Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for submitting last week the information requested by the Office of the Registrar (OTR) so that the task of assigning classrooms can begin. However, we have been notified by some faculty that they would like to make changes to the information that was submitted, especially in light of the Federal Government announcement regarding international students. On Friday, Deans received spread sheets listing courses that would be designated as Online delivery and were asked by OTR to review that information make corrections if necessary. This message provides some additional detail and context to that request.

Students will begin making adjustments to their Fall courses on July 20. It is very important that all changes to the course schedule be completed by then, so that students, particularly the international students, can have all the information they need as they adjust their schedules. Therefore, we ask that the OTR be notified of any changes as soon as possible, but no later than the close of business on Thursday, July 16. One of the main things the OTR will need to have specified for each course is the method of instruction. For the course schedule, there are only two choices: “face-to-face” and “online.” Rice policy 846 as well as our accrediting agency (SACSCOC) consider a course “online” if 50% or more of the instruction is delivered with the students and the instructor not in the same place. Please note, the term dual delivery is not a method of instruction. Dual delivery requires that course material be available to students who gather in a classroom as well as students engaging only remotely. For dual delivery, the instructor may be present in-person in the classroom or may be projected into the classroom (theater style) so that they engage with students in real time. However, unless the instructor is present in-person >50% of the time, the method of instruction is considered “online” and the course must be labelled as such in the course schedule. With the new directives from the Federal Government, our international students must take a minimum number of “face-to-face” courses that contribute to their proper progress to their degree, so it is extremely important that there are enough “face-to-face” courses available for our students.

Thank you all for everything you have done to prepare for instruction to resume this Fall. We appreciate that it is a confusing and uncertain time and that the parameters defining the semester continue to change. We are all trying to adapt to an uncertain environment, and it is indeed a challenge. Again, please submit any information on additional changes to the OTR as soon as possible but no later than COB on Thursday, July 16. In order to accommodate the needs of our international students, we encourage departments to consider how they might be able to offer more courses that meet the criteria for “face-to-face” designation. For example, switching instructors in courses that might need to be “online” due to faculty health concerns, or moving smaller courses from the Spring to the Fall, or breaking up courses that have projected enrollments greater than 25 are all ways that this could be accomplished, and I am sure there are many more.

Thank you all,

Chris Johns-Krull, ARC Chair