Updated Tuesday, July 7, 2020

INSTRUCTION AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Instruction

Undergraduate Students Instruction Model
Virginia State University will begin fall 2020 classes on Monday, August 17, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 health and safety recommendations, and in an effort to remain flexible and maintain low-density classrooms, VSU will offer multiple modalities of course delivery: Online/Remote Instruction, Face-to-Face Instruction, Hybrid (combination of face-to-face and remote learning), HyFlex and Flexible Instruction. Each course delivery method is defined below:

- **Face-to-Face** – These courses will meet in-person at the established time and location on campus.

- **Online-Asynchronous** – These courses involve coursework that is delivered via web, email and message boards, or online forums. Students complete the work at their own pace adhering to established due dates/deadlines set by the instructor. Students in these courses are **not** required to be on campus.

- **Online-Synchronous** – These courses involve online studies through chat and videoconferencing in real-time. Student participation is expected during **scheduled** class times. In the virtual classroom students may ask, and teachers answer questions instantly. Students in these courses are **not** required to be on campus.

- **Hybrid** - These courses may have scheduled in-person sessions and remote components. Students must be available to attend in-person sessions on campus.

- **HyFlex** - These courses are delivered in-person and online at the same time by the same faculty member. Most students will attend the class in-person. A limited number of students will be allowed to attend virtually. All student participation is expected during scheduled class times.

- **Flex** – This mode of delivery may consist on any of the teaching scenarios, including in-person, asynchronous and synchronous classroom experiences. Students must be available to attend on-campus sessions.
The following groups of students will have priority for face-to-face classes:

- New and Returning Freshmen (Student with fewer than 30 credit hours)
- Seniors (Students with 90 credits or more)
- Student Athletes (All Classifications)
- Student Leaders (All Classifications)
- Commuter Students (All Classifications - based on course availability and capacity)

Note: Returning residential students and commuter students can utilize any combination of the modalities of course delivery noted above.

**Graduate Students Instruction Model**

**Hybrid Graduate Instruction Model**

This model provides face-to-face, online, and hybrid courses for graduate students. With limited classroom capacity due to social distancing requirements, priority for face-to-face instruction will be primarily for courses that require hands-on activities and access to specialized equipment/instruction. Although graduate students will be a part of the commuter population, it is our belief that as working professionals and mature students, they will adhere to all CDC and VHD guidelines and processes to ensure the safety and well-being of the campus community. Graduate students engaging in face-to-face instruction will be required to adhere to the University’s Face-to-Face Instruction Safety Protocols.

Graduate Assistants (GAs) will be expected to complete all required work obligations in accordance with their assigned departments. For some departments, GAs will continue to work remotely, while other departments may require GAs to work on campus, or with a modified schedule to include telework options. GA should consult with department head to determine the appropriate methods for reporting to work.

**Face-to Face Instruction Safety Protocols**

The following protocols will be in place and enforced in classroom settings for face-to-face instruction:

- All classrooms have been restructured to support social distancing for students and faculty.
- Students and faculty are required to wear face masks or cloth face coverings to reduce the potential spread of the COVID-19 from person to person in accordance with Governor Northam’s Executive Order 63.
  - VSU Faculty and Students will be required to wear face masks at all times while engaging in face-to-face instruction.
  - Face coverings must be worn in times when at least six feet physical distancing cannot be maintained.
  - During meetings or gatherings or in narrow hallways or other settings where physical distancing may not be easy to maintain, a face covering must be worn.
- Students and faculty are also encouraged to use hand sanitizing stations at the entrances to classroom buildings prior to entering classrooms.
• Students and faculty are also encouraged to use provided sanitizing wipes to disinfect the surfaces of desks and learning stations both before and after use.
• Students experiencing symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection are strongly encouraged to avoid classroom settings and seek care from either the Student Health Center or their independent health care provider.
• Faculty experiencing symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection are strongly encouraged to avoid classroom settings and seek care from their independent health care provider.

Academic Calendar Updates

The Following adjustments have been made to the academic calendar:
1. There will be no fall break.
2. The last day for face-to-face classes will be Tuesday, Nov. 24.
3. Following Thanksgiving break, students will not return to campus. All remaining instruction and/or assessments will be conducted remotely until the last day of the fall semester, December 7, 2020.
4. All study abroad programs for the fall 2020 semester have been suspended.

The Fall 2020 Academic Calendar is available online.

Student Support Services

The University will provide additional virtual learning supports for online students.
• **Advisement** – Academic advisors will offer virtual meetings for students.
  - **Freshmen** - ACE academic advisors will be available via telephone Monday through Friday from 9:00am – 4:00pm (804-524-3095).
  - **All Other Students** - Please contact your faculty advisor for appointments.
• **Strategic Learning** – Remote tutoring, small group sessions, and academic coaching sessions will be available via zoom. Weekly seminars and/or webinars will be streamed via the internet for both on-campus and remote students.
• **Career Services** – New employment information, internships, and experiential learning opportunities will be communicated via email to all students. This information will also be available via the Career Services website (www.vsu.edu/career-services/). Resume or cover letter can be submitted for review through email (careerservices@vsu.edu). Career Services staff will also conduct virtual career coaching sessions. Please join the Career Services Twitter and Instagram pages for updates on career expos and opportunities.
• **Writing Center** – Assistance with writing assignments is available online and by appointment. Feedback and critique of writing assignment will be offered through the online tutorial service, Smarthinking.
- **University Counseling** - Counseling services will be provided using a hybrid service delivery format. Clinicians will provide counseling services based upon the acuity of the mental health symptoms students are experiencing. For emotional and behavioral health presentations that present a risk of harm to the student or the VSU community or any form of abuse, service delivery may be conducted utilizing traditional face-to-face counseling. Students experiencing any other life or school adjustments may be engaged in tele-mental health services.

The clinician, in collaboration with the student, reserves the right to decide which modality of counseling is appropriate based upon presenting concerns. If the student is not in agreement with the selected modality, they will be linked to a community-based provider of their choice. Due to state regulations, students must be located in the state of Virginia for each counseling session.

- **Student Accessibility Office** – Accessibility and accommodation services will be provided virtually upon request. (804) 524-2990

- **University Libraries** - The Johnston Memorial Library will reopen with reduced hours and reduced staffing. Physical access to the building will be limited to students, faculty, and staff with VSU identification only. Access to online library resources and services will continue to be available through fall 2020.

The physical spaces of the Special Collections and University Archives at Lindsay-Montague Hall will remain closed to the public; however reference and research consultation will be available via email at <refdesk@vsu.edu>, Ask-A-Librarian @ 804-524-5582, and Text-A-Librarian – text to 66746.

- **Office of Student Financial Aid** - The Office of Student Financial Aid will offer quality customer service to students via telephone, email and Zoom meetings. The installation of barrier shields and floor labels for social distancing will serve as additional layers promoting safety as we resume face-to-face interactions by scheduled appointments. Telephone lines are available from 9 am to 4 pm daily.

- **Office of Student Accounts** - The Office of Student Accounts will offer quality customer service to students and parents via telephone, email and Zoom meetings. The installation of barrier shields and floor labels for social distancing will serve as additional layers promoting safety as we resume face-to-face interactions by scheduled appointments. Telephone lines are available from 9 am to 4 pm daily. The staff is committed to delivering superior customer service to students and their families in meeting their educational financial obligations.

- **The Cashier Office** - The Cashier Office will offer quality cashiering and customer service to students and parents via telephone, on-line payment options, cashiering services and Zoom meetings. The installation of barrier shields and floor labels for social distancing and banners will serve as additional layers promoting safety as we resume face-to-face interactions by scheduled appointments. Telephone lines are available from 9 am to 4 pm daily and our on-line payment options can be accessed at: http://www.vsu.edu/student-accounts/online-payments.php.
Greetings VSU Students,

As we continue planning for the fall 2020 reopening, the health and safety of our faculty, staff, and students remains a priority. We are committed to adhering to all health and safety guidelines to ensure a successful semester. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classroom space with adequate social distancing capacity is limited; therefore, instruction for the fall 2020 semester will be offered for all Virginia State University students using multiple modalities. Below, please find a detailed explanation of the different methods of delivery for course instruction. While students may select any combination of classes, please note that some methods require students to be present for on-campus sessions while others may be done virtually.

Students may choose to reside on campus even if they are not enrolled in face to face classes. While first preference for housing is given to freshmen, seniors, student leaders, and athletes, **ALL OTHER STUDENTS** will be considered for on-campus housing pending space availability. Consideration will only be given to **students who have submitted a housing application and paid the $150.00 advance room reservation fee by the extended deadline of Friday, May 1, 2020.** If you have completed the online housing application and paid the advance fee during the initial housing process no further action is required of you. The Housing Office will reach out to you via email and phone call once space becomes available.

The **revised fall 2020 list of courses** is now available online. Please review it carefully as modifications have been made to the method of delivery for most courses. Courses are available via the below methods:

- **Face to Face** – These courses will meet in-person at the established time and location on campus.
- **Online-Asynchronous** – These course involve coursework that is delivered via web, email and message boards, or online forums. Students complete the work at their own pace adhering to established due dates/deadlines set by the instructor. Students in these course are **not** required to be on campus.
- **Online-Synchronous** – These courses involve online studies through chat and videoconferencing in real-time. Student participation is expected during scheduled class times. In the virtual classroom students may ask, and teachers answer questions instantly. Students in these course are **not** required to be on campus.
- **Hybrid** - These courses may have scheduled in-person sessions and remote components. Students must be available to attend in-person sessions on campus.
- **HyFlex** - These courses are delivered in-person and online at the same time by the same faculty member. Most students will attend the class in-person. A limited number of students will be allowed to attend virtually. All student participation is expected during scheduled class times.
- **Flex** – This mode of delivery may consist on any of the teaching scenarios, including in-person, asynchronous and synchronous classroom experiences. Students must be available to attend on-campus sessions.

Students may now register for classes and/or review and revise their existing schedule via [Banner Self-Service](#).
We are excited to continue providing our VSU students with a quality and transformative educational experience in fall 2020.

**Updated June 22, 2020**

Our plans remain flexible as we monitor any new COVID-19 mandates. We realize that circumstances surrounding COVID-19 may necessitate adjustments to our plan; and we are prepared to alter it as necessary. We will begin fall 2020 face-to-face classes on Monday, August 17, 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 health and safety recommendations, we will limit the capacity of our on-campus/residential community to freshmen (students with fewer than 30 credits), student leaders, student athletes and seniors (students with 90 credits or more). This population of students will have priority in enrolling in face-to-face courses. All other students will be commuting or online students. Commuting students will be provided an option of taking online, face-to-face or hybrid courses depending on class availability. Depending on requirements for their major, some students may choose a course load that is fully online/remote.

To afford students an opportunity to make a well informed decision prior to making travel arrangements or securing housing, a full schedule of all classes will be made available no later than July 1, 2020.

The following adjustments have been made to the academic calendar:

1) There will be no fall break.
2) The last day for face-to-face classes will be **Tuesday, Nov. 24**.
3) Following Thanksgiving break, students will not return to campus. All remaining instruction and/or assessments will be conducted remotely until the last day of the fall semester, **December 11, 2020**.

**Course Delivery:**

In an effort to remain flexible and maintain low-density classrooms, VSU will offer three modalities of course delivery: Online/Remote Instruction, Face-to-Face Instruction, and Hybrid (combination of face-to-face and remote learning) Instruction. The methods of course delivery described below are subject to change contingent upon new information provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the Virginia Department of Health.

- **ONLINE/REMOTE INSTRUCTION**
  A large number of classes in all disciplines will be offered remotely or in an online format. All VSU students will be able to take a full complement of online classes that ensures their matriculation and timely graduation. Students should consult their academic advisors or the ACE Advising Center when selecting courses.

- **FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION**
  Virginia State University faculty will provide face-to-face instruction. Total enrollment in these classes will be restricted by social distancing guidelines. Priority in face-to-face courses will be given to freshmen (students with fewer than 30 credits), student leaders, student athletes and seniors (students with 90 credits or more). Other students may enroll in these courses based on the capacity of the class.

- **HYBRID INSTRUCTION**
  (combination of face-to-face/remote/online learning)
Hybrid courses allow flexibility in the learning environment. Instruction is provided through a combination of face-to-face, remote, and online learning experiences. Only residential or commuting students may enroll in the hybrid courses.

The University will provide additional virtual learning supports for online students. We will continue to monitor the virus and make adjustments as necessary.

NOTE: All study abroad programs for the fall 2020 semester have been suspended.