

From: [Summers, Greg](#)
Subject: Update on Spring Classes
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Dear Students,

As UW-Stevens Point nears the end of the fall 2020 semester, we're eager to welcome you back next spring with changes in place aimed at transitioning to a more familiar way of teaching and learning.

Over the past month, the university conducted several surveys of students, faculty, and staff members to gather information on how people experienced the fall semester. We organized a faculty and student workgroup to review this data and make recommendations for improvements in the spring term. We plan to implement many of these suggestions, including:

- Improving communication through consistent Canvas practices
- Asking instructors to provide more frequent check-ins with students regarding course content and workload
- Ensuring that students have ample lead time in knowing assignments, and flexibility when circumstances related to the pandemic make coursework difficult.

Among the biggest challenges both students and faculty identified was connecting with one another while shifting between the online, in-person, and hybrid course formats required by the pandemic. Based on this experience, we want to transition back to a more familiar classroom experience. To achieve this, the workgroup recommended that students participate in class sessions as listed in the timetable, which means at their scheduled times and in their scheduled modalities (in-person, scheduled-time virtual classroom, or online). What does this mean in practice?

- Faculty will still provide flexibility for students who need to be absent from scheduled classes due to illness or because they need to quarantine.
- Students who are living far from campus or do not wish to attend in person because of the pandemic should contact instructors in advance—as soon as possible—to discuss options. We will encourage instructors to make virtual/online accommodations; however, this may not be possible for all courses.
- Students needing maximum flexibility should register for 100% online sections, when available.

This change will help to foster a more familiar and consistent learning experience and greater opportunities for students and faculty to work together during what we hope is one final semester of pandemic challenges. Be assured that we will work with you to complete necessary degree requirements that may be impacted by this change. Students should contact their advisors if they need to adjust their schedules.

Finally, as we look ahead to registration for the fall 2021 semester, I'm happy to report we are tentatively planning a more normal fall at UW-Stevens Point. Given the promising news regarding vaccines that provide immunity to COVID-19, we will plan a fall 2021 schedule of classes that assumes we will need less of the physical distancing that so transformed our current academic year. We will make appropriate adjustments next fall if necessary. However, we are genuinely hopeful that an end to the pandemic is in sight and our continued perseverance through the months ahead will be rewarded.

I wish you a successful conclusion to your fall courses, and we look forward to seeing you return this spring.

Greg

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