



The University of Texas at Austin  
Office of the Executive Vice President  
and Provost

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Dear faculty colleagues,

I am writing to update you on changes to the university's plans for the start of the fall semester. The COVID-19 situation across Texas, and particularly in Austin, remains serious. Many faculty members have shared their frustrations and concerns regarding the health and safety of our community.

President Hartzell and I have listened to this feedback, and have approved the two options listed below to provide more flexibility to faculty, while also providing high-quality, in-person experiences for UT students. Both options apply between Wednesday, 25 August and Friday, 17 September. Classes will be scheduled to revert to their original delivery modality on Monday, 20 September.

- Deans now have the authority to approve a limited number of requests from faculty for *temporary* changes to teaching modality. Faculty will receive information from their respective deans later this week about how these temporary requests should be routed, and deans will review these applications.
- All faculty have the option of teaching with a reduced classroom density, with a goal of providing each student with at least one in-person experience per week in the course. Some examples of cohort models were included in my [email](#) from last week.

The Provost's Office is also in the process of finalizing additional [FAQs](#) for faculty regarding how faculty should communicate with students about the importance of masking and the types of incentives that faculty, departments, and schools/colleges can provide for masking in classes. UT will also be creating incentives for students to get vaccinated.

We will continue to assess the situation in Austin, and should further

adjustments to our fall semester be warranted, we will communicate those to you directly. I realize these circumstances are very stressful for many in our community. I will keep you updated as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. L. Wood', written in a cursive style.

**SHARON L. WOOD** | Executive Vice President and Provost  
The University of Texas at Austin | [provost.utexas.edu](http://provost.utexas.edu)

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