To: All College of Fine Arts Faculty Members

From: Dean Doug Dempster

Subj: Faculty Absence and Travel Policies During COVID Pandemic

Date: August 3, 2020

Faculty Absence: Though most teaching will certainly be online this coming semester, many students are returning to Austin in hopes of some non-virtual instruction. While conditions today are not encouraging, our aspiration is to offer students opportunities for in-person instruction when public health guidance determines that to be prudent.

Whether you are teaching online, in person or a hybrid of the two, your students should be receiving regularly scheduled, substantive instruction. Please see the existing policy on faculty absences for guidance on absence from scheduled classes.

If you should need to be absent from teaching for any extended period, please notify your division head and chair/director to work out some plan for substitution. The sooner you can anticipate an absence, the better. But please be extremely cautious about avoiding in-person instruction whenever you suspect infection or exposure or feel sick. Substitute instruction will be found and/or hired in your absence.

Faculty whose courses are scheduled entirely online this semester may be considering teaching from a location remote from Austin. You may do so with the permission of your chair or director whom you should consult about any extended absence from Austin.

Faculty whose courses are scheduled as hybrid, should be preparing to teach in person when public health conditions allow. This doesn’t preclude those faculty teaching from remote locations, but once again, you should seek permission from your chair/director and you should be prepared to return to campus as soon as conditions allow in person instruction.

Faculty Travel: The current prohibition on university-sanctioned travel for business or study has been extended through December 31, 2020. Exceptions will be processed by deans or vice presidents for domestic travel and by Texas Global for international travel.

Travel to and from Austin, from a second home, is a personal expense that will not be reimbursed with university funds, including endowments associated with a professorship or chair. Travel between a second home and Austin is not reimbursable even when university-related research, teaching or other professional activity is pursued while residing in the second home. Research, teaching or professional expenses while residing in a second home are reimbursable in the same manner they would be for legitimate research expenses incurred while living in Austin.

Exceptions must be approved in advance, in writing by a department chair/director or by the dean. This college policy addressing travel between a second home and Austin will persist after the COVID pandemic ends.