



11 June 2020

Dear Colleagues,

It is hard, right now, to be resident in this country. On all sides there is pain: physical, spiritual, economic, mental. It is truly difficult to know what choices are the most right: should one remain self-isolated to protect others, or put one's body out in protest? Which does my elderly mother need more: isolation from possible infection, or physical contact with another human? Is it more important to protect our community by not gathering on campus in any form at the price of precipitous enrollment drops, or by doing all we can to maintain everyone's livelihoods and health insurance at the cost of possible risk of infection?

The choices are hard, and I do not think I can dismiss or blame people who make different choices than I do in each case. I would like us to be generous when we disagree about the best way forward for ourselves and our community, remembering that none of us believe cops killing people of color is okay. None of us want our neighbors to contract Covid-19. None of us want our colleagues to be laid off.

And even as we grapple with the pain and hard choices, the nitty-gritty planning needs to happen as well. Last Friday I presented several ways we could schedule our fall semester, once the decision is made about whether we begin the semester on time, in person, delayed, online. In order to minimize the viral dangers of Thanksgiving holiday travel and return to campus, we developed options like compressing the semester into 12 weeks, or planning the last three weeks of the 15-week semester to be entirely online. These options and others are presented in the PowerPoint [found here](#). I would ask you to look them over, and let me know your thoughts about what you think would be most manageable. You can respond to me directly, or to saicinfo@saic.edu, with the subject line "faculty town hall."

No matter what mode of teaching we end up with next semester, it would behoove faculty planning their courses to be ready to pivot online at any point, in case the virus resurges. To this end, I draw your attention to the discussion of course modules in the PowerPoint. More resources and guidance will be forthcoming on how to think about and plan a modular course.

These are hard times, dear colleagues. I stand amazed at the work you are doing. I hope that you are taking care of yourselves and your families even as you try to change the world.

Sincerely,
Beth Wright, Chair of Faculty