FACULTY SENATE
The University of Oklahoma
Norman Campus

STATEMENT ON THE FALL 2020 SAFE AND RESILIENT (SAR)
INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

July 15, 2020

The number of COVID-19 cases in Norman, Cleveland County, and the state of Oklahoma are rising dramatically. The University of Oklahoma created the Safe and Resilient (SAR) plan for returning to largely in-person instruction in Fall 2020 based on the strong preference expressed by parents and students for in-person instruction. We understand that there is an ongoing high-stakes balancing act necessary as we try to mitigate a financial crisis during this pandemic, while keeping everyone in the OU community safe and maintaining excellence in our instructional practices. However, given the current surge in COVID-19 cases in Oklahoma and Texas, we cannot prioritize finances ahead of faculty, student, and staff health. Further, the desire of students for primarily in-person instruction may not take into account that the safety precautions required for in-person instruction may foreclose the kinds of interactions that make a meaningful and optimal classroom experience, while still putting faculty and students at risk of exposure.

The position of the OU Norman Campus Faculty Senate Executive Committee is that

a) An instructor should not need to disclose personal or medical information in order to teach online.

b) Any instructor should be allowed to teach their Fall 2020 courses online due to COVID-19 risk to themselves, someone in their household, or someone for whom they care. An outbreak among faculty will surely result in serious illnesses, and likely deaths.

c) Departments should be given flexibility to allow faculty who deem it pedagogically necessary to move their course online for Fall 2020, to do so. The instructor may find it infeasible to use pedagogies designed for traditional face-to-face instruction with the current restrictions on in-person engagement.

d) Whether a course begins in person, hybrid, or fully online, all teaching faculty must be directed to be prepared to pivot back to fully online in the event of another full shutdown of campus.

Prof. Amy C. Bradshaw
OU-NC Faculty Senate Chair, 2020-21

Approved unanimously by the members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.