

IUB-AAUP Statement of Principles Regarding the Fall 2020 Bloomington Restart

The Indiana University Bloomington chapter of the American Association of University Professors ([AAUP](#)) acknowledges the dedicated efforts across the IU community to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, and affirms the following principles as basic guidelines for reopening and, if necessary, safely and rapidly reclosing the Bloomington campus for the 2020-2021 academic year. In a [recent article](#) in *The Atlantic*, Michael J. Sorrell, President of Paul Quinn College in Dallas, has suggested a wise watchword, that any “rush to reopen is going to set us back in our fight against COVID-19 even more. The sacrifices that we must make to restore order and safety will make us a stronger, more resilient society.”

1) Faculty, staff, and graduate employees must be full partners in reaching community agreement around safe reopening plans. The health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic means that instructors and other campus employees face numerous challenges to their ability to deliver instruction or services in the same way they would under normal circumstances. To ensure that plans to resume residential activities on the Bloomington campus address these challenges in a fair, equitable, and clear manner, faculty, staff, and graduate employees must be full partners in their development.

2) Individual instructors should have the freedom to opt-in to face-to-face teaching, rather than being required to opt-out on a case-by-case basis.

In its [2013 Statement on the Freedom to Teach](#), the AAUP notes:

The freedom to teach includes the right of the faculty to select the materials, determine the approach to the subject, make the assignments, and assess student academic performance in teaching activities for which faculty members are individually responsible, without having their decisions subject to the veto of a department chair, dean, or other administrative officer.

It has furthermore been longstanding IUB policy ([BL-ACA-H28](#)) that:

Faculty members teaching courses have the responsibility to provide instruction as scheduled. Variations from the schedule may occur for a variety of reasons, including illness, professional activities, and pedagogical considerations. When such variations occur, it is the responsibility of the faculty member both to provide equivalent activity for the students in the course and to notify the chairperson of the department offering the course of the change in schedule.

Given the strains the COVID-19 pandemic puts on the health of faculty, students, and their families, as well as on pedagogical and logistical relationships in the classroom, exceptions to the way classes are normally conducted must be expected. It is widely understood ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) that spending extended time with multiple people in an enclosed space—as required by face-to-face teaching ([here](#))—is the primary occasion for viral transmission. Under these circumstances, we uphold the principle that instructors have the right to decide the most appropriate method of course delivery in their own case, provided they meet professional standards and offer reasonably equivalent instruction.

3) Decisions on testing and other public health tools require inclusive public education of the whole community. In particular, there must be clearly publicized justification for the plan to test only symptomatic individuals, and an explanation for not pursuing randomized or comprehensive testing of everyone living or working on the Bloomington campus. Moreover, it must be made clear how University-sanctioned specialists will determine whether someone is symptomatic or otherwise.

4) Criteria for an emergency shutting down of face-to-face teaching and on-campus activities should be clearly articulated and publicized before the campus reopens for in-person activity. Whenever IU employees agree to an extraordinary arrangement for resuming campus activities in the pandemic, they are presuming that the arrangement is in effect for only as long as it continues to be reasonably safe. To make informed decisions on such arrangements, employees need to know the viral transmission rates and other circumstances under which the re-start arrangements will be suspended and the campus re-closed for in-person activity.

5) The ownership rights for intellectual property of online instructional material must be released to individual faculty members. Effective March 12, 2020, the University suspended section 1.B.iii. of IP Policy [UA-05](#) relinquishing “rights in any and all forms of online instructional materials, including but not limited to class recordings in Kaltura and Zoom, created or used by IU faculty as a result of the temporary suspension of face-to-face classroom teaching due to COVID-19.” This suspension needs to be explicitly extended throughout the coming academic year to be revisited within the shared governance structure at the end of the pandemic period.

6) Any fiscal repercussion of the health crisis needs to be met with a “cut from the top” policy. Benefit cuts or furloughs must begin with employees at the very top of the payroll and should not extend to those employees least able to afford them. Reductions in force must be avoided at all costs.

Approved by the IU-AAUP Executive Committee, June 1, 2020