

Subject: Education Redesign - Spring Update

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From: Peyre, Sarah (Warner School of Education)

To: Warner School Dean's Office

Dear Warner Community,

As we look to the spring semester, we have been watching and continuing to evaluate the implications of living and learning in a world of COVID. Our guiding principles remain the same:

- **Safety.** Keeping our community safe, and for our many students working in schools and community agencies, keeping those organizations, their employees, and their students, patients and clients safe.
- **Quality of education.** Providing a high-quality education that is responsive to the times and prepares our students to contribute to solving some of our most pressing challenges, especially as so much of our teaching, learning and collaboration moves to online spaces.
- **Manage the uncertainty.** Preparing for continued uncertainty with regards to a future vaccine and possible surge over the winter, and the likelihood that there will be no significant changes or game-changing solutions in the near future. An early decision allows faculty, staff and students to best plan and prepare for a successful semester and manage the needs of work, families, and study.
- **Keep students on track in their programs.** Supporting our students to continue making progress in their programs and towards their degrees, regardless of where they are residing, while creating additional opportunities to engage as a community.

Taking this all into consideration, we have come to the decision to **remain online for the spring semester.** In remaining with the university academic calendar, the spring semester will begin February 1, 2021, building in extra time to transition courses effectively to thoughtful and engaging online designs. They will be offered as appropriate for the learning goals for the course using synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction, and will occur at the times/dates indicated on the schedule.

We know that this news is a relief to many and a true disappointment to others. So many of us crave the lively, connected experience of in-person classes, but the reality is that we would simply not be able to return to that in the spring, and many of our students are experiencing travel restrictions. Space constraints, social distancing, and masking would result in an entirely different experience than the one we remember so fondly.

With all of that said, I always welcome the opportunity for feedback and to reflect on our practice. Whether you are faculty, staff or a student, I want to invite you to let me know how it's going and what changes might improve the online learning and community experience for you. Please also do not hesitate to be in touch with me with questions, ideas, or concerns. I know as a faculty, we will continue the conversation as to how we strive in providing excellence in our courses and learning experiences.

Thank you, Warner community, for being flexible, supportive and engaged as we pursue our shared belief **that education can transform lives and make the world more just and humane.**

Meliora,
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