Questions

COVID-Related Questions

Especially given indications from a Purdue Exponent survey that many Purdue students do not plan to get the vaccine when they are eligible, will Purdue consider requiring students to get the vaccine as a return to in-person classes?

Can Purdue please confirm whether or not instructors (including teaching assistants) at Purdue are covered for vaccination under the Federal Pharmacy Program? Colleagues are reporting Meijer and Kroger are accepting Purdue IDs as evidence of educator status, but federal documentation suggests that the program is directed towards K-12 educators, childcare workers, and people caring for younger workers along with support staff.

Can the president please present the evidence on which he/the Protect Purdue taskforce is basing the decision to return to 100% occupancy in all but the 5 biggest classrooms on campus? This question is asking not for the claim that there has been 0% classroom transmission, but rather the evidence that supports that claim: for example, whether (and how) someone specific verified that classes listed as face-to-face were indeed meeting face-to-face, what the occupancy density of those rooms were, etc.

Research and Funding Questions

It is my understanding that anyone being hired on funds other than federal funds needs to have hiring approval from a very high level. Does this also include undergraduate researchers being hired for the summer on discretionary faculty-held funds? If so, what is the reason for slow-walking these low-expense and temporary hires?

January Term Questions

Will the January Term term cut faculty's 9-month AY?

Will the January Term increase the number of weeks that one can be supported by grants (fewer weeks in summer and more weeks in January)?

Given the documented exhaustion and burnout of campus employees (see the Senate surveys), why is 2021-2022 the right time to roll out a revised calendar to support the January Term, necessitating instructors to again revise their courses for the shorter calendar, and for staff to invent a whole new infrastructure to support registration in the January Term for January 2022?
COVID-Related Questions

Especially given indications from a Purdue Exponent survey that many Purdue students do not plan to get the vaccine when they are eligible, will Purdue consider requiring students to get the vaccine as a return to in-person classes?

Response from Eric Barker, Dean of the College of Pharmacy and Dr. Esteban Ramirez, Chief Medical Officer

In the administration’s recent survey of Purdue community members, more than 90% of student respondents indicated they plan to get the vaccine when eligible. That percentage is larger than rate of the faculty and staff who plan to be vaccinated.

Purdue will only consider a COVID-19 vaccine requirement for return-to-campus once one or more of the vaccines receives full FDA approval. All of the current vaccines have been approved by the FDA under the Emergency Use Authorization protocol: this means they have met minimum thresholds for safety and efficacy, but have not yet undergone a full FDA review. At the time of full FDA approval, the Medical Advisory Team will need to evaluate the state of the pandemic/endemic to determine whether there is clinical justification for such a requirement.

Purdue will likely consider vaccine requirements for certain higher-risk optional activities, such as international travel and study abroad. Our Medical Advisory Team will be evaluating such requirements for optional activities as we move forward to summer and fall.

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Response from Eric Barker, Dean of the College of Pharmacy and Dr. Esteban Ramirez, Chief Medical Officer

Current state and federal eligibility guidelines include only K-12 educators and related support staff. This does not include those in higher education (i.e., university-level).

Can the president please present the evidence on which he/the Protect Purdue taskforce is basing the decision to return to 100% occupancy in all but the 5 biggest classrooms on campus? This question is asking not for the claim that there has been 0% classroom transmission, but rather the evidence that supports that claim: for example, whether (and how) someone specific verified that classes listed as face-to-face were indeed meeting face-to-face, what the occupancy density of those rooms were, etc.

Response from Eric Barker, Dean of the College of Pharmacy and Dr. Esteban Ramirez, Chief Medical Officer

This is a multi-faceted response:

A. We did a deep dive on instructional laboratory spaces, where there is higher density and higher attendance, in order to examine any links to spread of COVID-19. IDA+A is well equipped with both knowledge and the data to perform this analysis. No evidence was found suggesting increased risk of spread in these higher-risk environments. It follows that lower-risk classrooms would have an even lower risk of spread. Classroom transmission has not been observed in any environment.

B. More recent data suggests that in masked environments, with even 3 feet of separation there is no spread of the virus. Modeling and empiric data of masked individuals demonstrates that spread of aerosols or droplets
is limited to less than 12 inches. The conclusion is that in masked environments, spread is effectively mitigated.

C. Most importantly, we are transitioning to the endemic phase of virus management. This means that the risk of serious illness is considered when evaluating activities. By fall, we anticipate that all those in the most vulnerable category will have had the opportunity to receive vaccination. In addition, our student population will also likely have had the opportunity to receive vaccination. Between natural immunity due to prior disease and vaccine-induced immunity, the risk of serious illness should be reduced to a level on par with other common infectious diseases. We will be transitioning to clinical care that is consistent with other infectious disease treatment and management. Obviously, if the scientific or clinical data present a different landscape, we will need to modify our approaches to increase mitigation efforts.

Research and Funding Questions

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Response from Bill Bell, Vice President of Human Resources

No student hires, nor anything grant-funded, runs through the strategic hiring process.

January Term Questions

Will the January Term term cut faculty’s 9-month AY?

Response from Jay Akridge, Provost

No, the addition of a January Term does not have an impact on the compensation of any AY employee. Currently, AY contracts start 1 week prior to the beginning of instruction in the Fall and Spring semesters. Under the January Term model, the semesters would be reduced from 16 weeks to 15 weeks, and the start date for AY employees would begin two weeks prior to the start of instruction – so AY employees will be paid for the same number of weeks under the January Term model as they are currently.

An updated proposal and answers to frequently asked questions about the January Term can be found here: https://www.purdue.edu/provost/about/provostInitiatives/cwc/

Will the January Term increase the number of weeks that one can be supported by grants (fewer weeks in summer and more weeks in January)?

Response from Jay Akridge, Provost

Under the current proposal, AY faculty could support themselves on grants for a total of 14 weeks under the January Term model: 12 weeks over the summer, and 2 weeks in January before the regular academic year contract period begins.

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Given the documented exhaustion and burnout of campus employees (see the Senate surveys), why is 2021-2022 the right time to roll out a revised calendar to support the January Term, necessitating instructors to again revise their courses for the shorter calendar, and for staff to invent a whole new infrastructure to support registration in the January Term for January 2022?

Response from Jay Akridge, Provost

One important reason to consider a launch of January Term in January of 2022 is that the modifications we have made to our calendar and to courses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic put the University a step closer to the January Term model. In Spring 2021, we delayed the start of the semester by one week. The January Term calendar would delay the start one more week from the Spring 2021 calendar. In Spring of 2021, three instructional days were removed from the calendar to accommodate the three Reading Days. The January Term calendar would require removing two additional instructional days from the Spring 2022 calendar. The alternative would be to go back to our standard calendar in Spring 2022, which will require more substantive changes in the calendar/instruction to launch a January Term in January 2023.

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