

Social Sciences Breakout Session

1:00 - 2:00 PM, June 24

Discussion moderators: Karla Erickson, sociology and gender, women's and sexuality studies, Caleb Elfenbein, religious studies, Director of the Center of Humanities

S&B Reporters: Ingrid Meulemans, Wini Austin and Abraham Teuber

In-person research

- Observation hours for education courses will depend on Grinnell-Newburg school district operations and class schedules

Accessibility of learning materials

- Bookstore and library are working on e-book availability
- Affordability of in-person materials being addressed (used books, etc)

Faculty availability

- Prioritizing privacy and equity – which faculty and staff are necessary for college operations?
- A significant number of professors will teach remotely, not necessarily due to health reasons or lack of desire to be in-person
- Underlying conditions/circumstances, family situations and other factors requiring distance intersect with course availability → it is a long process of figuring this out
- Advisor availability: contact chair of intended major about any questions about advisor restructuring
- Are hoping to create a system where faculty members do not teach more than one, four-credit course at a time

Curriculum planning/course availability

- More detailed curriculum information will be coming out in the next 10 days
- Departments are considering needs of seniors re: fulfilling graduation requirements when rescheduling semester courses to terms
- Students will be informed of what teaching style professors will be favoring (synchronous or asynchronous) before re-registering, most classes will be a combination of both but prioritize one style

- Planning for an extremely “robust” add-drop period
- Add/drop period should continue through the end of the first week of classes
- Registration will first look at major or concentration requirements, and then look at intended trajectory, and then allow for student adjustment
- Currently expecting to be able to maintain 90% of class seats from current registration, just splitting courses into single terms
- Deciding remote vs. in-person learning will follow student need
- Summer classes: next summer will be open to ALL Grinnell students and will likely have more offerings, intended to provide a full liberal arts experience
- Summer will focus on providing students with the opportunity to continue making academic process
- Classes should be available to view/enroll in within the next two weeks (a hopeful estimate)
- First-year tutorials:
 - ◆ Taking online in the fall will ensure you have a cohort and connect you with other first-years early on while taking it in-person in the spring will be a delayed experience
 - ◆ Fall tutorial experience will connect you with resources from the beginning of your experience (career advisor, campus resources)
 - ◆ No matter what, the bond created between first-years through Tutorial will be intense and unusual
- Although study abroad has been canceled for the fall, it will not create a more competitive environment when enrolling for classes. While there may be more people in a course, it will not be a result of a cap being raised.
- Trying to arrange classes so professors aren't teaching any more than one four-credit course a term
- Going to be offering the same number of courses as usual, perhaps more 2-credit courses than in a normal academic year

Classes/Learning structure

- “Academic Units” (departments and concentrations) are considering what courses can be taught in person and what courses have to be taught via distance
- Coming up with on-campus offerings that protect registration while also defending and representing liberal arts values
- Synchronicity will consider student inequities (where students are located, technological availability)
- When planning course time table, professors are going to be cognizant of the times their classes may be held/have requirements

- ◆ “Even distance classes with synchronous opportunities for students will take place in the usual class schedule.”
- More flexible time frames to avoid overlap (8am-7pm classes)
- Limiting/avoiding “high-flex courses”: in-person/virtual combinations, although there might be exceptions for student circumstances

Assessments/Grading

- A flexibility and kindness that hasn't been present in other years due to the uncertainty of the virus and changing life circumstances
- Compressed time period will change expectations about what's achievable and humane: professors “distilling greatest hits” of material
- Professors are considering how to create courses that are as accessible as possible, so this will change the nature of the assignments
- The goal is to create assignments that will be doable in lots of different circumstances and locations
- Dean warns faculty and staff against being “too rigid.”
- Courses offered should represent the full breadth of a liberal arts curriculum
- Potential for more unconventional assessment formats; creative projects, videos, etc. may be an option instead of tests and papers
- S/D/F policy was emergency-specific and will be returning to normal at this point, but further conversations might be brought back to the executive council

Accommodations and academic support

- Access equity in terms of internet access is being prioritized: hotspots, other technology