Dear colleagues:

Thanks to your hard work, fall 2021 is off to a promising start. In the face of many challenges, we can be proud of all we’ve done to support educational excellence and equity, as well as the health and safety of our campus community.

Planning for spring 2022 is now underway, and I’m writing with guidelines to support chairs and faculty in building the spring course schedule; guidelines specific to staff and managers will be sent in two to three weeks. Deans and associate deans will follow up with departments to support their planning in the days and weeks ahead.

For the spring, departments should plan to offer a mix of in-person and online classes that includes more in-person offerings than we had this fall. As always, our driving goal is to ensure educational quality and student success, while continuing to maintain the health and safety standards that have made our campus one of the safest in the state and nation.

We recently completed a survey of our students, and over 10,000 undergraduates and graduate students responded by sharing their preferences for spring semester enrollment: detailed survey results will be shared with departments within the week. Taking students’ input into account, which aligns with current accreditation standards, we expect to offer at least half of our courses in person and the rest online. There will be variations across programs, reflecting their distribution of enrollments: for example, among the responses, which deans will discuss further with departments, students in some majors express a clear preference for face-to-face classes, lower-division students report the highest demand for in-person learning, while the preferences of graduate students generally skew toward online.

As they plan their schedules, departments should consider both student input and faculty experience with student achievement in different modalities, which should inform their determination of which classes to offer in person or online. They should also make sure to distribute face-to-face teaching assignments equitably among all their faculty—tenured and tenure-track as well as lecturer faculty—and align course offerings to support student degree progress and enrollment demand.

Our goal is to offer all students the option of taking at least two courses in the major face-to-face. To meet this goal, all faculty should prepare to teach one or two courses face-to-face—or more, if student and curricular need require it—unless exceptional circumstances suggest otherwise. (Of course, should the pandemic shift direction, we will return to online modalities following health and safety guidelines.)

Again, thank you for your collaboration and hard work as we plan for a successful spring semester.

Best wishes,
Jennifer

Jennifer Summit
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
San Francisco State University