Special meeting to discuss the response to our AAUP chapter letter regarding vaccine requirements.

20July2021

Attendance: Eva Cherniavsky (chair), Diane Morrison, Robert Wood, Ann Mescher, Aaron Katz, Duane Storti, Nora Kenworthy, Jay Johnson, Rachel Chapman, Amy Hagopian (minutes)

Eva has drafted a response to Provost Richards’ message to the AAUP board. The google doc is here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BLDjrF-PA0ka0KhVz2_e1Y7liDQg2z1C_WEvmAa8ukA/edit>

We agreed Eva’s draft was on the right track, and some edits were suggested in the google doc.

What is the playbook? Who is deciding what and where, and how are faculty invited into those conversations (with the Senate on summer hiatus)? Our workload is expanding without any consent from us.

This letter should be a shot across the bow. Your response makes clear we are not at the table, and administration doesn’t even feel it owes us a clear explanation of its plans.

Rachel suggested we issue four demands:

1)    Establish a representative emergency board with faculty and students, to address crucial issues of safety and support as we return to campus.

2)    Set clear guidelines for the fall generated by the above board,

3)    Ensure that faculty are paid for any additional labor this transition / teaching requires,

4)    Designate a COVID 19 tech team to support distance learning.

All this makes it clear how much we need a union.

Any announcement of the 2% raise? Not formally.

It would reduce uncertainty to require vaccinations—the Indiana University court decision could make it clear that we can do this.

Nora was told by administrators on her campus that students don’t have to file the form until November. They can register without being vaccinated?? [*From this page - https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/vaccination-requirement/ “Students must submit the Student COVID-19 Vaccine Attestation Form:*

*As soon as possible after the second dose of a 2-dose series or after a 1-dose vaccine, after they have decided to declare an exception, or by the start of autumn quarter on September 29, 2021, whichever date is earliest.*

*Students who are unable to get vaccinated until after arriving on campus may submit their form by November 5, 2021.*

*A hold will be placed on winter quarter registrations if the form has not been submitted by November 5, 2021.”*]

Dual Pandemic = Dual Duties!

Ask our members:

What does safe and supported look like to faculty?

We should decide:

Should we have a petition?

Are we talking with administration throughout?

Sequence: when we have responded to Richards on the list server, and our core points are on the list server, and we hear back from our subscribers, then we pose a thoughtful communication to Ana Mari Cauce and the Board of Regents. Seattle Times op ed?

Let’s document all the things that didn’t happen this summer: child care, clear guidance, support.

The [google doc](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BLDjrF-PA0ka0KhVz2_e1Y7liDQg2z1C_WEvmAa8ukA/edit) ended up being the place where we focused our discussion of this.

We raised the discussion of the elimination of the UWPD, and agreed this will be the focus of the August 3 AAUP board meeting.

APPENDIX MATERIAL

On Jul 19, 2021, at 11:56 PM, \_ ec22@uw.edu <ec22@uw.edu> wrote:

Dear Provost,

Many thanks for this reply. As you may be aware, the questions we posed in our earlier message emerged from our discussion on our faculty listserv, and we’re wondering whether we might have your permission to post this reply, which we think would be of interest to our readers.

All of us on the Board very much appreciate this considered response. If we are reading correctly, your response suggests that the expectations for in-person classes have not changed as a result of the pandemic – that we are, in effect, reverting to pre-pandemic teaching protocols and norms. This is, indeed, reassuring. At the same time, we are struggling to reconcile that reassurance with the CTL’s guidelines. *To the best of our collective knowledge, the university has not previously envisioned a scenario in which remote students would enroll in in-person classes.* The only, very limited way in which this kind of multi-modal instruction occurred was in a handful of classrooms where discussions were conducted synchronously with both in-person and remote students participating – the one configuration CTL specifically recommends those of us untrained in facilitating such classrooms *avoid.*

Evidence-based pedagogies, now well-established at UW, concern our approach to the use of *classroom time* – and it is thus not at all clear how evidence-teaching would somehow facilitate the accommodation of remote students (who are, precisely, *not* in the classroom). To be sure, “flipping” one’s classes and taping lectures can be very helpful in accommodating, for example, student athletes, or other students whose work or care obligations results in a relatively higher number of absences. But students navigating such pressures are *not* remote students – they can and do nevertheless attend a majority of class meetings (or sections or labs). The CTL guidelines envision something altogether different: the accommodation of students who will simply not be present in the classroom and will therefore require the instructor to devise a parallel set of activities and assessments that can be conducted remotely (e.g., “**for critical in-person exercises, activities, and assessments, determine how a remote student can still meet the course learning goals”).**

As you rightly note, the CTL guidelines are recommendations, not “directives.” In practice, however, the distinction is not as rigid as it may seem. While some units may leave it to the discretion of individual faculty to determine whether or not they might potentially accommodate remote students within in-person classes, it is easy to predict that other units will regard the CTL “recommendations” as a set of best practices to which all faculty (or at any rate, all meritorious faculty) are expected to adhere. The UW-AAUP Board is deeply concerned about the potential for profound inequities across units, resulting from the differential interpretation by program heads or chairs of these frankly ambiguous guidelines.

This is the reason that we wrote to seek clarification from university leadership. The Western Washington MOU between administration and the union clarifies that no faculty member can be required to undertake multi-modal teaching (and thus cannot be punished or disadvantaged for declining to do so) – indeed, faculty who undertake this work are understood as assuming an overload (carrying supplemental compensation). It does not seem to us that faculty at UW currently have the same assurance.

Respectfully,

On Jul 16, 2021, at 8:24 PM, Mark Richards <markrich@uw.edu> wrote:

Dear members of the UW-AAUP Executive Board,

Thank you for your communication regarding preparations for autumn quarter instruction. I understand your concerns about workload, which I will attempt to address.

On behalf of University leadership, let me begin by recognizing the significant amount of work that instructors have done over the past year-and-a-half to ensure that our students continue to receive an exceptional academic experience. Your efforts are appreciated throughout the University, from students to academic leaders to the Board of Regents.

As we approach the autumn quarter, we continue to expect that the vast majority of instruction will be in person. This past spring, we received many requests from instructors for advice on autumn course planning. The Tri-Campus Digital Learning Alliance – composed of faculty and instructional designers – drafted suggestions that were reviewed by academic leaders, including associate deans. The intent was to provide suggestions – not directives – on ways to accommodate remote learning in an existing in-person course. These suggestions do not include creating two courses, but instead incorporating evidenced-based approaches to teaching that were already designed and incorporated by many instructors prior to the pandemic.

To your question as to whether we will require students seeking a medical accommodation to go through DRS, the answer is "of course." The process will be the same as it was before the pandemic. Students requesting a medical accommodation associated with COVID or otherwise will be directed to DRS. Faculty will not be asked to address such requests. There may be some increase in the number of students seeking such accommodations as we emerge from the pandemic. However, the important thing to note is that UW’s policies and procedures regarding accommodations have not changed.

As you note, for many years UW instructors have worked with individual students in extenuating circumstances to accommodate them so they could continue their learning. I am confident this will be the case in autumn as all of us continue to put students and their learning first.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Richards

From: "\_ ec22@uw.edu" <ec22@uw.edu>

Subject: [Execaaup] From the UW-AAUP Executive Board

Date: July 9, 2021 at 11:24:47 AM PDT

To: markrich@uw.edu

Cc: execaaup@uw.edu

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Dear Provost Richards,

As you have acknowledged, UW faculty have shown extraordinary dedication to their students over the past 16 months. We have indeed worked far more hours on our teaching during the pandemic to provide instructional continuity, pedagogical excellence, and the extra support our students needed through these turbulent quarters of remote instruction. Too many faculty have put research agendas on hold to work exclusively on teaching and mentoring, doing so while experiencing our own losses and traumas.

UW faculty will continue to demonstrate collective and individual commitments to our students as the state’s pandemic response evolves. However, we must keep in mind during this evolution that the interests of students and faculty are aligned, not opposed: students are not well served when exhausted faculty are operating on the edge of burnout.

Regarding instruction in Fall 2021, we have received guidelines only from the Center for Teaching and Learning (<https://teaching.washington.edu/topics/preparing-for-autumn-2021/>). Most of the CTL recommendations are open to a range of interpretations, and in some cases, recommendations appear contradictory. “Instructors are not expected to develop two versions of the same course. But please do consider how remote students might be supported in a course where the majority of students are in-person,” the CTL writes. **The concept of a “majority” in-person class – implying, as it does, the existence of a smaller (minority) contingent of remote students in these classes – suggests *precisely* that instructors *are* expected to develop two versions of the same course, or in other words, that multi-modal teaching will be the norm in the 2021-2022 academic year, and perhaps beyond.**

We understand the pedagogical, public health, and ethical reasons for building maximum flexibility into course offerings, and affirm again our commitment to equity and student access. We’ve taught for equity long before COVID-19, using principles including universal course design, going above and beyond DRS recommendations to accommodate all students. Nevertheless, CTL guidelines largely expand the framework of “accessibility,” and UW faculty ***are*** deeply concerned regarding post-COVID workload increases given our experiences over the past 16 months. Thus, the AAUP asks for clarification regarding what instruction and “in-person” learning now means at the University of Washington.

**Will students requesting to take classes remotely (for designed in-person classes) be referred to an office such as DRS to provide support for their accommodation request?** In the pre-Covid context, students requesting accommodation were required to work through DRS, where trained professionals, not the instructor, determined eligibility for accommodation through a formalized process. DRS offers both students and faculty crucial forms of support to implement such accommodations. Imagine a scenario in which a relatively small number of students are unable to safely return to campus in the fall; such an additional small number of students might be accommodated through DRS; indeed, most of us willingly accommodate students on an *ad hoc* basis who need to miss class sessions or tests. This is however an altogether different scenario from one in which a much larger “minority” of students remain remote for an array of reasons, including caretaking responsibilities or work schedules.

UW faculty are committed to access and equity for our students. The pressures on students working full-time jobs, providing child care, and commuting long distances while attempting to remain as students earning their degrees are real and staggering, long pre-existing the pandemic. **But the cost of accommodation must not fall upon the faculty in the form of  an uncompensated overload. The problem is not solved by claiming (as the CTL guidelines appear to do) that this is simply a matter of faculty flexibility, up-to-date pedagogy, and adroit use of technology, rather than identifying it for what it truly is: a substantial escalation of faculty teaching loads.**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Western Washington University administration and its faculty union (United Faculty of Western Washington) states: “No instructor will be required to teach a section including both remote and in-person students. Instructors who choose to teach in a mixed modality (both in-person and remote instruction in some manner) can expect to receive necessary support.” The MOU further stipulates that “if a faculty member teaches a course with mixed modality (where, for example, some students attend in person and other students attend remotely, or classes are split periodically into smaller face-to-face meetings along with asynchronous remote instruction, then the faculty member, the chair, and the dean will determine the amount of extra workload in credit hour terms” and the faculty member will be compensated at “50% of the usual overload rate.” (At Western, this would be 1/72 of the faculty member’s annual academic salary per additional credit hour.)

The principle here is clear: this form of multi-modal teaching raises faculty course workloads.   Faculty must retain the option to choose (or not) to assume this overload and, if they opt to do so, they must be compensated accordingly. **Can UW faculty receive the same assurance from our university leadership?**

We are asking for unambiguous guidelines that can inform the work of *all* academic units as course offerings and expectations are defined in each program.  Because resources and practices vary greatly between units, it is imperative to have central guiding principles, such as Western’s MOU, recognizing the workload implications of multi-modal instruction.

Most UW faculty use the summer to prepare for next year’s teaching, and it is critically important for us to know what we are actually preparing for, ensuring that our students have the best experience possible. To this end, we request your preliminary response by July 23, 2021.

Respectfully,

The UW-AAUP Executive Board

Eva Cherniavsky

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# How to Reopen Higher Ed

This is a national imperative, requiring New Deal-level funding and focus, write Irene Mulvey and Randi Weingarten.

Link to this article in Inside Higher Ed: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2021/03/15/reopening-colleges-national-imperative-requiring-new-deal-level-funding-opinion>

[Irene Mulvey](https://www.insidehighered.com/users/irene-mulvey) **and** [Randi Weingarten](https://www.insidehighered.com/users/randi-weingarten)

Months after the coronavirus pandemic first shuttered colleges and universities throughout the United States, many institutions of higher education are barely better equipped to bring students, faculty and staff safely back to campus than they were in March 2020. In fact, with state budgets decimated by unprecedented demands and sharp declines in revenue, many campuses are even less prepared to do so.

We cannot allow America’s colleges and universities to be diminished when they are so essential to fulfilling our individual and societal aspirations. We cannot stand by as repercussions of the pandemic result in unprecedented faculty and staff layoffs and push large numbers of students out of higher education. This is a national imperative, requiring New Deal-level funding and focus. Only the federal government can provide the scale of support needed to safely reopen our colleges and universities, preserve and expand the essential contributions they make to the economy and to civic life, and ensure they are never again so dependent on revenue from in-person enrollment that they are tempted to bring students to campus when it’s not safe to do so. The Biden administration’s proposal for an American Rescue Plan is a vital first step on this road.

This past spring, as the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent, institutions of higher education faced an unsolvable bind. Lacking any guidance from the Trump-DeVos administration, and dependent on revenue from enrollment and on-campus housing, meal plans and other services, they wrestled with how to reopen safely for the fall semester, or whether to reopen at all.

In the ensuing months, often under pressure from governors and state legislatures, higher education leaders created a patchwork of institutional policies to safely bring students, faculty and staff back to campus. Despite great effort -- and some notable successes -- the fall semester at many institutions was a mess. Many colleges opened in person, then hastily moved back online as campuses became viral hot spots. Communities with large student populations have seen their [death rates soar](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/12/us/covid-colleges-nursing-homes.html) above the national average. It didn’t have to be this way.

The first order of business is to bring the pandemic under control. The recent rollout of coronavirus vaccines is an obvious and important step in the right direction, and vaccination -- prioritizing all members of the campus community who are required to be physically present on site -- will be crucial. But mask mandates, limits on gathering size and especially social distancing will also continue to be important tools in stopping the spread of the virus. The use of hybrid educational models, while not ideal, can reduce the number of people on a campus at any given point. Staff members whose jobs allow them to remain off campus should be allowed to telecommute. Workers who are at risk or who must care for family members should be allowed to work from home or given alternative assignments.

All campus employees should have access to affordable health care and paid medical leave for when they are sick or need to care for family members. Ensuring access to medical care by building upon the successes of the Affordable Care Act will help provide workers with resources to stay healthy and, should they become sick, seek treatment in both the short and the long term. If exposed to the virus or feeling ill, workers should not have to choose between keeping their jobs and protecting their communities by isolating.

Colleges and universities must also implement robust testing, tracing and isolation programs in order to identify and stop outbreaks before they spread. Testing must be widespread and regular in order to identify presymptomatic and asymptomatic carriers. Daily self-screening by students, faculty and staff who will be on campus should supplement that testing. Every institution that will be open in person needs to develop the capacity to conduct rapid contact tracing for anyone who has had close contact with an infected individual, while ensuring confidentiality. Members of the campus community should be isolated if they have symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone who is symptomatic or has tested positive. Students should be provided with physically distanced housing while in isolation.

For such measures to work, trust is essential. The faculty should make decisions about how any particular class will be taught and how research will be carried out since they know best how to teach their courses and conduct research. Clear communication about expectations and policies, as well as opportunities for giving feedback, are essential. Administrators, faculty members and students should collaboratively implement virus mitigation procedures. It is not enough to tell students what they cannot do; administrators must provide safe alternatives for students to meet their educational, physical and social needs. While institutions should actively enforce policies aimed at virus mitigation, sanctions should not be overly punitive. Threats of expulsion from campus will push risky behavior off campus and will undermine the trust necessary to conduct effective surveillance of viral outbreaks.

Personal protective equipment will be another important tool for safely reopening college campuses. In addition to on-campus mask mandates, colleges should ensure that personal protective equipment is available to all employees who require it. Hand-sanitizing stations should be readily accessible, and medical PPE should be available to campus health workers. Colleges and universities should make appropriate PPE available to faculty and staff who work in close quarters or whose job duties may involve a higher possibility of contact with COVID-19-positive individuals. They should train all staff and faculty on proper use of PPE and adequately outfit staff members with PPE so they can carry out appropriate sanitization. Campus administrations should not ask faculty or students to take responsibility for sanitizing classrooms.

Many, if not most, campus facilities will need new safeguards to ensure the health of the campus community. Campus HVAC systems should be upgraded to MERV 13, and indoor ventilation and airflow must be improved. Workspaces must allow for social distancing, with physical barriers such as Plexiglas for workers whose jobs require a high degree of in-person interactions. Enhanced, daily cleaning of classrooms and workspaces will be necessary, with high-touch surfaces receiving more frequent sanitization.

Colleges and universities must also meet the mental health needs brought on by the pandemic, whether caused by ongoing health challenges of people who’ve become sick or the stresses of decreased social interactions among otherwise healthy people. They should ensure that students, staff and faculty have access to mental health professionals as needed and that on-campus mental health counseling is available to students. These mental health challenges will not disappear with the virus; the strains and challenges will continue as people process months of isolation and disruption, and colleges must be prepared to meet this ongoing need.

All these measures are necessary -- and costly. State budgets have been drained by unprecedented demands and declining revenues. Congress must act immediately to provide New Deal-level funding for institutions of higher education, especially the public institutions that educate the vast majority of students. Over the years to come, we must ensure that our colleges and universities have the resources they need to provide the safe, just and inclusive education that serves the common good and can help transform our society.

Funds should go toward providing instruction, supporting students and paying the staff who do that work, and lowering tuition and fees. They should also be used to help address historic inequities that have been sharpened during the pandemic; lower-income students and students of color have been most likely to forgo higher education during the last several months. Finally, funding should be earmarked for improving campus facilities to provide a safe campus environment.

The task of safely reopening our colleges and universities is a historic challenge, one that will require a vast commitment and unprecedented collaboration. But it is within our grasp. Meeting this challenge not only will allow for the continuation of high-quality undergraduate and graduate education and innovative research, but it will also prepare us for the future health challenges we will surely face.

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