Questions

Teaching, Research Questions

Will the campus-wide educational Zoom licenses be renewed for the Spring? This is of interest to graduate staff as well as faculty and others.

Can instructors and TAs have the flexibility to switch their recitations to an online medium when in-person class participation falls to a level fewer than 5 students?

Currently, research credits are considered to be exclusively for residential-experience students. This prevents many graduate students at Purdue from opting for the online experience while still performing their vital research duties. Yet, many graduate students are still able to perform their research duties remotely. In fact, graduate students have been encouraged to work from home where possible. So, why does Purdue require that these credits be residential?

Currently, it is prohibitively difficult for students who did not opt out of the residential experience for Fall 2021 to choose an online-only option for Spring 2021. The University requires students to demonstrate "significant" changes in personal circumstances or life situations such as medical concerns, their family health or financial situation, or international travel/visa restrictions, but students have many justifiable and sometimes unpredictable reasons for requesting changes.

Testing Protocols and Potential Changes for Spring

What are the criteria for random surveillance selection under the Protect Purdue Plan? How has the selection process been carried out? For example, are undergraduate students prioritized?

Given the rise in cases locally and nationally, what action is Purdue taking (beyond the mask reminder we received last week) to immediately contain the spread of the virus? The current healthcare system is stressed, particularly with the number of available frontline personnel. These two weeks until Thanksgiving are critical, and there are significant consequences to Boilermaker families if students go home with positivity rates so high.

If the base infection rate nationally rises to around 200k new cases per day as projected, it is likely that our testing screens in January will not be as effective in containing outbreaks as it was in our August effort. Given this reality, what additional measures will Purdue take?

The Purdue daycare centers (Patti Jischke Center, and the Purdue University Center in Hort Park) have recently had to shut down due to COVID. During this time, it has become apparent that third-party workers, even essential workers like daycare providers, are not included in Purdue’s surveillance testing, even if they are spending more than 20 hrs a week on campus, or are directly supporting students, staff or faculty. They don’t have access to on-campus testing, aren’t included in Purdue’s dashboard numbers, and don’t have access to Purdue’s contact tracing. Given the number of additional third-party vendors involved in supporting extra cleaning efforts, or dining hall efforts, etc. on campus, this seems a significant vulnerability. How is Purdue going to fix this vulnerability?

Burn Out and Related Questions

One question that has been asked in different forms boils down to: many of us are very burned out, with investing extra hours in work, and few breaks for vacation or time with family because of the pandemic. They asked two things:
- It's a bit difficult to watch President Daniels and other heads of departments recently accept some of the largest salaries that they have earned at Purdue (through performance, merit increases, or promotions), but then turn around and say, "We cannot do merit increases for all employees." Presumably the merit increases won't be around next summer either. Will the university plan to make up for this in the future? .......................................................... 5

- We've given the students reading days, but can similar things be done for faculty and staff? Why not voluntarily declare more university holidays at random times during the year to help faculty/staff to take time off? 5

### Caregiving Needs and Working from Home

In addition to the childcare centers closing for 2 weeks, Tippecanoe School District has now shut down for 2 weeks, with others likely to follow if not soon, after Thanksgiving break (which, past holiday patterns suggest, will result in a bump in cases). Students, staff, and faculty caring for children are having to again work from home while caring for their kids. Purdue has not followed the lead of other Big 10 campuses in initiating a childcare taskforce or similar, or University of California campuses who have dedicated considerable investment and policy proposals regarding supporting caregivers. It feels as though because this is feminized work, that Purdue is letting caregiving remain a private burden, even though many of us are at the breaking point. What tangible changes will Purdue make—in addition to opt-in tenure-clock extensions, and allowing workers to continue to work from home—to support workers working while caring for children at home? .......................................................... 6

### Teaching, Research Questions

Will the campus-wide educational Zoom licenses be renewed for the Spring? This is of interest to graduate staff as well as faculty and others.

**From Karl Browning, Chief Information Officer:**
Paid Zoom licenses are for 1 year from initiation. All active licenses will continue through the Spring semester until the anniversary date. Zoom treats graduate staff as students; therefore, grad students can sign up as students without incurring additional license fees. These licenses have the same privileges as other Zoom licenses. In order to facilitate easier access to Zoom, we are working on a more seamless method of sign-up, which we expect to announce prior to the start of the semester.

Can instructors and TAs have the flexibility to switch their recitations to an online medium when in-person class participation falls to a level fewer than 5 students?

**From Jay Akridge, Provost:**
We should continue to offer in-person instruction through the last day of on-campus courses. Attendance can be substantially impacted by students in quarantine, which will ebb and flow through the semester. Some students truly need in-person recitation to learn the material, and we should not take that away from them, even if the number of attendees is limited during a class period. In the Spring, a number of important changes will be made, and interventions put in place to encourage students to participate in in-person courses. These include: reducing the number of “split sections,” better scheduling of in-person and on-line courses, more student study space options on campus, an improved absence notification process, and better guidance on attendance and grading (developed in concert with the Educational Policy Committee), among others.
Currently, research credits are considered to be exclusively for residential-experience students. This prevents many graduate students at Purdue from opting for the online experience while still performing their vital research duties. Yet, many graduate students are still able to perform their research duties remotely. In fact, graduate students have been encouraged to work from home where possible. So, why does Purdue require that these credits be residential?

From Linda Mason, Dean of the Graduate School:
We are not authorized for an online graduate degree, and so that creates some issues, but those in the online cohort can take up to 3 credits each semester (this fall and spring) if needed during their first years. However, we have many other options for graduate students who need to work off campus. We have Form GS 19 for off-campus research so that they can register for as many research credits that they need and still be off campus. If employed, students can fill out a request for Change of Duty Station and stay in the residential cohort and still be off campus – although there are restrictions on international students and employment. Ph.D. students can do research in absentia after their prelims and courses are complete, and can take a full load of research credits and save on tuition, although they cannot be employed by Purdue for this registration. So, ultimately, we have several options for graduate students to be away from campus, and do research, without an online cohort. We have always had these options.

Currently, it is prohibitively difficult for students who did not opt out of the residential experience for Fall 2021 to choose an online-only option for Spring 2021. The University requires students to demonstrate "significant" changes in personal circumstances or life situations such as medical concerns, their family health or financial situation, or international travel/visa restrictions, but students have many justifiable and sometimes unpredictable reasons for requesting changes.

From Jay Akridge, Provost:
We have an appeal process that is open to any student who wants to move to the Online Option, and so far, we have approved approximately half of those students who need to move online for a wide variety of reasons (physical health, mental health, change in family financial situation, etc.). One of the important reasons for this appeal process is that we must know if a student is in the Online Option for our COVID-19 tracking and tracing purposes. We expect such students to be out of the Greater Lafayette area if they are in the Online Option. (There are exceptions for students who live in the area and have compelling reasons to be in the Online Option). If an Online Option student is living in a residence hall, congregate housing, or off campus apartment, we have no way to track and trace that student and no way to limit their access to the campus. The Online Option was designed for students who cannot or will not come to the physical campus, and it is part of our campus de-densification effort. Students in the Greater Lafayette area can choose to build an online schedule if they want to stay in the area and be online. Finally, the Online Option was created to assist/triage students who cannot not be on campus but want to continue to make academic progress – and the course catalog is limited as a result. There are programs in the university/specific courses that simply can’t be duplicated online, and a decision to take the Online Option might set a student back significantly. The accommodation process also ensures that students fully understand their choice and its ramifications.
Testing Protocols and Potential Changes for Spring

What are the criteria for random surveillance selection under the Protect Purdue Plan? How has the selection process been carried out? For example, are undergraduate students prioritized?

From Erik Barker, Dean of the College of Pharmacy:
Surveillance for the fall semester was a weekly sample of:
10% students living in university residences
10% students living in off-campus residences
20% students living in congregate housing
10% of employees designated as working on campus 100% of the time.

All employees classified as core to essential university services (PUFD, PUPD, power plant, etc.) are tested weekly. The sample is generated through a random process managed through IDA+A.

Given the rise in cases locally and nationally, what action is Purdue taking (beyond the mask reminder we received last week) to immediately contain the spread of the virus? The current healthcare system is stressed, particularly with the number of available frontline personnel. These two weeks until Thanksgiving are critical, and there are significant consequences to Boilermaker families if students go home with positivity rates so high.

From Erik Barker, Dean of the College of Pharmacy:
The increase in cases over the past two weeks has been largely attributed to spread in the greater Lafayette community – not on-campus spread. We are working with the county and local health systems on joint messaging as well as to get alignment about measures that will limit spread in the community. Increased testing capacity pre-Thanksgiving will provide opportunities for students and employees to test. Our on-campus positivity rate continues to trend lower than most local communities.

If the base infection rate nationally rises to around 200k new cases per day as projected, it is likely that our testing screens in January will not be as effective in containing outbreaks as it was in our August effort. Given this reality, what additional measures will Purdue take?

From Erik Barker, Dean of the College of Pharmacy:
We are planning additional testing measures at the beginning of the semester and adding resources that might be necessary if the case load matches predictions. There will be a number of contingency plans to allow Purdue to respond appropriately. We will closely monitor the community prevalence and positivity rates, and continue to work with local public health and health systems to make science-driven decisions on how to manage the situation.
The Purdue daycare centers (Patti Jischke Center, and the Purdue University Center in Hort Park) have recently had to shut down due to COVID. During this time, it has become apparent that third-party workers, even essential workers like daycare providers, are not included in Purdue’s surveillance testing, even if they are spending more than 20 hrs a week on campus, or are directly supporting students, staff or faculty. They don’t have access to on-campus testing, aren’t included in Purdue’s dashboard numbers, and don’t have access to Purdue’s contact tracing. Given the number of additional third-party vendors involved in supporting extra cleaning efforts, or dining hall efforts, etc. on campus, this seems a significant vulnerability. How is Purdue going to fix this vulnerability?

From Erik Barker, Dean of the College of Pharmacy:
Kindercare employees have been offered access to our testing – and they have accepted this plan. Procurement and Contracting has worked with all vendors to ensure that they follow all elements of the Protect Purdue pledge while their employees work on campus. As private employers, many have elected to utilize other resources for testing and tracing.

Burn Out and Related Questions

One question that has been asked in different forms boils down to: many of us are very burned out, with investing extra hours in work, and few breaks for vacation or time with family because of the pandemic. They asked two things:

- It’s a bit difficult to watch President Daniels and other heads of departments recently accept some of the largest salaries that they have earned at Purdue (through performance, merit increases, or promotions), but then turn around and say, “We cannot do merit increases for all employees.” Presumably the merit increases won’t be around next summer either. Will the university plan to make up for this in the future?

- We’ve given the students reading days, but can similar things be done for faculty and staff? Why not voluntarily declare more university holidays at random times during the year to help faculty/staff to take time off?

From Bill Bell, Vice President of Human Resources:
Purdue will continue to do all it can to compensate its employees well. In prior years, we offered salary pools that were larger than our peers. Unlike many schools during COVID, Purdue has avoided lay-offs, furloughs, and pay cuts, and we have maintained our benefits. The university has every intention to make merit increases available starting next fiscal year, with a total amount to be distributed consistent with pre-pandemic levels.

By any measure, Purdue’s paid time-off benefits are generous. In addition to 14 paid days off (16 in 2020), staff receive 10 to 22 vacation days per year, plus sick leave allowances. By providing the additional two days of winter recess, faculty and staff who were planning to use vacation days for that time will have those days to be utilized in the future. Staff may opt to use this time to coincide with the scheduled “reading days” during the semester – allowing periodic breaks throughout the semester.

With regard to President Daniels, he actually took a $23,000 pay cut in fiscal year 2020. When he became president of Purdue in 2013, he requested that the Board of Trustees place a portion of his salary “at-risk,” meaning he would only receive his full salary if he scored 100% on a set of metrics. In fiscal year 2020, fully half of the president’s pay was “at-risk,” and because of COVID’s impact on his performance metrics, he
received only 89% of his “at-risk” pay. That means that President Daniels earned less at-risk pay than any year since 2015.

Caregiving Needs and Working from Home

In addition to the childcare centers closing for 2 weeks, Tippecanoe School District has now shut down for 2 weeks, with others likely to follow if not soon, after Thanksgiving break (which, past holiday patterns suggest, will result in a bump in cases). Students, staff, and faculty caring for children are having to again work from home while caring for their kids. Purdue has not followed the lead of other Big 10 campuses in initiating a childcare taskforce or similar, or University of California campuses who have dedicated considerable investment and policy proposals regarding supporting caregivers. It feels as though because this is feminized work, that Purdue is letting caregiving remain a private burden, even though many of us are at the breaking point. What tangible changes will Purdue make—in addition to opt-in tenure-clock extensions, and allowing workers to continue to work from home—to support workers working while caring for children at home?

From Bill Bell, Vice President of Human Resources:

Purdue is being flexible around alternative scheduling/work hours and work locations, allowing remote working on a full-time or hybrid basis—or as-needed due to childcare issues. We are also being very flexible around the use of paid time off due to childcare issues. Emergency FMLA is available through the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act. Our Benefits/Family Friendly website can aid parents with finding childcare arrangements and referrals.