

From the Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee

WHEREAS COVID-19 case counts have been rapidly increasing in Knox County and the county has been designated as an area of high transmission by the CDC¹; and

WHEREAS the University of Tennessee, Knoxville has mandated a return to full-capacity in-person teaching during Fall 2021; and

WHEREAS physical distancing in classrooms is not possible; and

WHEREAS the vaccination status of the campus population is not known; and

WHEREAS the CDC guidance for Institutions of Higher Education² states, “Particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission, IHEs in collaboration with their local or state health department may consider maintaining or implementing additional prevention strategies including physical distancing and mask use indoors by all students, faculty, staff, and other people such as visitors, including those who are fully vaccinated”;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that, in the interest of the health and safety of UTK and the broader Knoxville community, decisions about course modality be returned to individual faculty members, and that, in consultation with their department head, faculty have the right to choose online delivery of their courses in response to the current, evolving pandemic situation.

¹<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view> (searched for Knox County on September 7th, 2021)

²<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html#section>