

**From:** [Perna, Laura W](#)  
**To:** [Office of the Faculty Senate](#); [Braham, William W](#); [Gadsden, Vivian Lynette](#); [Jamieson, Kathleen Hall](#)  
**Cc:** [Walsh, J. Patrick](#); [Detlefsen, Karen](#); [Dube, Benoit](#); [Heuer, Jack](#); [Papageorge, Anne](#); [Winkelstein, Beth A](#); [Hunter, Lynne A](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Faculty Senate Webinar - Unaddressed Questions  
**Date:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 9:47:42 AM

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Dear colleagues,

Thank you very much for hosting last week's Faculty Senate Seminar. We appreciate your ongoing attention to identifying and communicating the needs and concerns of the faculty, and thank you for your partnership as we work to address them. To address the questions that faculty raised at the Seminar, we are including below the most up-to-date information about policies and resources.

Penn operates with the expectation that our students receive – and reap the benefits of – an in-person pedagogical experience. Undergraduate courses that are expected to be taught in person can be offered online only with permission of the department chair and undergraduate dean. Graduate courses that are expected to be taught in person can be offered online only with permission of the department chair and/or dean. Short-term shifts to remote delivery may be permitted if necessary - for instance, if an instructor is required to quarantine while still being able to teach or if a significant number of students in a course are required to quarantine.

The University has prepared a detailed and continually updated [FAQ for instructors in this semester](#) and provides extensive and continually updated information on [public health guidance, testing, and vaccines](#). The Center for Teaching and Learning offers a wide range of [strategies and resources for teaching this semester](#), including detailed [strategies for teaching with masks](#). Instructors are welcome to conduct their in-person classes outdoors, and there is a process in place for instructors to [request mask exceptions](#).

Data on COVID cases at Penn are [publicly available](#) and updated every Tuesday. Contact tracing data on our campus have yet to document a single case of classroom or office transmission. Any member of the Penn community may be tested as often as they would like, at no cost to them. The odds of contracting COVID [in a community where nearly all are vaccinated](#) are low. The University continuously monitors Penn's transmission rates, alongside those of our neighboring communities, and reviews [alert levels](#). Should the risk assessment associated with classroom teaching change, we will make accommodations accordingly and quickly communicate with faculty and other members of our community.

We are very sensitive to the needs of members of the Penn community who are experiencing caregiving challenges as a result of the pandemic. On September 23, we are holding a special Zoom session on [resources for caregiving](#) in partnership with Penn Forum for Women Faculty and with presentations from Human Resources. We also encourage caregivers to talk directly with their dean, department chair, or supervisor about their concerns and to learn more about our resources for [backup care](#), [child care](#), and [senior care](#). Faculty with medical concerns may request a medical accommodation from the [Office of Affirmative Action](#).

We are continuing to work to clarify and communicate other policies and procedures. New FAQs focused specifically on [classroom risk and contact tracing](#) were posted yesterday. As these FAQs

indicate, in light of our current campus positivity rates, vaccination rates, and mask mandate, there is currently no need for seating charts. The nature of classroom interactions is considered low to no risk.

Thank you again for your attention to these important issues. We look forward to continuing to work together to address our shared goals and concerns.

Laura, Karen, Benoit, Jack, and Anne

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**From:** Office of the Faculty Senate <senate@pobox.upenn.edu>

**Date:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 at 5:56 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Faculty Senate Webinar - Unaddressed Questions

Dear Benoit, Laura, Jack, and Anne –

The Tri-Chairs have asked me to share the remaining questions left over from yesterday's webinar. Many of the questions are duplicative and we welcome your grouping them together in offering replies. I have also included the raw Q&A Log as a reference, which also contain "upvotes" that you might find helpful. (The non-chronological order of the Q&A Log is an unfortunate function of the BlueJeans system.)

The Tri-Chairs also want to feature these questions in particular:

1. The Tri chairs requested via memo to Laura Perna on August 19 that those whose appeals were in process be permitted to work remotely until a decision was rendered, and we reiterate our position.
2. Penn prides itself on being family friendly. We want to bring back a question about what accommodations the University was making for those whose childcare options have been constrained by closed daycare centers and the absence of care takers willing to work in people's homes. Are deans open to requests for remote work by those who would otherwise have to bring their children to the University and subject them to the attendant risks? Is the University able to provide on campus on demand care for such children in a safe fully vaccinate specified center?
3. We want to bring back a question whose premise may have been misunderstood. We asked why, if the teacher taught online successfully last year, had good evaluations, and surveys their class to determine whether it would prefer being online or in person and finds that the class would prefer being online, would the university object to the faculty member doing so?

4.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] What will happen to faculty who decide to simply teach online?

Thank you,  
Patrick

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**J. Patrick Walsh, M.S.Ed.**

Executive Assistant, [University Faculty Senate](#)

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