

Move to Remote Teaching and Learning for First Week of Classes

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To: Rojas, Jason <Jason.Rojas@trincoll.edu>

Dear Students,

Please see the message below from Dean Cardenas to the faculty regarding a decision to move to remote teaching and learning for the first week of classes. We have made this decision in anticipation of an unprecedented number of students, staff, and faculty needing to isolate because of a positive pre-arrival test or from their first on-campus PCR test taken on arrival. We expect to return to in-person learning at the start of the second week of classes.

It is essential that students return to campus on time January 26-30. Doing so will allow our community to provide appropriate support for students who do test positive while mitigating disruption to the start of the classes. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jason Rojas, Chief of Staff and Associate Vice President for External Relations

Joe DiChristina, Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

I hope you had a restful break. I am writing to let you know that the first week of the semester will be remote. This may not be the start to the New Year we all wanted, but I am confident we will get through it.

The plan is for students to return to campus between January 26-30, and for the semester to still begin on Monday, January 31. However, to best respond to an expected rise in the positivity rate on campus, and ensure the least amount of disruption as we start the semester, all faculty should prepare to teach remotely during the first week of classes. This should allow us to return quickly and safely to in-person learning in the second week of classes.

As we look to external expert guidance and trends across higher education, we anticipate a high percentage of the campus population testing positive prior to or upon returning to campus. Like many of our peers, we are currently close to 10% of students on campus testing positive, either through pre-arrival tests or from their first campus PCR test; and the positivity rate in Connecticut is over 20%. We could start the semester with an unprecedented number of students (and faculty) having to isolate, which would prove highly disruptive to learning.

To ensure an equitable experience for all students, and best support faculty, we are making this decision now. We recognize that switching learning modes will require adjustments and preparation on your part, and the sooner you know the better. In case it is helpful, this page on [Online Learning Resources for Trinity Faculty](#) provides extensive guidance on teaching remotely.

As you prepare for the first week, keep in mind that teaching remotely at Trinity does require synchronous engagement with students during the scheduled class period (not during other times, which may conflict with courses or activities). This real-time interaction is essential to our mission as a liberal arts college and ensures that we comply with Trinity's credit-hour policies. Faculty who have questions about teaching remotely should feel free to consult with their department chair/program director.

The Covid Steering Committee will write with other updates to campus policies. In the meantime, please let us know if you have questions or concerns. While this is of course not an ideal start to the semester, it is an intentionally proactive attempt to balance health and safety with our core educational mission.

Yours sincerely,

Sonia Cardenas
Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Professor of Political Science