Dear colleagues:

As we prepare to resume in-person instruction next week, I want to thank you for your flexibility and forbearance over the first, rocky weeks of the semester. With the Omicron surge now receding and the Bay Area preparing to lift many restrictions on in-person gatherings, I look forward to seeing many of you in the weeks ahead as we welcome our students back to campus. This message addresses questions related to health and safety and fall 2022.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Rigorous health and safety standards remain in effect at San Francisco State, and anyone returning to campus should continue to monitor the Campus Comeback website for up-to-date guidance about vaccination requirements, free on-campus testing, mask requirements and supply sources, and other relevant public health information and guidelines.

With the return to face-to-face instruction just around the corner, I know faculty and staff have some pressing questions related to their return. I'll summarize answers to the most urgent:

1. Although state and some local authorities are beginning to lift mask mandates, we will continue our masking policy (KN-95 masks are available from building coordinators and the Cesar Chavez Student Center).
2. Boosters are required for students, faculty and unrepresented employees as of Feb. 28. Represented staff are encouraged to get their boosters while the CSU awaits the meet and confer process with the unions.
3. Students and employees who have received exemptions will be required to test regularly. Students who do not comply will be withdrawn from courses. Employees who do not comply will be referred to Human Resources.
4. If a student in your class tests positive, they are required to isolate for 10 days, but can test back into class after five days. This also applies to employees.

For more details, faculty and staff can consult FAQs that address topics and scenarios related to health and safety in the classroom, studios and labs, as well as the Instructional Continuity website. Any questions that aren’t addressed on these sites can be submitted to this link. Additional questions can be directed to Carleen Mandolfo, AVP for Faculty Affairs. Finally, data and dashboards tracking San Francisco COVID cases can be found at this website.

FALL 2022 PLANNING

With planning now underway, I also want to share guidelines to help departments prepare course schedules for
the next academic year and beyond. Even as we negotiate this transitional phase of the pandemic, this is the right
time to look ahead and consider—now in a less reactive and more purposeful way—what kind of university we
wish to be for our students, supported by our core values. Driving our fall planning efforts is a commitment to
rebuilding our campus-based community, starting with a robust offering of in-person classes.

We know that the pandemic has been very hard on students. Many have not flourished in fully online
environments--and too many, disengaged by online learning experiences in high school, have elected not to enroll
in college at all. Nationwide, data on student enrollment and experiences under COVID have been sobering. High
school graduates of the class of 2020 were 6.8% less likely to enroll in college than their 2019 counterparts;
additional declines for the class of 2021 brought that figure to 7.8%. Graduates of high-poverty high schools saw
an even steeper enrollment decline of 11.4%, with larger drops still among BIPOC students. Moreover, at a time
when peer-to-peer contact plays a critical role in their development, students’ prolonged isolation has been
detrimental to their mental health and wellness. In a study of 46,000 college students nationwide, a third of
respondents reported major depression and anxiety disorders—doubling pre-pandemic levels--with low-income,
BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students disproportionately affected. The very students whom we are most committed to
serving are the ones most likely to suffer the worst effects of the prolonged isolation of a fully-online learning
environment—or to forego college enrollment entirely. For their sake, it is important that we rebuild our campus
as a welcoming, supportive community, with a vibrant, in-person learning environment.

This semester we offered just over 50% of classes in person, with departmental variations reflecting student
learning needs across the disciplines. In fall 2022 we aim to increase in-person, undergraduate offerings to 75%
campus-wide, allowing variations across departments in a range from 70% to 80%, as appropriate to student
learning needs. (Graduate programs may include a higher ratio of online classes but, like all programs, must
maintain at least 51% in-person instruction--unless they decide to change their modality—as required by our
accreditor, WASC.) While we can’t predict the state of the pandemic by next fall, we have reason to hope for
continued improvement—and we’ll prepare to move online if the need arises, whether because of COVID or
disruptions such as wildfire smoke that make resilient course design an ongoing imperative. This 75%
undergraduate in-person target reflects the value of continued innovation in online learning, while renewing the
centrality of our in-person curriculum--particularly for the students most likely to benefit from it.

As departments and colleges build fall 2022 course schedules that prioritize student enrollment need and degree
progress, they should bear this overall target in mind—while reviewing evidence of student learning outcomes in
order to determine appropriate modalities for specific courses. Support for making such determinations can be
found through the Instructional Continuity Website and CEETL. Some programs—particularly those serving
primarily advanced and graduate students--may find that student learning and achievement are best supported
through online or hybrid modalities; should they wish to make these changes permanent, they should use this
planning template as a guide. But the experience of the last two years has confirmed that many students—
undergraduate, lower-division students especially--thrive in face-to-face environments, which foster experiential
learning and vital peer interaction. We expect a strong return to campus-based instruction to benefit them,
supported by a healthy range of in-person student activities and services.

As teaching, learning, and curriculum evolve in the post-pandemic years, we will continue to adapt to meet the
changing needs of our students and the world for which we’re preparing them. The experience of the last two
years has shown us how well we can rise to the challenge. Again, I’m grateful for your continued hard work on
behalf of our students, and wish you a successful semester.

Best wishes,

Jennifer Summit
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs