Dear colleagues:

As you’ve learned from the President’s message, the University will delay the start of in-person instruction to allow for the current Omicron surge to stabilize and for members of our campus community to receive boosters. All courses will begin in virtual modality from January 24 through the first three weeks of the semester.

While we expect in-person courses to resume face-to-face instruction on February 14, we anticipate granting a limited number of exceptions to courses that must begin the semester in person. These include courses for which hands-on experience and in-person pedagogy are required to deliver core student learning outcomes in the first three weeks of the semester and cannot be delayed until February 14.

In order to allow timely notification of students, exceptions will need to be submitted and reviewed on a very short timeline. If you are scheduled to teach such a course and wish it to be considered for an exception, please submit a request to your chair immediately and no later than the end of Tuesday, January 11 with a brief justification of why a three-week delay of in-person instruction would be detrimental to student learning outcomes. Requests that are initiated after Tuesday, January 11 may be too late to be considered for an exception. Chairs will submit their proposals by the end of Wednesday, January 12 to the college dean/associate dean, and chairs will work with deans to review and approve exceptions. Once exceptions are approved by the college dean or associate dean by the end of January 13, departments must notify students by the end of January 14 that their course will begin the semester in person.
Courses that are approved for exceptions and allowed to begin the semester face-to-face must also include alternative arrangements for students who are unable to begin the semester in person due to illness or other health precautions. Faculty will be responsible for providing these alternative arrangements.

Planning courses under such rapidly-changing and unpredictable circumstances is extremely challenging, and I’m extremely grateful for your hard work to maintain high-quality instruction. Your efforts make a difference: in a recent survey, our students expressed their overwhelming appreciation for your teaching and support over the past year. As you plan for the new semester, I call your attention to resources currently available to you through The Center for Equity and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CEETL):

- CEETL’s Teaching Through Transitions course helps SF State faculty prepare their courses for unexpected changes in learning mode (participating faculty receive a $1250 stipend upon completion).
- The Instructor Planning Guide on the SF State Resilient Teaching and Learning Resources website provides suggested syllabus statements to help you prepare students to keep learning during these types of disruptions.
- For personal assistance, you can schedule a virtual one-on-one consultation with a CEETL instructional designer by emailing iteach@sfsu.edu.

For updated information about the campus’s COVID-19 planning, health and safety efforts, please visit the Campus Comeback website. If you haven’t already, please also remember to upload your vaccination status to My Health, to help keep our campus healthy and safe.

To close, I want to thank you again for your extraordinary efforts in this most extraordinary time. I wish you all the best for the new semester and the new year.

Best wishes,

Jennifer Summit
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs