

December 3, 2020

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

Thank you for all your work this semester. The RIT community has continued to step up to the challenge. Our individual and collective efforts to keep each other safe have been working. However, as we think about spring, I know we all realize that the actions that we took to keep the campus running in fall semester may not be the actions that keep it running in spring.

How will COVID-19 prevalence make spring different? Winter months will create more possibilities for infection as we spend more time indoors and the increased viral load of both flu and COVID-19 means it will be more challenging to start and remain healthy. The good news is, we know how to do this and there will be increased opportunity for testing, giving us faster information about any outbreaks on campus. And, vaccines should be well on their way by the time classes start.

What does this mean for you? Continue to be vigilant, be prepared, and be as flexible as you are able. The prevalence of illness and probable increases in those who report symptoms means that you should be prepared to shift your teaching modes. *A pivot to online learning could be required at any point in the semester and could result from either a New York State mandate or a decision by RIT.* It is important that you plan for this possibility and are **ready** in the event this occurs. A pivot to online could occur for a short period of time at the start of spring semester or sometime during the semester. You may want to take any needed equipment home with you during the holiday break (microphones, webcams, etc.) so that you have the resources that you would need in the event of a pivot at the start of the semester.

Research could also be impacted. Our current academic continuity plans allow for the maintenance of office, laboratory and studio access throughout the semester. This would only change if RIT were ordered to close, as occurred last March. In either case, however, it is important that you plan for the continuity of your research and creative work, especially in the event you or someone on your team needs to self-isolate or quarantine.

How will we handle Recharge Days? Another new element of the spring semester are “Recharge Days”. Three days (February 23, March 24 and April 22) have been built into the calendar to allow students and faculty a day of respite from classes, assignments, and tests. The spring recharge days do not just give students a break from academic work, but faculty as well. To be successful, we all must be both physically and mentally healthy. It is important for everyone to respect those days and not build ANY course expectations or assignments into that time.

Course Modalities? Student schedules for spring are also different. Unlike fall, when course modalities were not completely finalized at the time of registration, students are constructing their spring schedules based on the modalities they believe are best for them. All modalities are displayed in SIS. Because of this, it is critical that instructors follow the published modality for their course throughout the entire semester.

What resources are available to you? We are the best support for each other, but here are a few resources to support your planning:

Teaching & Learning Support:

- [Teaching & Learning Services](#)
- [College Course Advancement Team](#)

Research:

- [General Laboratory Closure Checklist](#)
- [Library](#)

Mental Health and Well-Being Support:

- [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- [Faculty Wellness \(Better Me\)](#)

Stay up to date:

- **Check your email regularly** and watch the [RIT Ready Website](#), and [RIT COVID-19 Alert Levels](#) for ongoing updates and announcements.

Sincerely,

Ellen Granberg, Ph.D.
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs