ASC Teaching Transition Committee Report

7 July 2020

In May 2020, ASC Executive Dean Gretchen Ritter created a Teaching Transition Committee to coordinate planning and make recommendations for instruction during the Autumn semester. The following faculty, staff, and students agreed to serve on the committee:

Ian Anderson (.1234), Academic Technology Consultant, ASC Tech
Andy Blosser (.31), Senior Lecturer, Music
Stephanie Brown (.2596), Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Newark campus
Liana Crisan-Vandeborne (.1), Business Intelligence Senior Analyst, ASC
Ron Fillipelli (.2), Director, Facilities Management, ASC
David Horn (.5), Associate Executive Dean for Undergraduate Education, ASC
Mary Ellen Jenkins (.196), Assistant Executive Dean for Advising and Academic Services, ASC
Vlad Kogan (.18), Associate Professor, Political Science
Laura Lisbon (.1), Professor and Chair, Art
Maria Miriti (.1), Associate Professor, EEOB
Wendy Panero (.1), Professor, Earth Sciences
Markus Schoof (.3), Graduate Student, History
Laura Seeger (.16), Web and eLearning Manager, History
Mike Slater (.59), Professor and Director, Communication
Sergio Soave (.1), Associate Executive Dean for Space and Infrastructure, ASC
MacKenzie Wilcox (.297), Undergraduate Student, Religious Studies

The committee was initially given the following charges:

1) In coordination with university-level recommendations, give advice on a teaching plan that balances safety concerns; varied situations of students and faculty in our college; and pedagogical and programmatic goals of ASC departments, schools, and programs;

2) Consider solutions to courses in ASC that pose particular challenges because of their reliance on certain kinds of space, equipment, or interaction: studio arts, performing arts, and science labs, for example;

3) Identify, coordinate, and develop resources—at the level of departments, the college, and the university—that can help ASC faculty prepare for online and hybrid delivery and support their teaching over the course of the semester;

4) Plan a college course approval or assurance process that enables us to change the mode of delivery of autumn courses as quickly and painlessly as possible, while still assuring that certain standards are met.

Since the committee began its work, the university has affirmed its plan to welcome students back to campus in the fall and to offer them a mix of in-person, hybrid, and fully online educational experiences. Information on safety policies related to instruction is now available on the university's Safe and Healthy website. A formal decision about the assurance process for Autumn courses has not yet been made, but the committee has recommended that the process be limited to courses that are at least 75% online (exempting hybrid courses) and that it be overseen by the several colleges.

In addition, the national protests focused on police violence and racism have created new opportunities and challenges for the classroom this fall. We expect that many students and faculty will be anxious to engage issues of institutional racism in a wide variety of physical and virtual classrooms, including many in departments and disciplines that are not accustomed to having such conversations. The Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and other university offices are assembling and developing new resources for teaching and learning focused on race and justice. The committee recommends that ASC also create a webpage to support its instructors and students, linking to these university sites but also sharing local resources across departmental and divisional boundaries. We also encourage instructors to include a statement on diversity on their syllabi, using either the university's recommended language or new language that might be developed by the college.

The following report is meant to provide support and guidance to instructors in ASC, and to stimulate conversations in academic units, rather than to be prescriptive. In some areas, its recommendations are necessarily provisional. Additional information can be found in the report of the university's Academic Transition Advisory subgroup.

Sections:

1. Resources for distance education
2. Modes of delivery
3. Planning for contingencies
4. Syllabus statements
5. Other concerns

1. Resources for distance education

We strongly encourage all faculty, chairs, and directors to make use of existing university and college resources on distance education, ranging from the Office of Distance Education and eLearning (ODEE) to the Drake Institute to ASC Technology Services (ASCTech). The Keep Teaching website continues to be the best centralized site for ideas and suggestions on effective hybrid and online teaching in the COVID-19 context.

The committee is also working with ASC Communications to expand the ASC COVID-19 intranet site to include resources collected from academic units in our college. These include manuals

for online teaching developed by specific units, videos on hybrid and distance learning, Carmen course shells, and hybrid and distance learning syllabi (some examples are included in the appendix). This is a site that should continue to grow and evolve: we invite units to contribute materials and encourage instructors to check back periodically for additional resources.

2. Modes of Delivery

Contexts

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only necessitated a dramatic shift in modes of delivery but has also raised particular challenges for the undergraduate and graduate student experience in and outside the classroom: disrupting the normal rhythms of university life, creating new sources of anxiety, and intensifying social isolation. Dynamics that were problematic in the Spring and Summer may be intensified in the Autumn, particularly for first-year students who may, because of their last semester of high school, not feel fully prepared for the fall, and have not yet been able to become parts of communities on campus.

In May 2020, the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS), the University Institute for Teaching and Learning, the Center for the Study of Student Life, and the Office of International Affairs jointly conducted a survey of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates about the experience of online teaching and learning during the last six weeks of Spring semester. (SEIs and narrative evaluations collected by departments may also be valuable sources of information for assessing what was and was not effective during the Spring and Summer terms.)

Students' overall perception of online learning in the Spring was fairly negative, but respondents were generally understanding given the unplanned and sudden interruption to in-person instruction. Under these emergency conditions, with faculty adopting a variety of strategies for teaching remotely, students who completed the university's survey had a modestly more positive experience in "live" or synchronous classes than in asynchronous classes. This difference was particularly pronounced among students who had challenges of internet and technology access, as well as among under-represented minority students.

The committee's interpretation of these results is that synchronous instruction may have helped some students to continue to feel connected to their classes, providing them a well-defined time and scope for their learning. As we explain below, the committee feels both asynchronous and synchronous modes of delivery can be effective at meeting pedagogical goals and at building a sense of connection or shared community. Each mode may, however, require different levels of investment of time and energy to be done well.

Instructors should consider intentional course design using strategies that *initiate and promote substantive and meaningful interaction with the course instructor and peers*, not just the TA or grader. Such regular, meaningful interaction may be achieved through distance or hybrid or in person, while each instructional mode may require implementation of different strategies.

A. *General recommendations*

1) Transparency & managing student expectations

The committee recommends that departments and individual instructors communicate with students during the summer about the planned formats of their courses. As changes are made to SIS, students may notice the mode of delivery of a class section change from P to DL, for example, without understanding whether instruction will be asynchronous, delivered "live" via Zoom, or a mix. (It may be helpful to students for departments to remove meeting times from SIS for fully asynchronous DL courses while leaving them for all others.) Other students will have questions about hybrid modes of delivery. Some departments are choosing to include details about hybrid courses in the "Class Notes" section of the SIS record.

In addition, course syllabi should include clear discussions of modes of delivery, expectations for remote participation, plans for various kinds of disruption, and other issues raised by non-traditional forms of instruction and the COVID pandemic (see below for further discussion of syllabi).

2) Carmen infrastructure

The committee strongly recommends that *all* courses have a robust Carmen shell that follows the model of [Carmen Common Sense](#) with as many class materials as possible (assignments, readings, PowerPoint slides, exams, grading rubrics) available to students from the beginning of the semester. This not only will enable students to have remote access to core components of classes but will also facilitate continuity of instruction in the event an instructor becomes ill or is required to quarantine.

Materials that are not intended for distribution to students but that might be helpful to a backup instructor (for example, private lecture notes) can be stored in a Box folder shared with the designated backup or else placed in Carmen as a module that can be seen by instructors only.

3) Continuity of instruction

Units have been asked to identify backup instructors for every course it will offer in the fall. The committee suggests instructors review teaching plans and resources with their backup instructors prior to the beginning of classes to facilitate a smooth transfer of responsibilities.

The committee recognizes that for advanced and specialized courses it may be difficult to identify a suitable replacement instructor, especially for a prolonged absence. In some cases, the most suitable temporary replacement for a course might be a graduate student who works closely with the instructor or serves as a GTA. In units where associated faculty make up a large

percentage of the instructional staff, the most suitable replacement might be a lecturer or senior lecturer. Since both graduate students and associated faculty are typically paid by the course, the committee recommends that the university set aside funds to compensate this additional work.

4) Accessibility

[Carmen terms of use](#) state that "Carmen course content must be accessible to all users. This means that course materials should be accessible by screen reading technology and all multimedia (audio/video) files should have a text alternative. Instructors should also take into account how their materials will display on the smaller screens of mobile devices."

CarmenZoom provides for [automatic transcription](#) of recordings of lectures and discussions saved to the cloud; transcripts can then be edited by the instructor. Word, PowerPoint, and other software can check documents for accessibility.

For further information and training modules, instructors should consult the [Digital Minimum Accessibility Standards](#) and other resources provided by [Digital Accessibility Services](#). Additional questions may be directed to ASC Digital Accessibility Coordinators Christopher Wallace (.638) and Eva Dale (.36)

5) Accommodations

It is the committee's understanding at the time of this report that in-person classes (as well as the in-person components of hybrid classes) are expected to make *reasonable accommodations* for students who are unable to be safely present in the classroom *and* have been approved for an accommodation by the office of Student Life Disability Services (SLDS). For a lecture course, such an accommodation might mean streaming lectures on Zoom or making recordings available to the students. For classes that involve laboratory work, studio work, or a mix of lecture and discussion, a reasonable accommodation will not always be possible.

Students are expected to work with their advisors and, where appropriate, SLDS to find workable solutions to their scheduling needs.

6) Academic misconduct

Some departments reported significant problems with academic misconduct during the last weeks of Spring semester, and especially during finals.

The Proctorio software upon which OSU has relied to monitor student behavior during remote testing is not compatible with the iPads that many of our students now use. It is not clear that alternative software solutions will be widely available by the fall.

Various departments and instructors in ASC have developed alternatives to timed, closed-book, high-stakes assessments. The committee encourages units to share solutions to midterm and end-of-term assessments on the ASC intranet page. Additional information on assessment is available at the ODEE Resource Center and the keepteaching website.

B. *Distance learning and distance enhanced (DL and DH) classes*

Distance learning (100% online) and distance enhanced (75-99% online) versions of existing ASC courses should have two primary goals: to ensure that the expected learning outcomes of the original course are effectively met, and to provide for regular and meaningful interactions between the instructor and students, as well as among students. There is more than one way to achieve these goals.

Fully asynchronous distance learning classes (no scheduled or live sessions) are considered by some to be the gold standard for distance education. These courses typically limit lectures to short, pre-recorded videos (under 15 minutes) and combine a variety of kinds of individual and collaborative activities to ensure sustained engagement of instructors and students. When done well, fully asynchronous courses can require months of planning and refinement. By contrast, the asynchronous delivery of PowerPoint slides with a recorded voice over is a poor substitute for an in-person lecture and does not take full advantage of the opportunities for interactive learning made possible by online tools.

It is also important to note that, especially in the COVID-19 environment, asynchronous courses may not be the best solution for every student. As mentioned above, some students like the structure and the sense of "going to class" provided by synchronous delivery, even when they may face technical or economic challenges accessing live classes.

The committee therefore recommends that only courses that have been carefully developed, planned, and reviewed be offered in a fully asynchronous format.   Online resources, workshops, and training classes to develop such courses are available through ODEE, and the manuals and guidelines developed by ASC departments may also prove valuable resources for engaging in this work.

Other classes may be taught effectively with synchronous (live) components offered through Zoom.   Here, too, instructors should consider limiting the length of lectures. Studies of distance education and reports of our own students suggest, for example, that 80-minute lectures delivered on Zoom should be avoided, and that it is more effective to break up lectures with synchronous interactive activities or to replace parts of them with asynchronous online work. Instructors should keep in mind, however, that the *total amount of instructional time should be equal to that of the original course.*

Below are some examples of synchronous and asynchronous alternatives:

Synchronous (real-time, scheduled)   Asynchronous (self-paced, unscheduled)

Zoom demos	recorded video demos
discussion	discussion-board posts
oral critique	written critique
in-progress check-ins	in-progress posts
breakout-room group projects	peer group projects
work session with real time feedback	at-home, self-paced studio work
presentations by guest speakers, webinars	recorded presentations
real time zoom project sharing	presentations and projects on u.osu.edu

For any DH or DL course that is offered in a synchronous format, it will also be important to provide access to students who may not always be able to participate in the course "live" because of unreliable internet access, because of their location in other time zones, or because of illness. The easiest way to do this is to record online lectures or discussions using CarmenZoom. Saving recordings to the cloud (an option on CarmenZoom) will enable them to be automatically transcribed. Information on recording Zoom sessions can be found on the ODEE resource pages and the Zoom support website. ODEE also provides an instructional video.

C. *Hybrid courses*

The university defines as "hybrid" any course with between 25% and 74% of instruction occurring online. Hybrid courses can take a variety of forms and make use of classrooms in different ways. For example, the entire class can meet together for the in-person component of a hybrid course, working remotely on other days, or the course can be divided into cohorts that meet on alternate days in person, with the rest of the class following on Zoom.

Many instructors who have taught in hybrid formats favor the "flipped classroom" model, in which much or most didactic content is available online as readings or recorded lectures, while in-person class time is focused on discussion, questions and answers, and group activities. In the context of COVID-19, it may make sense to use Zoom for activities that do not lend themselves well to a socially distanced, mask-wearing classroom (for example, having students work on some tasks together in small groups).

As in the case of DH and DL courses, providing recordings of any synchronous online components of courses will be important for ensuring uninterrupted student access. Instructors may also wish to record in-person components of hybrid classes for students who may be sick or quarantined. This might be done using an instructor's device or cameras available in classrooms (the wider provision of classroom technology for this purpose is still under discussion).

Please remember that every hybrid course will need to be taught entirely online following Thanksgiving break, as students will not be returning to campus.

D. *In-person (P) instruction*

The university defines as "in-person" any course with less than 25% of instruction occurring online. Although this form of teaching is familiar to all ASC instructors, it will present its own challenges in the coming year as students are masked and safely distanced from one another in the classroom.

While many students will be anxious to resume face-to-face learning, and the university is implementing policies to make these interactions safer, some students are indicating their reluctance to return to the classroom.

Each department in ASC has developed a teaching plan that offers a variety of in-person, hybrid, and online options for students. With the exception of *reasonable accommodations requested through SLDS* (see above), instructors of in-person classes are under no obligation to provide access to their courses for students who are unable or unwilling to be physically present.

Departments and instructors may, however, proactively decide to provide live Zoom access or recordings for some in-person courses, including those likely to be required by significant numbers of students. (This may also help to address the needs of students who fall ill or are quarantined during the semester.)

In some cases, a student may be required to take a course—either to complete a degree requirement or to graduate on time—that is only offered in an in-person format. If the student is unable to be physically present for that required course, no online alternative is available, and no reasonable accommodation can be made, departments should consider in advance flexible solutions (including adjusting prerequisites or major requirements) that minimize the harm to students.

Please remember that every in-person course will need to be taught remotely following Thanksgiving break, as students will not be returning to campus.

E. *Specialized classrooms*

Some specialized spaces and equipment linked to departments and disciplines—studios in the arts, laboratories in the sciences, and collections of artifacts, specimens, or texts in others—may present particular challenges for teaching in the fall. Although some of these spaces may, with the use of personal protection equipment (PPEs) and proper ventilation, be able to accommodate students at a higher density than others, many will require hybrid solutions that break students into smaller cohorts. Even in these cases, alternatives may need to be found for activities, such as group lab work at close quarters or vocal projection in choirs or theatre rehearsals, that could put classmates at increased risk.

Some departments will also face particular challenges cleaning equipment, floors, and other surface between classes, especially since the university did not extend the class transition period.

The committee has learned that departments in the arts have already begun to share creative solutions to uses of studio spaces and theatres, while departments in the social and natural sciences have shared practices for in-person and remote laboratory work. In each case, the conversations have been centered on the best ways to meet the learning goals of particular classes in newly constricted spaces.

3. <u>Planning for contingencies</u>

Course syllabi should be as explicit as possible about plans for responding to various kinds of potential disruptions to instruction. This would have two principal benefits: students would be reassured that their classes would continue and the expected learning outcomes would be met, and instructors would be prepared in advance to be flexible and responsive.

As mentioned above, the committee recognizes that workable solutions to some of the challenges instructors are likely to face in the fall will depend on the kinds of technology available in classrooms to share or record lectures, labs, discussions, and other activities.

Contingencies to be addressed:

- Student is unable to attend class because of positive diagnosis, symptoms, or quarantine required following contact tracing
- Entire class is required to quarantine following contact tracing
- In-person classes are suspended at the university
- Instructor is unable to be present in person because of positive diagnosis, symptoms, or quarantine following contact tracing

Prolonged student absences could be managed in a variety of ways, depending on the format of the course:

- Absent students synchronously access lectures, discussions, or other classroom experiences via Zoom
- Absent students asynchronously view recordings of lectures, discussions, or other classrooms experiences
- Absent students complete alternative free-standing modules for classes that are not "scaffolded" (each section building on the ones that come before)

Moving a class entirely online for a prolonged period might require:

- Changes to course delivery

- Changes to assignments
- Changes to grading percentages
- Changes to assessment

Contingency planning for instructor illness might include the following:

- Alternate instructor for course is identified in advance
- Essential materials for course (readings, assignments, grading information) are available on Carmen from beginning of semester
- Correspondence with students is managed through Carmen so that it is accessible to a new instructor

4. Syllabus statements

A. *Safety statement (hybrid and in-person classes)*

Guidelines and requirements for campus safety from the University's COVID-19 Transition Task Force were published on July 1 on the [Safe and Healthy website.](#) They include the following:

- "A daily health check to report body temperature and health status will be required for all faculty, staff and students each day they intend to be on Ohio State's campuses in the autumn."
- Face masks must be worn in indoor settings, including classrooms.
- Members of the campus community will be required to sign a pledge "to affirm their understanding of what is needed to help fight the spread of the virus and their intention to do their part."
- "Accountability measures will be in place for those who refuse to abide by required health and safety guidelines."

More detailed information on safety pledges and accountability measures will likely be available at the same website.

The committee recommends that *every ASC syllabus contain a safety statement that includes*:

- A reminder to students to complete daily health checks and to self-isolate if running a fever or in other ways symptomatic
- University expectations regarding masks and social distancing (including seat assignments, if applicable) in classrooms
- University-sanctioned procedures for managing non-compliance (when available)

B. *Attendance policy*

Students may need to miss class, sometimes for periods of two weeks or more, for a variety of reasons related to COVID-19:

- Because they have COVID-19 symptoms
- Because they have tested positive for COVID-19
- Because they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive or is symptomatic
- Because they need to care for someone who is symptomatic

In some cases, students may be advised not to consult a physician and may therefore be unable to provide a written excuse for their absence.

As we are all aware, symptoms of COVID-19 can vary dramatically in severity, including for students in their late teens and early twenties. Some students may have few or no symptoms and may be able to keep up with coursework remotely without any difficulty. Others may be unable to complete basic tasks associated with coursework and may therefore require different kinds of accommodation.

Taking attendance is important for in-person, hybrid, and online courses; for example, regular attendance may be tied to student eligibility for financial aid or participation on athletic teams. At the same time, attendance policies are sources of considerable student anxiety, even in normal times, and particularly when attendance counts toward a significant percentage of final grades.

The committee recommends that, for the duration of the pandemic, instructors consider decoupling attendance from the evaluation of participation and *not assign separate grades for attendance.* Some units may wish to have uniform attendance policies for all of their courses.

C. *Mental health statement*

The [mental health syllabus statement](#) developed by the university is currently optional for ASC courses. Many expect the mental health challenges to be greater in the fall than in previous semesters, particularly because online learning and social distancing can increase loneliness and exacerbate mood disorders. The committee recommends that, for the duration of the pandemic, *every ASC syllabus include the mental health statement*.

Additional resources for supporting the mental health needs of students are available from the [Counseling and Consultation Service](#).

D. *Statement on academic misconduct*

The [standard language on academic misconduct](#) that is required for OSU syllabi may not be adequate to address the specific challenges of the current situation. The committee suggests that syllabi be more explicit than usual about what is and is not permissible (forms of

collaboration, access to notes and other class materials during exams, etc.) in an online or hybrid environment.

E. *Diversity Statement*

As we mentioned above, the committee encourages instructors to include a statement on diversity on their syllabi, using either the [university's recommended language](#) or new language that might be developed by departments or the college and that more explicitly addresses the opportunities and challenges of the current national focus on race, justice, and institutional violence.

F. *Additional links*

ODEE recommends including the following information on syllabi or Carmen sites:

- The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center's [Cornavirus Outbreak site](#) includes the latest information about COVID-19 as well as guidance for students, faculty and staff.
- The [Keep Learning site](#) includes tips and resources to help students make the shift to online learning, addressing strategies for success as well as technology tools.
- The [Office of Student Life's "We Are Here For You" page](#) includes several resources to support students' mental, physical and financial health.

5. Other Concerns

In the last two weeks, instructors in some departments have raised concerns with members of the committee about privacy and property issues associated with the shift to more online offerings. They have asked about:

- Ownership of recordings of Zoom lectures and seminars
- Privacy rights of students who may be recorded in Zoom lectures, discussions, and labs
- Expectations of students with regard to sharing videos, transcripts, and other class materials outside the "classroom," for example on social media

The committee did not have sufficient time to explore fully the implications of these important questions, and lacks the expertise to provide answers on its own. However, we have been informed that Carmen terms of use cover some of the questions raised about permissible and impermissible uses of materials available on that site, and that the Keep Teaching website will be revised to include additional information about student responsibilities and privacy.

Section IV.C of the university's [Intellectual Property Policy](#) includes information on faculty and university rights with regard to "instructional works" they create.

Appendix: Resources for ASC COVID-19 Intranet Page

<u>ASCTech Resources</u>

- [ASC COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [College of Arts and Sciences, "Handbook for Online Teaching" (2019)](#)

<u>Department resources</u>

The following resources were shared with the committee during its work. The committee recommends that a portion of the ASC intranet site be devoted to making an expended selection of manuals, course shells, videos, and syllabi available on an ongoing basis.

Distance education teaching manuals

- Department of Comparative Studies (Caroline Toy and Elizabeth Vu), "A Guide to Developing and Teaching your Online Course" (PDF, 2020)
- School of Earth Sciences, "Goals for Online Courses" (PDF, 2020)

Training programs and videos

- "Goldberg Center Online Course Training–Ohio State University History Dept" (Canvas Commons)
- ["Goldberg Ctr Hybrid Course Training"](#) (Canvas Commons)
- [School of Communication: Online Training Resources](#) (includes training videos)

Sample syllabi

- Communication 3332, 3415, 3558, and 4555
- Comparative Studies 1100
- History 2125, 2700, 2704, 3301, 3306, and 3403