

**From:** [UHD Provost](#)  
**To:** [UHD Provost](#)  
**Subject:** DATE CORRECTION: Soft Opening Update  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 18, 2021 5:01:33 PM

\*\*\* Please see the correct **dates** below. \*\*\*



## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

Dear Colleagues,

As part of our ongoing dialogue about the opening plans, we wanted to confirm our plans and share some additional information based on questions we have received.

All faculty should message students via GatorMail and post announcements by 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, August 20** to explain their plans (or confirm no changes). Also, if you are teaching an online course with synchronous meeting times, please remind students that there are required meetings as per the schedule, as we have reports that some students may still assume that any online course is fully asynchronous.

At noon on **Saturday, August 21**, all BB shells will be automatically opened by IT—please remember that you must combine sections prior to this time if you are planning to do so. Blackboard remains our most consistent method to engage our students and we are directing them there; thus we ask that you leverage this resource for regular messaging, if only to confirm that nothing has changed with your plans.

In terms of soft-opening plans, faculty are expected to offer at least one in-classroom experience each week if you are scheduled for a class with an in-person component.

In addition to the information from August 13 (attached above), we offer additional clarifications as follows:

- We continue to support decisions for the soft opening that maximize opportunities for reduced density on campus.
- If you have a 2x/week course, you can choose to hold class as scheduled on both days and ask students to attend. Some students may express concerns and as such, you should be prepared to respond to that in terms of your class policies or other options that you are comfortable with. Please direct students with COVID-related issues to 1) [report diagnosis or exposure](#) via forms on the right side of the page and/or 2) contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) for possible short-term accommodations.
- Note on technology: not all classrooms are equipped with a webcam and if they are, the Zoom capacity is limited to the desktop webcam without tracking and audio range is not robust. If you want to offer this to students for the first three weeks, you will need to understand what that looks like in your specific classrooms. If you are in a HyFlex room (see [list](#)), and would like to try to use this for the first three weeks, please seek training from Nikhil Bhatt's team in order to use the advanced technology.
- If you have a hybrid class, you still need to offer an in-classroom experience but as with the 2 day/week schedule, they do not need to be required attendance experiences for

students—they may be supplemental but faculty should be available in the scheduled classroom space for that experience.

- Faculty may offer virtual office hours, but should work to schedule an in-person meeting upon student request.

We recognize the challenges posed by the uncertainties of our fall planning and very much appreciate the extra effort required by each faculty member to make decisions and changes to your carefully planned semester vision. We will share information as often and openly as we can regarding additional issues and changes. Please contact your department and college leadership or anyone in my office with questions.

Thank you,  
Akif Uzman  
Interim Provost & Senior Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs