



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Office of the President

PLANS FOR FALL 2021

Dear Texas Tech community,

As we reflect on the past year, one of the primary means by which we have ensured the health and safety of our faculty, staff, and students during the pandemic has been adjustments in classroom capacity to provide for appropriate social distancing. Our Fall 2020 capacity averaged about 50%, whereas in the current semester, we made every effort to ensure the CDC-recommended distancing of six feet, which resulted in classroom capacities of 25 to 33% of normal. In planning for Fall 2021, we began by scheduling with 50% capacity as our target. With registration for the Fall 2021 term approaching and the outlook for improving conditions with COVID-19, we need to reconsider the operating capacity in our teaching facilities.

The roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines is progressing at a rapid pace, and the federal government has announced that everyone in the U.S. should have access to the vaccine by the end of May 2021. Thus, based on an expectation that by next August the percentage of the U.S. population that has acquired immunity to COVID-19 through vaccination will result in an environment with minimal risk of disease spread, we believe it is safe for departments to plan for normal capacity in classrooms and teaching laboratories. Texas Tech has always had a robust schedule of online classes, which will continue to be the case next fall, but we expect that classes that were taught in a face-to-face modality before the pandemic will return to that modality for the Fall 2021 term. Accordingly, the Registrar's Office will work with academic unit schedulers to allow for normal classroom capacity for the Fall 2021 semester. Advisors and students should be able to plan for advance registration as usual. That said, we are committed to working through ADA procedures with students, faculty, and staff who require accommodations for documented health reasons. Moreover, we will follow the advice of the CDC and local public health experts with respect to the use of masks in our classrooms and hygienic practices. If circumstances change, and we need to decrease classroom capacity because of a resurgence of the virus, we will pivot to hybrid and online modalities as appropriate for individual classes.

As for Summer 2021, we have encouraged more online course options than had been normal for summers pre-pandemic but still want to provide ample in-person courses to students who choose to spend the summer in Lubbock. This summer's in-person course sections should plan for capacities of 50%.

Please note that both the change to normal classroom capacities next Fall and to 50% capacity this summer were discussed in a meeting of Academic Council on Tuesday, March 16. The meeting included department chairs, school directors, and area coordinators, and members of the Student Senate. Both changes were highly supported by the Council and presented as a Council recommendation to us.

The Texas Tech community has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in remarkable ways. We have helped each other and our local community work through these challenging times, while continuing to provide high-quality educational experiences for our students. As we look forward to greater normalcy in our lives in the months ahead, we are thankful for every member of the TTU family and the good work you have done over the past year.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Schovanec
President
Texas Tech University

Michael Galyean
Provost



FROM HERE, IT'S POSSIBLE