!

Thank you,
Kelly Fowler



Kelly Fowler

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