




PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

MEMORANDUM

To: PVAMU Students, Faculty and Staff

From: James M. Palmer 
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Beverly Copeland 
Vice President for Student Affairs

Date: August 16, 2021

Re: Fall 2021 Semester Opening Follow-up

Fall 2021 semester plans were issued in early summer about returning to campus this academic year. This announcement reaffirms those plans and provides additional information about the Fall 2021 semester. Everyone has a shared responsibility to ensure a healthy environment as we return to campus.

Course Instruction

The first day of classes is Monday, August 23rd, and PVAMU will return fully to face-to-face instruction. Occupancy levels of classrooms and labs will return to 100 percent, though every effort will be made to place courses in larger settings where available.

COVID-19 Testing and Vaccinations

Testing is required of students moving into on-campus residential housing, but vaccination is the most effective way to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Vaccinations are, therefore, strongly encouraged. Contact Health Services at 936-261-1410 to schedule an appointment for vaccinations. Testing will be offered at the main campus through the Curative kiosk through the fall semester.

COVID-19 Training

New freshmen and transfer students must complete an assigned training course. Returning students should refer to their prior training and updates made to the PVAMU COVID-19 Resource webpage.

Face Coverings

Face Coverings are highly recommended indoors and outdoors when physical distancing is not possible. At present, not everyone has been vaccinated; therefore, asymptomatic, unvaccinated individuals pose a risk, and face coverings help reduce that risk.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Face masks will be made available to all departments for use and distribution when needed in the classroom and other spaces. Contact Euletha Wade if PPE is needed at egwade@pvamu.edu.

Academic Support

In-person advising and tutoring services will return this fall, but virtual support will also take place during pre-scheduled times.

Faculty Office Hours

Full-time faculty will be required to hold a minimum of six office hours per week, on at least two days during the week. Faculty will hold some office hours face-to-face in areas arranged where social distancing is available, such as in regular offices, department conference rooms or open classrooms. A schedule should be established at the departmental level to ensure at least some in-person office hours for all faculty teaching in-person classes.

Classroom Safety

Current cleaning protocols will remain in place for the fall term. These include disinfecting facilities and scheduling time for deep cleaning during the day between classes at select times.

Course Attendance

Faculty will record attendance and report absences per the Attendance Reporting schedule as determined by the Office of the Registrar. Students who are sick or who are self-quarantining due to COVID-19 related illnesses or exposure, must not attend in-person class sessions. Students who are feeling sick should follow PVAMU's COVID guidelines posted at <https://www.pvamu.edu/coronavirus/>.

To encourage students to stay home when ill, they will not be required to provide documentation for absences of less than two weeks and will not be penalized for absences. However, if a student has to miss more than two weeks, then a doctor's note must be provided to the Division of Student Affairs, Dean of Students.

If possible, students who miss class due to illness should:

- Notify instructor of record by email in advance of missing class
- Attend and/or review online lectures or materials to stay abreast of all class notes or materials
- Email the instructor saying they have viewed the Zoom video for the day, or other interaction
- Email the instructor regularly regarding assignments, etc.
- Submit assignments electronically if permissible
- Reschedule all face-to-face exams and/or assignments with their instructor

Class Seating Charts

Seating charts are encouraged during the pandemic because they assist with contact tracing. Faculty should be prepared to share who attended and where students sat should they be contacted by the COVID-19 campus personnel or by the Operations Center (Ops Center) due to potential positive cases revealed through testing and contact tracing.

Faculty Illness

Faculty who are ill must contact their department head to ensure continuity of instruction, whether through remote learning or through substitute instruction. Depending on the nature of the arrangement and illness, a faculty member would take appropriate leave, including through their accrued sick leave.

Athletics, Band and other Student Groups

Details will be shared by the administration and staff over these areas regarding details about testing and safety protocols. Testing will be required for participation in certain activities, including when bus travel would be required to attend or participate in an event.

Domestic and International Travel

Domestic travel is allowed for essential University business purposes, however COVID-19 cases are on the rise and many in-person conferences planned for the fall have moved to a virtual platform. Caution is needed. International travel is allowed to countries with a CDC risk assessment level of three or lower following careful approval of its essential business need. Vaccinations are recommended prior to travel and CDC COVID-19 protocols must be followed upon return to the U.S.

Study Abroad

Planning for study abroad programs taking place in spring and summer of 2022 resumed in June. We will proceed with caution by minimizing upfront payments to vendors for as long as possible as we monitor the pandemic. Changes to planned travel may be necessary.

Syllabus Template

There are important changes in three sections: Student Support and Success, Academic Misconduct and Forms of Academic Dishonesty, and COVID-19 Campus Safety Measures.

Academic Integrity

Faculty should design online coursework to reduce pressure to cheat; include self-assessments or low-stakes activities to test student understanding; pace the deadlines to keep student workload manageable; model academic integrity through their own postings and behavior. They should monitor and track student work carefully. University resources to monitor academic integrity include: Turnitin, Examity, Respondus Lockdown Browser, Respondus Monitor, among others. Visit the Center for Instructional Innovation and Technology Services (CIITS) for more information about the various services offered to faculty, staff, and students.

Event Guidelines

Meetings and events designated only for PVAMU employees should ensure participants socially distance and adhere to CDC and PVAMU COVID-19 prevention guidelines. External guests on campus should remain limited. Organizers should continue to complete the Event and Meeting COVID-19 Approval Request Form and return it to the Office of Risk Management & Safety at least seven days before the event. The request form assists with some elements of contact tracing if necessary.

On-going Safety

Working together, we can ensure a successful start and finish to the fall semester. Continue to stay safe and follow safety protocols.

xc: Ruth Simmons, President