

RIT Fall Semester Calendar Recommendations

January 27, 2021

Submitted by:

Chair: **Christine M. Licata**, Vice Provost

Fall Calendar Subcommittee

Co-Chairs: **Chris Jackson** and **Jennifer Schneider***

Returning Members from Fall Planning Committee:

- **Carmie Garzione**, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs
- **André Hudson**, School Head, Thomas H. Gosnell School of Life Sciences, COS
- **Chris Jackson**, Sr. Associate Dean, CAD
- **Joe Loffredo**, Registrar
- **Lynne Mazadoorian**, Assistant VP, Undergraduate Student Success & Director of University Advising
- **Jim Myers**, Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs
- **Jen Schneider**, Professor, CET and Fram Chair
- **Tomicka Wagstaff**, Assistant Vice President for Academic Access Success, Division of Diversity and Inclusion
- **Anne Wahl**, Assistant Provost
- **Ian Webber**, Interim Director of ILI
- Staff Council Representative
 - **Lindsay Vallone**, Chair, Staff Council, Academic Advisor, CET
- Student Government Representative
 - **Sunny Khan**, Director of Student Operations, Student Government
- Graduate Student Representative
 - **Sri Charitha Velamuri**, GSAC Representative
- Academic Senate Representatives
 - **Marcos Esterman**, Assistant Professor, Industrial and Systems Engineering, KGCOE
 - **Clyde Hull**, Professor, Management, SCB, (Returning)
 - **Elizabeth Kronfield**, Professor, School of Art, CAD

- **Joe Lanzafame**, Senior Lecturer, COS
- **Kristen Waterstram-Rich**, Professor, CHST
- **Michael Yacci**, Professor and Associate Dean, GCCIS
- Council of Chairs Representative
 - **James Lee**, Department Chair Electrical, Computer, and Telecommunications Engineering Technology, CET
- Faculty Nominees from Deans
 - **Peter Boyd**, Lecturer, SOIS
 - **Carlos Diaz-Acosta**, Associate Professor, Packaging Science, CET
 - **Kim Kurz**, Associate Professor, ASLIE, NTID
 - **Todd Pagano**, Associate Dean for Teaching and Scholarship, NTID
 - **Thomas Trabold**, Professor and Department Head, Golisano Institute for Sustainability
 - **Tracy Worrell**, Professor, School of Communication, COLA
- Administrative Support: **Karel Shapiro**, Administrative Assistant, Office of Vice Provost

***Note:** A subcommittee drawn primarily for the Spring/Fall Academic Planning Committee prepared the initial recommendations and report on the fall calendar and course modality scenarios which were then reviewed, discussed and modified based on consultation with the full spring/fall planning group.

Subcommittee Co-Chairs: **Chris Jackson, Jennifer Schneider**

- Members:
 - **Larry Buckley**, Associate Dean, COS, **Ad Hoc**
 - **André Hudson**, School Head, Thomas H. Gosnell School of Life Sciences, COS
 - **Chris Jackson**, Sr. Associate Dean, CAD
 - **Joe Loffredo**, Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs, and Registrar
 - **Lynne Mazadoorian**, Assistant Vice President, Undergraduate Student Success & Director of University Advising
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 - **Tomicka Wagstaff**, Assistant Vice President for Academic Access Success, Division of Diversity and Inclusion
 - **Sri Charitha Velamuri**, Graduate Senator, Student Government

- **Kristen Waterstram-Rich**, Professor, CHST
- **Kim Kurz**, Associate Professor, ASLIE, NTID
- Administrative Assistant
 - **Karel Shapiro**, Administrative Assistant, Office of the Vice Provost

Executive Summary

Fall Planning Sub-Committee Charge

- Provide recommendations for the fall 2021 semester calendar, including instructional modalities
- Determine any potential impact to the fall academic calendar including scheduling

Assumptions for Fall Semester based on External Predictions: (https://www.cdc.gov/library/covid19/103020_covidupdate.html)

- It is uncertain if a majority of the national population will be vaccinated and mobile. Because of this uncertainty, flexibility in the fall calendar and with instructional modalities is needed in order for the University to be prepared to respond to the conditions prevalent in August.
- It is also difficult to predict the distribution for the vaccine internationally. This will affect our International students, particularly because each country has a different rollout timeframe.

Summary of Recommendations for Fall Semester 2021:

- **Academic Calendar:** The sub-committee recommends that we proceed with a **Normal Start** calendar, with additional flexibility considerations. This calendar choice maximizes time for co-ops, faculty research and summer.
- **Course Scheduling Modalities:** The sub-committee recommends a scenario that places special emphasis on in person experiences for first- and second-year student-required courses and sets a goal of 70-80% in person and 10-30% online with reduced room occupancy rates as per 2020 academic year. It also asks that departments eliminate A/B splits for first- and second-year students to the degree possible. In order to reach these goals, the guidance for remaining courses for students in years 3 and above sets up a three-modality scale that includes in person, blended and online. **It will also require some modest additional adjunct funds in order to achieve these goals.**

In addition, this scenario gives the flexibility to build back to a context closer to pre-COVID instructional delivery if conditions, timing, and governmental requirements allow. This includes restoring more in person experiences, converting some blended courses to in person and enhancing the overall student experience. In addition, this supports planning for high quality online and blended learning as needed, not a reactionary shift.

RIT

Fall Semester Planning Constraints and Guiding Considerations

Preparation of this document was guided by important health and safety constraints that are a result of living and recovering from the pandemic. These include the Pandemic Trajectory: the possible state of the pandemic, including vaccination, community immunity and protection, vulnerable populations and vaccine access and uptake both for our RIT community and the greater community.

- **Accommodations:** The need to support special population needs, including faculty, staff and students that have COVID-19 accommodations, students that for various reasons cannot attend courses on campus, including international students or those with other situations that prevent engagement on campus. *See section on Health and Safety on page 4 for further detail.*
- **Vaccine:** The possibility that vaccine availability and uptake may vary across the US and the world, and therefore, may be unevenly distributed within our population. Travel restrictions or special requirements such as quarantine and isolation may continue to exist for some time.
- **Virus Severity:** Since COVID-19 will remain in circulation, even with robust vaccination uptake, the winter months may feature a 'COVID' season, much like the flu season. This double season, especially for the first northern hemisphere winter after vaccination, is difficult to predict in severity and substance. While it most certainly will not be as severe as winter 2020, it also will be far from 'normal'. Therefore, even as vaccination continues, RIT will need to be ready to support our constituent needs in this new normal.
- **Checkpoints:** Preparing early for these challenges, including a series of planned monthly 'checkpoints' to evaluate the trajectory of vaccine distribution and COVID transmission, will enable decision-makers to modify the calendar and modalities, if needed.

- **Student Support:** Serving student needs (remote, on-campus, international) both at the undergraduate and graduate levels are critical. This includes academic achievement, faculty/student engagement and well-being, as well as the ability to adjust to and manage in a changing teaching/learning environment. The pandemic forced all educational institutions to pivot rapidly to remote learning. This did not, however, adequately support student growth, especially in relationships, cohort building, faculty interactions etc.

In fall 2019, about 4.5% of all courses offered were on-line. This number jumped to 35% in fall 2020. Student data from fall 2020 uncovered concerning trends, especially for first year students, that need to be remedied to the degree possible in fall 2021. Faculty, student and advisor surveys, course evaluations and feedback indicate that students struggled with navigating multiple course modalities, especially in the A/B splits and the online (asynchronous) format. Only 21% of courses taken by first year students last fall were delivered totally in person. In addition, the first to second semester retention rate is the lowest it has been in the last 8 years (93.3%). When RIT students were surveyed in the fall, they indicated that in person classes were their preference, followed by on-line (synchronous). These data must not be ignored and served as a catalyst for the course modality recommendations that follow.

- **Transition to a New Normal:** Due to all the upheaval the world has experienced, a concerted effort to minimize further disruption and return to some sort of stability is desirable. This includes a calendar that supports as normal as possible summer, fall and holiday break, as well as scheduling that can flex or pivot as needed based upon the evolving situation.

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Fall Semester Influencers

The committee was able to leverage effort and experience of the prior work of the committee in developing the fall 2020 and spring 2021 calendars. Accordingly, we reached out to campus partners and external subject matter experts for input and guidance on our possible calendar scenarios and operational considerations, such as the need for modalities and the technologies to support these modalities. The committee was able to meet with **Dr. David Holtgrave**, Epidemiologist and Dean of the University at Albany, School of Public Health to explore the possible state of the greater community in summer and fall of 2021. A summary of campus partner and expert guidance is presented below.

Health and Safety: Various modelers and experts have conjectured about the state of the pandemic by summer and fall 2021. The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has continued to adjust their models for pandemic response and recovery. The emergence of COVID-19 variants in December 2020 has continued to influence forecasting. Most experts believe that the vaccines that have been developed will be effective on these new more infectious variants, but research confirmation is just beginning.

Most experts agree that vaccine availability and uptake is the single most important determinant of our recovery. At this writing (1/20/21), vaccine rollout is still relatively slow and supplies are severely constrained. The CDC has stated that manufacture and access to vaccine/s, especially as more options are approved, will markedly increase in late spring 2020. However, our core constituency is likely the last population to be offered the vaccine.

Further, some 70-80 percent or more may need to be vaccinated to create 'herd' or population immunity, a rather large number to achieve, particularly if the group is near the bottom of the priority list. This could very well result in an environment where our campus population does not have sufficient herd immunity to allow for full density physical spacing. The committee believes that in mid- spring we should have greater understanding if this is achievable. Thus, checkpoints will be needed to confirm any final decisions that are made about the calendar and instructional modalities.

Faculty Accommodations: The formal faculty "accommodations" process coordinated by HR is also an important driver that will undoubtedly impact our plans for fall as there is a direct correlation between approved accommodations and the ability to provide the desired percentage of in-person course offerings. The committee identified several questions that will need to be answered and communicated to faculty as soon as possible. These include the following:

- Will HR continue the same formal faculty accommodations process in the next AY or will it be modified?
- How will faculty preferences to work remotely be handled? The University response to this question needs to be guided by an HR policy to ensure equity and consistency across departments.

Room Occupancy: The room occupancies for AY20-21 were based on New York State mandated guidelines with respect to maintaining the 6ft physical distancing requirement. As such, many course offerings had to be split (A/B) or moved fully online or extra sections were created to address occupancy restrictions including but not limited to larger than normal waitlists. We have no information at this time or ability to predict what occupancy restrictions may be in fall 2021 or if these occupancy requirements will be modified. These restrictions are what forced colleges to implement instructional alternatives like A/B splits or online. In the absence of any formal changes, our plan allows for the current occupancy standards to still be in effect.

If room occupancies are relaxed by New York State and Monroe County, the recommendations regarding course modalities which are based on classroom occupancy could be modified in response.

Resource Requirements: Because these same external forces will also continue to determine the length of duration of COVID-related accommodations for faculty and staff as well as dictate any periods of quarantine or isolation due to exposure and/or infection, the possibility

of increasing the number of in person classes becomes less definite. The lack of available funds to cover an increase in the number of sections necessary to increase the number of in person sections adds another layer of complexity in decision making. Consideration of external and internal drivers influence the recommendations for RIT's fall scheduling pathways.

Feedback from influencers can be found in Appendix B.

Potential Calendar Scenarios are displayed on the next page.

RIT Potential Fall Semester Calendar Scenarios

Scenarios include **14 weeks of instruction + equal number of each day of the week (i.e., 14 Mon; 14 Tues, etc.) + final exams.**

Fall 2021	Scenario 1: Existing/Normal Fall Calendar (Recommend)	Scenario 2: Late Start to Fall Calendar (Preferred Option for Pivoting, If Needed)	Scenario 3: Early Start to Fall Calendar (Emergency Start for Fall)
End of Summer Exams	08/10 (Tuesday)	08/10 (Tuesday)	08/03 (Tuesday) Reduce summer term from 11 weeks to 10 weeks
New Student Move-in	08/17 (Tuesday)	08/24 (Tuesday)	08/10 (Tuesday)
Classes Begin	08/23 (Monday)	08/30 (Monday)	08/16 (Monday)
Break-Days	09/06 Labor Day 10/11,12 Fall Break 11/24,25,26 Thanksgiving*	09/06 Labor Day 10/11,12 Fall Break 11/24,25,26 Thanksgiving	09/06 Labor Day 10/11,12 Fall Break 11/24,25,26 Thanksgiving – designed for students not to return with finals remote
Last Day of Classes	12/06 (Monday)	12/13 (Monday)	11/23 (Tuesday)
End of Semester/Reading Day	12/07 (Tuesday)	12/14 (Tuesday)	11/29 (Monday)
Final Exams	6 Days: 12/(08,09,10,13,14,15)	5 Days: 12/(15,16,17,20,21)	6 Days: 11/30, 12/(01,02,03,06,07)
Break Period	12/16 – 01/09 (25 Days)	12/22 – 01/09 (18 Days)	12/8 – 01/09 (32 Days)
Spring Start 2022	Normal Spring Start	Normal Spring Start	Normal Spring Start
Classes Begin	01/10/2022 (Monday)	01/10/2022 (Monday)	01/10/2022 (Monday)

* If COVID conditions dictate, the option not to return after Thanksgiving is possible. This necessitates remote delivery of the last week of classes and final exams.

Calendar Scenarios

We present three scenarios for consideration, briefly described below, along with the advantages and disadvantages for each. The sub-committee reached out to campus partners and external subject matter experts for input and guidance on our possible calendar scenarios as described previously and the results can be found in Appendix E.

Scenario #1 (Normal Start)

This calendar is the previously approved fall 2021 calendar. It has all of the normal breaks including Labor Day, October two-day break, and three days at Thanksgiving. Classes end December 6, with a reading day and the normal six days of final exams, ending December 15.

Advantages:

- Back to normal class start and breaks and the full break between fall and the start of spring classes.
- Provides more time for the community to receive vaccinations compared to Scenario #3 (Early Start).
- Ends classes sooner than Scenario #2 (Late Start) to avoid some of the expected winter impact of both COVID-19 and the flu.
- Provides time for end of term processing (grading, academic actions and certifications) to occur prior to the break.
- Provides for the full six-day exam period.

Disadvantages:

- Provides one less week for the community to receive vaccinations compared to the Scenario #2 (Late Start).
- Ends classes later than Scenario #3 (Early Start) potentially subjecting more to the winter impact of both COVID-19 and the flu.

Note: Campus partners did not identify concerns with this calendar.

Scenario #2 (Late Start)

This calendar pushes the start and end of the semester out one week compared to a normal fall. It includes normal breaks Labor Day, October two-day break, and three days at Thanksgiving. Classes end December 13, with a reading day and only 5 days of final exams, ending December 21.

Advantages:

- Provides more time for the community to receive vaccinations compared to both of the other calendar scenarios.
- Provides for an additional week during the summer that could be used for summer classes if spring 2021 semester gets disrupted in a way that requires spring semester to end later than planned.

Disadvantages:

- Ends classes later than both of the other calendar scenarios, potentially subjecting more to the winter impact of both COVID-19 and the flu.
- Does **not** provide time for end of term processing (grading, academic actions and certifications) to occur prior to the break.
- Reduces the winter break by one week at a time when the campus community will want/need the full break.
- One fewer day for final exams.

Note: Campus partners did not identify concerns with this calendar

Scenario #3 (Early Start)

This calendar is to be used only in the case where we are not likely to have any real improvement in the pandemic and need to end classes again prior to Thanksgiving, with final exams conducted remotely, as we did for fall 2020. Classes start one week sooner than a normal start.

Advantages:

- Permits ending in-person instruction prior to Thanksgiving and finishing end of semester exams remotely like we did for fall 2020 to avoid some of the expected winter impact of both COVID-19 and the flu.
- Provides time for end of term processing (grading, academic actions and certifications) to occur prior to the break.

Disadvantages:

- Provides less time for the community to receive vaccinations compared to both of the other scenarios, which could impact our ability to conduct in-person classes.
- Reduced summer time may impact externally funded faculty research and other planned research activities.
- Would require the summer semester to be reduced by another week.

Note: Of all the scenarios, some campus partners had the most concerns about the early start because of the impact on their operations.

Calendar Recommendation:

Recommendation: The sub-committee recommends that we proceed with calendar **scenario #1 (Normal Start)**. This calendar best balances the advantages and disadvantages of the three calendar scenarios that we considered and also still provides a degree of flexibility. This calendar choice maximizes time for co-ops, faculty research and summer travel. When discussed in the full committee, there were some minority views expressed that supported calendar scenario #3 (Early Start) because it was felt that that calendar recognized the uncertainty of the COVID condition in the fall and provided the additional health benefit of ending classes before Thanksgiving and handling final exams. This line of thinking actually influenced the *additional flexibility considerations* that we ask be made in adopting a Normal Start Calendar.

We recommend that the following additional considerations accompany the approval of this calendar in order to allow for the University to mitigate COVID health and safety concerns that may impact fall semester:

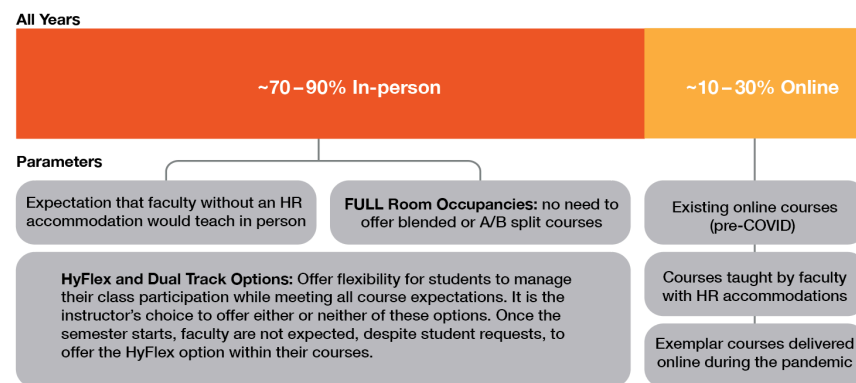
1. Keep open the option in Scenario 1 that students not return to campus following Thanksgiving. This would require that the final week of classes be delivered remotely and that final exams would be delivered remotely as well.
2. Offer a 10-week summer session in summer 2021 (one week shorter than planned). This provides needed flexibility for Spring 2021 in case there is a required pause or need to revert to an early start for fall, based on the COVID conditions.
3. Labor Day and Fall Break (October 11 and 12) can be redistributed to avoid long breaks. Those days can be repurposed as recharge days throughout the fall semester if health/safety concerns continue.

RIT Potential Fall 2021 Course Scheduling Modalities

Potential Course Modality Scenarios: We created two potential course scheduling scenarios for fall 2021, illustrated below. One scenario assumes a back to normal environment where rooms returned to full occupancy. The second scenario assumes a more cautious context where room occupancy remains at the level used for fall and spring and approved faculty accommodations (all or some) will still be in effect.

Scenario 1 Percentage ranges are estimated.

Start: Offer a majority of in-person courses. This assumes a back to normal environment where rooms returned to full occupancy. Priorities given to in-person courses for first and second year students.

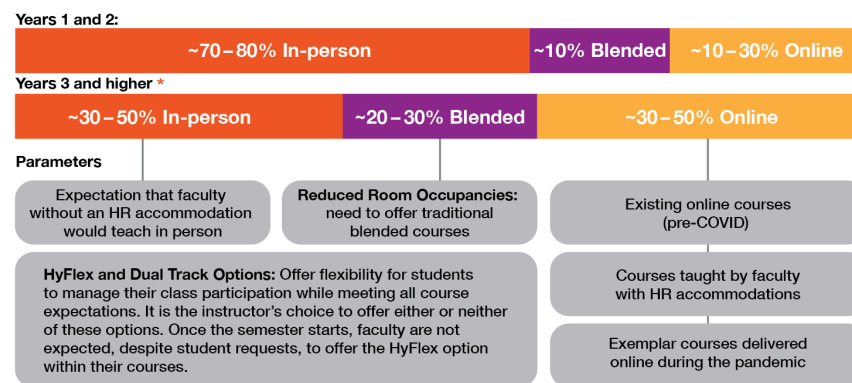


The discussion about modalities was very difficult. Most on the committee wanted to return to a 'normal' semester but the number of uncertainties in play influenced the committee's thinking. To plan for a normal semester with so many unknowns seemed to many to be ill-advised and not realistic. The two main drivers here are **classroom occupancy** and **faculty accommodations**.

In both cases, as of this time, we do not know what the end result will be for either. This guided the committee in the direction of the more cautious and flexible scenario. The reasoning here was that if we planned for a "normal" fall, it would be very difficult to pivot midstream to another scenario, and optimize for those priority areas within the student experience such as year 1 and 2 student courses. A pivot would be

Scenario 2 Percentage ranges are estimated.

Start: Transitional fall semester with priorities given to in-person courses for first and second year students. Provides flexibility to build back to a context closer to Scenario 1 if conditions, timing, and governmental requirements allow.



* Faculty preference and student need will help inform the course modality to the degree possible given existing space, room constraints, and instructional resources.

constrained by the existing schedule and space availability, closer to the fall 2020 experience.

Students need to know what modality they are registering for. The course schedule including modalities must be ready for viewing by students at the end of March. This necessitates providing guidance to the colleges in early February so that a schedule can be finalized in time for registration. This process typically requires 8 weeks from start to finish. These factors make this recommendation complex given the unknowns and timing required. Regardless of the scenario selected, the committee believes that the course schedule must be student-centered and respond to the needs of students that we know to be true. These needs have been discussed previously on page 3.

Modality Distribution Recommendation:

The sub-committee recommends scenario 2 as the framework for course scheduling modality plan for Fall 2021. It includes guidelines for deliberate consideration of courses and modalities. It includes a sensitivity to students in the early years but not at the expense of the needs of students in their later years. It is a schedule that we could work with immediately but accommodates possible later modifications. Further discussion and the rationale for this recommendation follow.

This scenario places special emphasis on first- and second-year student-required courses and sets a goal of 70-80% in person and 10-30% online. It also asks that departments eliminate A/B splits for first- and second-year students to the degree possible. In order to reach these goals, the guidance for remaining courses for students in years 3 and above sets up a three-modality scale that includes in person, blended and on-line. It will also require some modest additional adjunct funds in order to achieve these goals.

Scenario 2 gives the flexibility to build back to a context closer to scenario 1 if conditions, timing, and governmental requirements allow. This includes restoring more in person experiences, converting some blended courses to in person and enhancing the overall student experience. In addition, this supports planning for high quality on line and blended learning as needed, not a reactionary shift.

Academic Guiding Principles

External Forces: It is important to remember that external forces and decisions in response to the pandemic have a direct effect on RIT's flexibility with respect to course offerings and modes of instruction. External forces determine room capacity. Room occupancy affects the percentage of possible in person class offerings. A less than maximum room occupancy mandated by the State, such as currently exists, results in a lower percentage than is typical for classes offered with in-person mode of instruction. A continued lower percentage of in-person classes results in the need for a greater percentage of alternate modes of instruction to accommodate course demand. This reduction further results in a decrease in room availability and an increase in instructional staffing constraints which may require extra funding to mitigate.

Room Occupancy: At this point in time, it is unclear if room capacities will be different from the reduced occupancy under which RIT was required to operate in the 2020-2021 academic year. Given this and other pandemic uncertainties and given that the only occasional NYS changes to room capacity regulations have been to decrease capacity at non-educational facilities, our recommendation is to plan a schedule in which room occupancies remain at the current reduced COVID

occupancies. This strategy will be combined with regular check points throughout the spring and summer to keep scheduling plans aligned with pandemic circumstances. Should the COVID situation improve sufficiently to allow for the university to shift towards in person classes in the Fall term, this monitoring will allow the time to modify the schedule. Such a modification to the schedule is not only dependent on changes to room occupancy but also to changes in COVID related accommodations and other COVID related restrictions internal and external to RIT.

Required Additional Academic Space: The reduced academic space occupancies in place this academic year severely impacted our ability to meet the needs for in-person classes, especially those needing larger spaces. Thanks to outstanding support from campus partners, we were been able to use some non-traditional spaces on campus for classes. These spaces included: Ingle Auditorium, the University Gallery, the large conference rooms in Slaughter Hall, and the large room in the Simone Center. It will critical to our fall 2021 class scheduling to retain the use of these spaces if we are still operating with reduced space occupancies.

Scheduling Prioritization: If scenario 2 is adopted, which calls for a focus on in-person classes for year 1 and year 2 students, the University

will need to develop a set of guidelines, procedures and supporting data, to help make this a reality. The following should be considered: 1. Using fall 2020 as a guide, and working with all colleges, identify the courses that should be prioritized for in-person and online instruction for year 1 and year 2 students, to include the recommend number of seats and sections counts. 2. Priority room scheduling should occur first for these priority in-person classes and rooms across campus will be considered, regardless of college room priority. (*We will run an early room waitlist process, for example.*) 3. Only after rooms are scheduled for the priority year 1 and year 2 classes, will the rest of the rooms be scheduled. 4. The Registrar's Office will develop a timeline for this multi-phase scheduling effort and provide data and worksheets to support this effort.

Competition and Enrollment: it is understood that student enrollment is competitive. It is understood that there are institutions of higher education that have already made public commitments to offering an in person schedule that mirrors pre-COVID. The competition to be attractive to future and returning students is critical for the success of the university as a whole. The return to in-person instruction is necessary to compete with other schools for student enrollment. We believe that with careful messaging, we can communicate that that RIT has chosen a scheduling plan that addresses health and safety, optimizes student learning, prioritizes in person instruction, through informed consideration of the available information and current forecasting regarding the pandemic. This thoughtful approach means that RIT will drive its destiny and quality and not be reactionary with health and safety. It could build on a promotion of student safety combined with quality education.

Advantages and Rationale: A schedule built using the current room occupancies accompanied by deliberate guidance for identifying courses to be offered with in person instruction allows for a straight-forward approach to Fall 2021 scheduling. Student course schedules could be created with what many believe to be a greater certainty with respect to mode of instruction. A more deliberate approach to matching in person course offerings to student year level, when possible, and to classes, laboratories, workshops, and studios that require specialized equipment requiring hands-on experience will help mitigate some of the less-than-optimal student experiences from Fall 2021.

Since there is significantly more time between now and the start of Fall 2021 compared to our Spring/Summer 2020, a schedule built for multi-mode instruction could include planning for a potential modification to a schedule providing a greater percentage of in person instruction during the ensuing 6-7 months. If the governor or health department mandates continue physical distancing and reduced room occupancies into Fall, we are prepared. If the governor or health department relax the mandates on physical distancing and reductions in room occupancy, a pre-planned modification could then be implemented relatively quickly.

This modification would be less drastic than the type of pivot that is familiar to faculty who have already had success adapting to changes in modalities. We also believe this can be accomplished with fewer course and student schedule changes than if we were to begin with Scenario 1 and have to implement a modification. In short, any modification to a schedule that is not only built and has registered students is already constrained. The difficulty lies in logistics and the as receptiveness to change by students, families, faculty, and staff.

The release of restrictions and the timing of a release (should it occur) is out of RIT control. Given these uncertain and dynamic times, the more realistic the original schedule, the better it is for all. Our plans include regular checkpoints throughout Spring and early Summer 2021 for adaptation to a possible greater room capacity should circumstances warrant as we approach Fall 2021. In addition, the remote work accommodations for some faculty also may continue to constrain the academic unit ability to meet the in-person percentage goal. If the existing faculty accommodations continue into Fall 2021, **scenario 2 is the better scenario to address this constraint.**

Timeline: The timing for selecting the scheduling pathway is critical. The fall schedule needs to be created in the colleges in February and built in the system in time for student viewing in late March. The dynamic nature of the pandemic necessitates a series of checkpoints to be established for the purpose of monitoring the viability of the selected pathway and if needed apply modifications to the course schedule and student schedules prior to the beginning of fall semester classes (see Appendix B).

Scheduling Scenario Advantages and Disadvantages

Scenario	1: Mostly In-Person Fall Course Scheduling	2: Online/Blended/In-Person Fall Course Scheduling
Schedule Planning	Plan mostly in-person courses for all year levels.	Plan more in-person 1st & 2nd year courses (70-80%), while maintaining 33/33/33 mix for upper division courses.
Remaining Restrictions - 1st/2nd year schedules	In person schedule planning for all courses and year levels (consistent, familiar, and straightforward) including sensitivity for 1st/2nd year students. Potentially easier to control retention of in-person courses for 1st/2nd year students with initial in-person plan for all students.	Sensitivity for schedule in person classes for 1st and 2nd year students but building in an alternate modality to accommodate the various student needs and probably governmental restrictions. Potentially more difficult to control retention of in-person courses for 1st/2nd year students with initial mixed plan for 3rd yr + students schedules.
Released Restrictions - 1st/2nd year courses	Few changes needed.	Few changes needed.
Remaining Restrictions - 3rd + year schedules	If NYS restrictions remain, upper division course schedules can be adapted to a mixed modality schedule similar to what was done in much less time during 2020. Online modifications would require development of blended and A/B modalities potentially causing disruptive changes to student schedules (but pivot timing under RIT control).	If NYS restrictions remain, upper division course schedules won't need to be changed since they will already be mixed modalities.
Current Restrictions Released - 3rd + year courses	No Changes needed.	Upper division courses will likely not all be able to return to full in-person modalities since many blended or A/B courses will need to remain for students who need to retain online options (remote students who have fewer options). 3rd year + student schedules would have to be redesigned, if they were not in person. Many 3 rd + courses, labs, studios will have remained in person due to the necessity of the use of specialized equipment on campus
Probability of release from current restrictions	Seems less realistic given the current COVID/vaccination environment.	Seems more realistic given the current COVID/vaccination environment.
Fall Start conditions	NYS retains control of the restrictions, however, RIT retains control of decision timing for changing to a mixed online/in-	NYS retains control of the restrictions, RIT retains control of decision timing for changing to an in-person Fall start condition (restriction and accommodation releases). Although NYS's

timing	person Fall startup and if needed can be staged several months ahead of Fall start.	decision to relax (should it occur) may occur too late to get significant in-person schedules, a modification to the schedule may still be possible.
Current Restrictions Released	No changes to plan 1 schedule will be necessary.	Modifications may be considered to increase the number of in person classes, if provided with sufficient time.
Current Restrictions Continue	Entire schedule has to be modified.	No changes necessary.
Logistics of Pivot	Easier to depopulate classrooms since classes that go to alternate modes of instruction release existing space.	Since all modalities would be in effect, and if the scheduling of rooms were planned for a possible modification, the modification to in person for some classes may be easier than others. However, if the scheduling of rooms and classes did not take the possible modification into consideration, it would be more difficult to re-populate classrooms with courses originally scheduled for an alternate mode of instruction without disruption to existing in person classes.
Faculty Accommodations	Faculty accommodations already in place would not need to change if the current COVID/vaccination environment remains indefinitely into the Fall.	Faculty accommodations already in place would not need to change if the current COVID/vaccination environment remains indefinitely into the Fall.
Recruitment & Competition	Admissions/enrollment recruitment easier with a campus plan to return to primarily in-person courses (i.e. full campus experience). However, a modification to the schedule may cause a greater problem.	Recruitment may be more difficult with this plan which continues a significant number of alternate modes of instruction. However, a modification to the schedule may not cause a problem.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sub-Committee Focus Areas

Semester Calendar	College Budgets for Faculty Vacancies and Adjuncts	Fall Course Scheduling	Potential Instructional Modalities	Goal for Modality %
Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start date End date Breaks/Holidays/ Recharge Days Reading Days Final Exams Faculty contracts Scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Typical fall calendar with breaks/holidays B. One-week late start with breaks/holidays C. Early start, with breaks/holidays; end classes before Thanksgiving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to streamline budget continues but not as drastically as we did this year Adjunct money returned to the colleges Return of the permanent cuts not anticipated 	<div>Keep adjusted Start/Stop scheduling time blocks</div> <div>Annual registration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pause <i>or</i> continue </div> <div>Decide room occupancy changes using planned periodic 'checkpoints' throughout the spring and summer</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person Online <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synchronous Asynchronous Blended A/B Blended HyFlex Dual Track 	% In-Person % Online % Blended Innovation Option % HyFlex

Appendix B: Fall 2021 Scheduling Timeline

February 1st week	Fall schedule and guidance for fall build to colleges
February last week	Colleges return final schedules to Registrar to build course schedule
March third/fourth week	Registrar makes schedule available to students for shopping carts
April	Students Register
May	Check on external factors affecting schedule
June	Check on external factors affecting schedule
July	First year students are registered
August	Schedule cannot change

Appendix C: Contextual Data as of January 15, 2021

For Context

- **Pre-COVID**
 - 4.5% of courses offered were online
- **Fall 2020**
 - 20% of year one classes were fully in person
 - 38% of year one were blended with some in person time
- **Pulse Surveys**
 - In-person and online were the preferred modes of instruction
- **Current Faculty Accommodations**
 - 185 faculty with HR Accommodation to Work Remotely

“First to Second Term” Retention

- Lowest retention rate in many years

FTDSF Cohort Code	First Term After Entry		
	Persistence Count	Sub Cohort Count	Persistence Rate
2101			
2111			
2121			
2131	2,419	2,553	94.75%
2141	2,389	2,504	95.41%
2151	2,611	2,716	96.13%
2161	2,337	2,424	96.41%
2171	2,494	2,611	95.52%
2181	2,568	2,697	95.22%
2191	2,430	2,555	95.11%
2201	2,742	2,970	92.32%

Appendix D: Influencers' Feedback on Fall 2021

Influencer	Summary
Health/Safety - Internal (12/11/2020) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendy Gelbard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall is still a big unknown Hoping that it will look as close to normal but a bumpy road getting there Dependent on wide-spread adoption of the vaccine (70 – 80% = herd immunity) Work as close to normal as possible; but may have to make a shift if vaccine adoption rates are low Worst case scenario: maintain current room capacities and course modalities, % of online courses Faculty and staff are at risk more, they are the key group to create herd immunity Educators fall into prioritized groups: profession + age + illness/disease Requirement: at this point not talking about the vaccine as a requirement Communication is critical
Health/Safety - External (01/08/2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Holtgrave, Epidemiologist 	<p>Perspective on summer and fall 2021: the current plan at the University at Albany:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring and Summer: online and hybrid classes with few in-person classes Fall: campus classrooms run at capacity with no de-densifying No waste water testing but saliva testing, student testing prior to returning to campus Grad students prefer online instruction Undergrad students: prefer in person: struggle with students who are off campus <p>What general milestones will indicate we are getting back to normal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccine rollout will play a key role - governor updates will be a place to find metrics on this Health care workers will have a high adoption rate. However, general population vaccination may not have the same high adoption rate After vaccination, research needs to be conducted on risks still present UK and South Africa COVID strain variant could be a game changer if transmissibility is higher <p>What will universities be struggling with in the fall?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precautions will still be in place: masks and hand sanitizing, health monitoring will remain in place SUNY is planning for full classes in fall - no de-densifying of campuses However, current vaccine rollout is slow and NYS may not get there in terms on % vaccinated to offer full occupancy in classes in the fall May need to think about dividing the fall semester into two halves: first half hybrid and second full density/capacity A new normal may appear to be in place near the middle of fall semester. The end of the pandemic will not be a sudden, quick end. <p>Herd immunity targets: current thinking is higher at 80-85%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYS rate of vaccination is low currently - may take over a year to get NYS at vaccination targets Governor wants the rate to go up higher with more providers - utilizing churches, community centers, outpatient clinics

	<p>How might you track immunity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUA makes it harder for employers to require vaccine • Require masks if you refuse a vaccine? • CDC is tracking vaccine rollout and NYS is interested in doing this, private sector apps <p>Restrictions on students who are not vaccinated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on study abroad - remitted until safer to travel • Focus on global experiences becoming virtual experiences - longer time period for restrictions on study abroad based on country rollout and variant strains <p>Prepping RIT community for vaccine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate about the vaccine, effectiveness, and early adopters • Campaign formative work: who do faculty, staff, students listen to? • Brand communications that reinforce the same message • Will need to have a wide variety of voices (messengers)
<p>HR/Legal/Contractual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodations <p>(12/18/2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo Ellen Pinkham • Bobby Colon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR - No University position/plan/timeframe on the vaccine yet - If University does require the vaccine, we would follow the same protocols as the seasonal flu vaccine including: self-reporting, confirmation by supervisor, tracked on campus employees, offer the same accommodations for health and religion • Legal - No law states that RIT can't require employees to medical exams/vaccines. Any mandates/requirements by RIT must meet the accommodations provided by the EOC. • Spring semester 2021 will look something like fall semester 2020. Vaccines will be available for the RIT community (faculty/staff/students) late spring and throughout the summer. Fall 2021 may look a little different from spring, possibly as normal as it can be. • Return off of accommodations: COVID-related accommodations timeframe is pandemic-based not semester-based. • Accommodations to work remotely for the duration of the pandemic as characterized by the CDC • The accommodations were not originally planned to be open-ended • Spring 2021 accommodations will remain relatively the same as Fall 2020. • For fall 2021 accommodations, we will need to step back and reevaluate. • CDC and NYS-Department of Health: State and Federal state that the pandemic is over. Work accordingly with the law. • Impact on faculty contracts with specific dates if RIT extends a semester: Retain the right to change the dates based on unforeseen events out of RIT's control • Need to add the discretionary language in the contracts

Enrollment Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Student Visa Requirements <p>(12/18/2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Mortimer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RIT fall 2021 will function as fall 2019 (fully in-person/on campus operational) - RIT will communicate a message in early February <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can't talk about fragmented modalities Can communicate that certain courses and sections are better suited for a specific modality First-year student expectation: In-coming students expect on campus attendance and in-person learning Market interests: Students want a holistic experience and they will understand the value that they are paying for Other universities have already made the decision to start fully in-person/on campus in fall 2021. RIT needs to remain competitive. Students arriving with not a complete high school experience - not taking standardized NYS Regents exams Reawakening into what education used to be like prior to the pandemic College and Careers - unknown in modality and dates, be mindful and flexible as possible First-year Academy course profile - potential to offer more "meaty" preparation courses in addition to fun/exciting topics; need to figure out a balanced portfolio between preparation and interest courses May 1st deposit date will remain the same: it would only move if there is a mass flurry of on campus visits/activity late April International student logistical issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID impact on the country (India is currently heavily impacted) Opening of consulates for visas (many appointments are pushed to late February/early March) Transportation to the US (flights are limited) Encouraging news: 45 of the Remote Start (R35) students are planning on being at RIT in the spring Demand by international students is there; logistics are the issues China is in an educational Visa lock-down - may have an impact on fall 2021 Fall applications are down 12% - typical with other universities experiencing a delay
Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would be able to work with any of the calendar scenarios. No major impact to our business. Would keep the same payment due dates and work with Registrar and Financial Aid, Housing and Dining Services to adjust refund dates for LOA and WD
New Student Orientation and Onboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normal or Late start to Fall calendar = Minimal impact on operations. Early Start = Student staff move in would need to be August 1 or 2.

Housing/Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food services: would be able to work with any of the calendar scenarios. • Housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal or Late start to Fall calendar = Minimal impact on operations. • Early Start = Student staff move in would need to be August 1 or 2.
Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty • Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None given

Appendix E: Influencers' Feedback on Academic Calendar Scenarios

Feedback on the (3) different calendar scenarios.

Partners	Type in your feedback in this column.
Athletics	<p>Scenario 1-minimal impact on operations and budget expenses.</p> <p>Scenario 2-minimal impact on operations and budget expenses; potential longer than usual fall preseason period.</p> <p>Scenario 3- greatest amount of impact on operations and budget expenses. Would eliminate our fall teams from having any type of preseason. Would have to provide housing and meals to our winter teams during the winter break period because of competitions (we typically do this for a 2-week period), this would require us to do this for 4 weeks.</p>
Counseling and Psychological Services	Counseling and Psychological Services overall operations will not be affected by any of the three calendar Scenarios. Students and the community will have the same access to services within each scenario. Thank you!
Financial Aid	We would be able to work with any of these scenarios.
Student Financial Services	No major impact to our business. We would keep the same payment due dates and work with Registrar and Financial Aid, Housing and Dining Services to adjust refund dates for LOA and WD
Food Services	We would be able to work with any of these scenarios
International Student Services	<p>International students will likely still need to quarantine upon arrival in NYS and we should assume this quarantine could be up to 10-14 days. This is not a problem for students living off-campus, but for those moving into RIT housing, I would advocate for RIT to replicate the current University Coordinated Quarantine option and ideally have that again open up at least 2 weeks prior to starting classes.</p> <p>I would advocate for a calendar that does not have any long mid-term breaks to discourage travel.</p> <p>I would advocate for a similar length break between Dec/Jan (as was done this year) as this bigger window did allow for more students to obtain visas in their home country and increase the likelihood of them arriving in Rochester in time for spring term.</p>
New Student Orientation/Onboarding	<p>Scenario 1 or 2 = Minimal impact on operations.</p> <p>Scenario 3 = Student staff move in would need to be August 1 or 2.</p>

Public Safety	Public Safety is not affected by any of the three scenarios
Residence Life	Similar to NSO Scenario 1 or 2 = Minimal impact on operations. Scenario 3 = Student staff move in would need to be August 1 or 2.
RIT Online	No significant impacts. We can work with each scenario presented here. Comment: If RIT went with scenario 2, it would provide more time for vaccinations as well as give us more time to enroll for Fall 2021 which may be needed for students who continue to experience varying degrees of uncertainty surrounding the pandemic (resources, jobs, etc.).
Student Housing	RIT Housing can work with all three scenarios

Appendix F: Instruction Modes for Fall 2201 and Spring 2205

Review of Instruction Mode Fall 2020

Instr_mode	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Blended	1114	36.84	1114	36.84
In-Person	854	28.24	1968	65.08
Online	1056	34.92	3024	100.00

Mode	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
AB	714	23.61	714	23.61
BL	400	13.23	1114	36.84
OA	311	10.28	1425	47.12
OL	6	0.20	1431	47.32
OS	739	24.44	2170	71.76
P	854	28.24	3024	100.00

Review of Instruction Mode Spring 2021

Instr_mode	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Blended	686	25.98	686	25.98
In-Person	967	36.63	1653	62.61
Online	987	37.39	2640	100.00

Mode	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
AB	410	15.53	410	15.53
BL	276	10.45	686	25.98
OA	184	6.97	870	32.95
OL	13	0.49	883	33.45
OS	790	29.92	1673	63.37
P	967	36.63	2640	100.00