Survey of Faculty on Tulane University Reopening Plan

I. Executive Summary

On May 1, 2020, Tulane University announced that all students, staff, contract workers, and faculty would return in Fall to an on-ground, in-person campus experience. According to President Mike Fitts, the “first, and foremost” principle guiding Tulane’s Reopening Committees “is the health and safety of the Tulane community. This is non-negotiable.” At the time, the Louisiana Department of Health reported a 7-day average of 317 COVID-19 cases. Six weeks later this number had risen by 410% to 1891. New Orleans has seen a similar trend over the same period, with the 7-day average of reported cases rising by 239%, from 30 to 101. With this rapid increase and the August 19 reopening date close at hand, the Tulane University chapter of the AAUP sent an anonymous, short survey on the reopening plans, including teaching and requests for accommodation, to 1806 faculty members. We received 710 responses (39%) during survey period of July 15-16, 2020. Since then, the university has announced its Return to Campus plan and the city of New Orleans determined that public schools would begin online because of the city’s unacceptably high community spread rate.

Key Findings

1. **59% faculty are uncomfortable with Tulane’s reopening plan**: A majority of faculty (59%) are not comfortable with Tulane’s re-opening plan as of July 16. A sizeable number (31%) are “very uncomfortable.” A large majority of SLA (76%), Law (70%), and SSE (65%) faculty are “somewhat” or “very uncomfortable” with the plan.

2. **14% of faculty requested accommodation to teach online only**: University-wide, 14% (98) faculty had asked for an accommodation. Most were granted: 44% by the Dean, 17% by Goldman, while 37% are in process. Faculty comments suggest that many did not believe they would qualify.

3. **Just 23% of faculty favor the return of all students to campus**: A minority of faculty, just 23%, favor the return of all students to campus in Fall. 58% prefer fewer students, with 36% believing that students should not return to campus in Fall and 22% favoring a limited pool of students (e.g., first year and transfer students).

4. **53% prefer hybrid teaching; 43% prefer to teach online only**: If students do return to campus in Fall, faculty are split over preferred instructional mode: 51% prefer a mix of “hybrid and online” teaching and 43% would rather engage in “online only” instruction. This varies by school, e.g., 60% of Law and 56% of SLA faculty would prefer “online only” vs. 22% of SOM faculty.

5. **One-third of faculty offered comments on the reopening plan**: Faculty member comments reveal a range of concerns: communication from the administration, the accommodation process, viral transmission, the pedagogical challenges of hybrid courses, issues related to in-person teaching, the ability of students (and others) to comply with masking and social distancing, childcare and family concerns, and the impacts on the New Orleans community. A large selection of these comments are provided in the appendix.
Recommendations and Conclusions

The survey reveals that the majority of the faculty, and the vast majority of the Uptown faculty, are uncomfortable with the University’s Fall 2020 reopening plan. And only a quarter of faculty support having all students back on campus. We have four key recommendations:

1. **Transparent communication and a commitment to dialogue:** The university must recognize that it has provided limited and incomplete information, leading to increased uncertainty and clarity for the Fall. We all recognize the challenging nature of the COVID-19 crisis; however, faculty are not being consulted nor presented with adequate information on budgetary priorities, risk assessment, and the implementation of public health protocols.

2. **Faculty should determine the appropriate mode of course delivery:** Faculty—experts in their fields with real world teaching experience—should be trusted to select the mode of delivery best suited to their class in the current public health crisis. This is especially important because COVID-19 infection is far more serious and life-threatening for faculty than for students. Many faculty members have expressed anxiety over Tulane’s unclear protocols and its ability to ensure consistent application of necessary public health practices.

3. **Accommodation requests fail to measure faculty preferences on teaching:** We see a disconnect between the number of faculty choosing to follow the formal “accommodation” request process and faculty’s stated preference for online instruction. Although many universities have given faculty a choice over their course mode of delivery, Tulane faculty are required to be "on-ground" in Fall 2020 unless they have received an accommodation through the ADA office or their Dean. We recommend an open window for faculty members to be able to continue requesting accommodations and ongoing administrative support for accommodation requests.

4. **Develop meaningful benchmarks for changes to the reopening plan:** Tulane made the announcement to return on ground in late May when stay-at-home practices in Louisiana and New Orleans led to diminished infection rates that were expected to stay so through the early Fall. This is the reasoning behind Tulane’s earlier opening and closing dates. Unfortunately, the spread of COVID-19 has grown alarmingly as we near the arrival of thousands of students to campus, many coming from current COVID-19 hotspots. We urge the university to recognize the changing conditions on the ground and the widespread faculty concerns expressed in this report, and make decisions driven by an informed public health analysis of community spread within the city.
II. Background to the Survey

The Tulane University Chapter of the AAUP surveyed 1806 Tulane faculty members about the administration’s reopening plan (see Appendix 1 for more details). Because of the subject’s urgency, we collected responses to this anonymous, short online survey (8 questions) over a two-day period, July 15-16, 2020. Respondents were also offered a space for open-ended comments and many shared specific thoughts and concerns. The University has hosted several town halls and webinars, but while the administration indicated that it has surveyed students about the Fall reopening, it did not carry out a survey of faculty regarding Tulane’s Fall plans.

We received 710 responses out of the 1806 faculty across all schools for an overall university-wide response rate of 39%. The response rate when counting only full-time faculty was even higher (46%). See Table 1 for details. All faculty were polled, including tenured and tenure-track, full-time clinical or POP, and part-time, visiting, adjunct, research. Because Tulane AAUP created the list manually based on university websites, some faculty members may have been missed and we believe that adjunct and contingent faculty were disproportionately undercounted. The proportion of tenured and tenure-track faculty among the respondents was 53%, although it varied by school, ranging from 33% in Architecture to 71% in SSE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Overall Response Rate by School and Appointment Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPHTM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>This total does not include 9 individuals who did not provide information on Unit and Appointment Type

<sup>2</sup>The number of full-time faculty was determined by available data from the Tulane University’s online listing.

<sup>3</sup>“Tenure-Track” includes tenured and tenure-track. “POP/Clinical” includes full-time only. “Other” include part time, research, visiting, and adjunct faculty, depending on Unit.
III. Findings

The basic description and bivariate data are presented by school.

In general, how do you feel about the University’s reopening plan for Fall 2020?

Overall, among the 710 responses received, 59% responded they are “very” or “somewhat” uncomfortable, while 21% responded they are “somewhat” comfortable and only 10% were “very” comfortable with the plan. Table 2 presents details by school and Figure 1 provides a summary chart. Note, responses varied little by type of appointment.

Table 2: Degree of Comfort with Reopening by Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Very Comfortable</th>
<th>Somewhat comfortable</th>
<th>Somewhat uncomfortable</th>
<th>Very uncomfortable</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARCH</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>7 (21%)</td>
<td>11 (33%)</td>
<td>11 (33%)</td>
<td>3 (9%)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>10 (5%)</td>
<td>23 (10%)</td>
<td>68 (31%)</td>
<td>160 (45%)</td>
<td>19 (9%)</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>8 (7%)</td>
<td>22 (19%)</td>
<td>38 (34%)</td>
<td>36 (32%)</td>
<td>9 (8%)</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUS</td>
<td>11 (13%)</td>
<td>18 (22%)</td>
<td>25 (30%)</td>
<td>17 (20%)</td>
<td>12 (14%)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
<td>12 (40%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPHTM</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>18 (30%)</td>
<td>16 (27%)</td>
<td>14 (23%)</td>
<td>9 (15%)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOM</td>
<td>29 (24%)</td>
<td>43 (35%)</td>
<td>15 (12%)</td>
<td>18 (15%)</td>
<td>18 (15%)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSW</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (18%)</td>
<td>5 (29%)</td>
<td>8 (47%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOPA</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>6 (27%)</td>
<td>5 (23%)</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>71 (10%)</td>
<td>144 (21%)</td>
<td>192 (27%)</td>
<td>219 (31%)</td>
<td>75 (11%)</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note, responses varied little by type of appointment.

Figure 1: Faculty Comfort with Reopening by School
Do you favor students returning to campus in Fall 2020?

Just 23% of faculty members favor the return of all students to campus in Fall. While 19% claim no opinion, 36% believe students should not return at this time and 22% favor a limited number of students on campus (e.g., first year and transfer students, or another configuration). Table 3 presents these results by school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Do you favor students return to campus in Fall?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPHTM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Created with Dataverse  

What mode of teaching are your classes listed for in Fall?

Among the 588 who reported teaching in fall, 71% report “hybrid” teaching, 14% online only, and 14% both hybrid and online courses. In the open-ended comments, several faculty members in the professional schools indicated that they were expected to teach fully in-person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: What mode of teaching are your classes listed for in Fall?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPHTM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Created with Dataverse)
If students return to campus in Fall, how would you prefer to teach?

Just over half prefer “Hybrid and online” (52%); 45% prefer “Online only.” These vary by school; 60% of Law and 56% of SLA faculty prefer “Online only.” Moreover, of faculty currently slated to teach hybrid courses, 41% would prefer to teach online only.

Table 5: Preferred mode of instruction for Fall 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Hybrid and Online</th>
<th>Online Only</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Assigned Hybrid, Prefer Online Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARCH</td>
<td>18 (55%)</td>
<td>14 (42%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUS</td>
<td>43 (52%)</td>
<td>34 (41%)</td>
<td>6 (7%)</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW</td>
<td>11 (37%)</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>90 (41%)</td>
<td>124 (56%)</td>
<td>6 (3%)</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDM</td>
<td>85 (69%)</td>
<td>27 (22%)</td>
<td>11 (9%)</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOFA</td>
<td>14 (64%)</td>
<td>7 (32%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPHTM</td>
<td>34 (57%)</td>
<td>23 (38%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>58 (51%)</td>
<td>48 (42%)</td>
<td>7 (6%)</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSW</td>
<td>7 (41%)</td>
<td>9 (53%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>360 (51%)</td>
<td>304 (43%)</td>
<td>37 (5%)</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you request an accommodation? If so, what is its status?

University-wide, 14% of faculty respondents had asked for an accommodation. To date, most faculty accommodation requests have been granted: 44% by a Dean, 17% by the Goldman Center. 37% remained in process and 2% of the requests were denied.

Table 6: Requests for Accommodation to Teach Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>No(^1)</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Granted by Goldman Center</th>
<th>Granted by Dean</th>
<th>In Process(^2)</th>
<th>Denied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARCH</td>
<td>27 (82%)</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (83%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUS</td>
<td>79 (95%)</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (75%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW</td>
<td>26 (87%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>2 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>168 (77%)</td>
<td>50 (23%)</td>
<td>13 (26%)</td>
<td>24 (48%)</td>
<td>13 (26%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDM</td>
<td>120 (98%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (67%)</td>
<td>1 (33%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOFA</td>
<td>15 (66%)</td>
<td>7 (32%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (71%)</td>
<td>2 (29%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPHTM</td>
<td>51 (85%)</td>
<td>9 (15%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>5 (56%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>101 (89%)</td>
<td>12 (11%)</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>4 (33%)</td>
<td>6 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSW</td>
<td>15 (88%)</td>
<td>2 (12%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>602 (86%)</td>
<td>97 (14%)</td>
<td>18 (19%)</td>
<td>45 (46%)</td>
<td>29 (30%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Non-answers to this question were coded as “No.”
\(^2\)Non-answers to this question were coded as “In Process”.
Open-ended Comments

We provided space for faculty members to offer their extended responses about the survey and the reopening plans. About 34% of responded elaborated on a range of concerns and issues. Appendix 2 contains a select of these comments arrange around a set of themes that emerged from them:

- **Communication and transparency of the administration**: concerns with lack of transparency, failure in faculty governance, insufficient budgetary information, and confusing and/or mixed messaging.

- **Risks of transmissions and public health measures**: concerns around the potential for aerosol transmission, poor ventilation (hallways, rooms), the possibility of spread outside the “classroom” itself, and uncertainty about the efficacy of testing and tracing plans.

- **The accommodation request process**: concerns about privacy, fear of retribution or stigmatization, and support for faculty self-determination.

- **Appropriate pedagogical models**: concerns about complications and details of “hybrid” and “hyflex” teaching modes and the overall burden of work to prepare as well as the pedagogical effectiveness of socially-distanced and masked in-person teaching, and appropriate classroomb

- **Student adherence to health safety protocols outside the classroom**: many concerns about the ability of young people (and others) to follow the masking and social distancing guidelines, especially outside of the classroom.

- **Childcare and schooling**: faculty with school-aged children indicated problems with the need for in-person/on-ground teaching at Tulane were the K-12 public schools to be online only. (Note: The survey was conducted before the City’s announcement to start the year remotely.)

- **Responsibility to the greater New Orleans community**: concerns that Tulane’s young, incoming student population—most of which comes from current COVID-19 hotspots—could add to the spread of infection within the city, especially given the disproportionate infection and death rates among the African American community. Many also noted particular concern for staff, contracted workers, and community members.
Appendix 1: Survey Questions & Notes

1. “In general, how do you feel about the University’s reopening plan for Fall 2020?”
   (Very Comfortable, Somewhat Comfortable, No Opinion, Someone Uncomfortable, Very Uncomfortable)

2. “Do you favor students returning to campus in Fall 2020?” (Yes, all students; Yes, limited students; No; No opinion)

3. “My classes this fall are listed as…” (Hybrid, Online only, Both, Not teaching Fall 2020)

4. “If students return to campus in Fall, what (mode of instruction) would you prefer?”
   (Hybrid & online; Online only, No opinion)

5. “Did you request an accommodation?” (Yes; No); if “No”, skip to question 7.

6. “What is the status of the request?” (Granted by Dean, Granted by Goldman Center; Denied; In process)

7. School affiliation

8. Type of appointment (Tenured/Tenure-Track, POP/Clinical, Part-Time/Adjunct/Visiting, Research)

9. Open-ended comments

The survey was design and organized rapidly. These notes are intended for those interested in questions of survey methodology and implementation.

- The survey and report were produced by the leadership of the Tulane University Chapter of the AAUP: Carola Wenk (president), Erin Kappeler (secretary/treasurer), Jana Lipman (past president), and Executive Committee members Michelle Lacey (Uptown), Laura Murphy (Downtown), Katherine Theall (Downtown), and Justin Wolfe (Uptown). To contact the AAUP, please email Carola Wenk at cwenk@tulane.edu.

- The survey was unique to the recipient and available for one-time use only.

- It was emailed to 1806 faculty via an AAUP-compiled list, representing all publicly available email addresses. The Tulane website indicates there are approximately 1200 full-time faculty. Our inclusion of part-time, visiting, and adjunct faculty accounts for our higher number.

- The response period was from 9 am July 15 to 11:59 pm July 16.

- Because the survey was voluntary, anonymous, and used total population sampling, it may have some self-selection bias towards those most concerned with the reopening plan. The overall response rate of 39%, however, was relatively high—even higher for just full-time faculty (46%)—and respondents expressed a significant range of opinions.
Appendix 2: Selection of Respondents’ Comments

Of the 710 respondents to the survey, 243 took the opportunity to provide comments. We have sampled them here, organized around common (emergent) themes. We aimed to show a range of perspectives from faculty from all schools.

A few faculty members offered strong support for the administration’s reopening plans:

- The School of Medicine has taken the lead at the university putting in place multiple safeguards to assure safety for all faculty/staff/students/employees.
  
  —MEDICINE

- All classes should be in person only. The measures taken in response to the coronavirus by the university, and practically every other organization whose primary goal is to cover its ass, are grossly excessive.
  
  —SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

- I believe that the university is doing all it can to navigate uncharted waters, using all available resources and the guidance of experts in communicable diseases and industrial hygiene. None of us has encountered these circumstances before. Our Tulane leadership seems to be guided by science and good intentions.
  
  —PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

- Confident in Tulane leadership and planning. Enjoy townhall meetings for updates.
  
  —SOCIAL WORK

Most faculty members who commented, however, raised questions about reopening. These clustered around seven major themes and presented below:

1. Community and transparency of the administration
2. Risks of transmissions and public health measures
3. The accommodation request process
4. Appropriate pedagogical models
5. Student adherence to health safety protocols outside the classroom
6. Childcare and schooling
7. Responsibility to the greater New Orleans community
Communication and Transparency of the Administration

Given the university’s haste and lack of concern for faculty and staff, I feel devalued, overlooked.

—Science & Engineering

Lack of transparency and honesty about financial considerations driving decision-making has been very frustrating. I’ve talked to friends at other institutions who seem to have much more info.

—Liberal Arts

I am very uncomfortable with the university’s plans, including in-person teaching… What I find more appalling is that faculty have not been given a choice about teaching in-person or online… The way the administration has treated faculty at Tulane throughout this entire process has made it clear that not only do we lack value, but that we are also dispensable.

—Public Health & Tropical Medicine

I am concerned--and angry--that the Most disturbing has been a lack of even a pretense of consultation with faculty, with "this is the way it is" directives.

—Science & Engineering

I remain frustrated by the lack of transparency on the part of the administration around what data they are using to make decisions.

—Liberal Arts

Faculty at SPHTM have not been appropriately involved and in lieu of rank and file faculty knowledgeable about infectious disease epidemiology and behavior change, the leadership has relied on committees Assistant/Associate Deans who don’t represent broader faculty concerns.

—Public Health & Tropical Medicine

As of now I am still unsure about how safe or effective the administration’s plan is going to be. The situation is just made worse by the administration’s refusal to engage with the faculty on these matters.

—Science & Engineering

This is a tough time. Seeking faculty input instead of primarily considering the administrative perspective for issues such as how to handle teaching this fall would have been appreciated and may have illuminated creative solutions.

—Public Health & Tropical Medicine

Faculty should have been consulted before making decisions about teaching.

—Medicine

University has been so opaque about its decision-making and the research and expertise it has relied on for the reopening. The decision to reopen with all students on campus appears to have been decided first and has since driven all subsequent decisions.

—Liberal Arts

Lack of good strategy and communication on the part of the university is very disappointing.

—Public Health & Tropical Medicine
Risks of Transmissions and Public Health Measures

We have a chance to quell the virus spread and pandemic now and in the next few months. If classes re-open there will be infections and potentially hundreds/thousands of exposed and infected students, professors and staff. That will only delay safe reopening even further.

—MEDICINE

I am very concerned about our old buildings and HVAC systems, given the new evidence about the airborne nature of the virus. I am also concerned about crowded hallways and students forgetting/not respecting social distancing.

—LIBERAL ARTS

It seems very likely that someone from the Tulane community will die because of this decision to open-up, even partially

—ARCHITECTURE

We need to have contact tracers specifically dedicated to students, and an instant alert system if a student in person tests positive. We need to practice that system before start of classes.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

I don’t think there is any way to expect teenagers to distance themselves 24/7 and believe there will be large COVID spikes on campus that will require a shutdown despite best efforts. I am not sure if all of these efforts are worth trying to make this in-person, on-campus semester happen during a pandemic that is not under control.

—BUSINESS

If things continue on the current trajectory, with Tulane policy seemingly detached from the reality of growing case numbers and no semblance of community control of the virus, some students, faculty, and staff will contract COVID—19 unnecessarily. I hope our administration is made aware of this.

—PUBLIC HEALTH & TROPICAL MEDICINE

TESTING. TESTING. TESTING.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

The process of reopening is supposed to be data-driven. Yet, there was no plan for the situation that we are dealing with right now: an early resurgence of the virus. It is surprising that the SOM is not leading the way as a voice of caution and restraint.

—MEDICINE

The majority of faculty want the University to teach remotely in the fall NOT because each individual faculty member is concerned about his or her own personal well-being. The faculty understand that this course of action is likely to result in disaster—deaths, hospitalizations, AND financial catastrophe will be the consequence of this course of action.

—LIBERAL ARTS

Adjuncts are underpaid. Many are underinsured or uninsured. The university has done very little to ensure our safety.

—PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
This feels like a ticking time bomb.
—Professional Advancement

I think re-opening plans should be flexible and dependent on the trend lines of the pandemic at the relevant time of decision. It may be necessary in the interest of public health to move to online only instruction. We should listen to what the public health experts recommend.
—LAW

I do not have much confidence in the air filtration systems in place in various classroom buildings where students and faculty are teaching / working for at least 4 hours in the same space.
—Architecture

The testing plan as currently laid out will not be able to function the way it is designed. What are the University’s contingency plans? What is the critical number of infections that will prompt the University to rethink its approach? With ALL the money that is being spent on buildings, PPE, screens, testing supplies, etc., does that money not equal or exceed what might have been lost if students decided not to attend because of all online classes? I wish the administration was taking a more cautious approach like Harvard, and prioritizing the health and safety of Tulane students, personnel and faculty more than the (uncertain) threat of loss of tuition dollars.
—Public Health & Tropical Medicine

I am very concerned for the health of students and colleagues should the fall semester proceed according to the current plan. Neither student health services nor the health care system in New Orleans more generally is equipped to deal with a massive outbreak, and I have little confidence that we will be able to avoid such an outbreak.
—Liberal Arts

We need to keep students home and continue online learning until we see significant improvement in community spread rates.
—MEDICINE

Tulane has promised its students (the students have reported) that Tulane is safe... very likely to come back to haunt us.
—LIBERAL ARTS

Most recent evidence shows that airborne transmission in indoor spaces is among the most important ways people get infected by the novel coronavirus.
—Business

I have a deep fear about the testing regimen, and having my medical info be at all a part of my employment file. Not to mention contact tracing that my employer will have access to.
—Liberal Arts
With no known medical cure, no available vaccine, and reduced availability of medical resources ... placing large numbers of faculty, staff and students in enclosed environments (whether 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1 day a week) makes no sense to me ... we know we can use distance learning instruction technology. We should follow the lead of our colleagues at Harvard, USC, Berkeley, and the California College system.

—LAW

As a physician faculty member in the School of Medicine, I’m witnessing the pandemic take a huge toll on our community. Reopening not only puts students at risk, it also puts staff and faculty at risk as well. It is an unwise decision. If, as we anticipate, the pandemic worsens over the fall and winter, the University will be behind the 8-ball and will need to make a plan in a hurry to evacuate the campus. Delaying reopening until it is safe is a much more prudent plan.

—MEDICINE

The Accommodation Request Process

I think that there needs to be more flexibility about online teaching from the administration. Faculty should make this decision for themselves based on their living situation, childcare, and medical history.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

I am grateful to be considered in this survey because I have grave concerns. Faculty are nervous, not accommodated, and dealing with stress from the society and the university

—LIBERAL ARTS

My request for online teaching was not taken seriously and I was discouraged to pursue it.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

The Tulane Administration should not have the right to insist that faculty members endanger their lives/chronic health and those of their family. It is doubly wrong because non-administrative faculty have not had meaningful input into developing the reopening plans.

—SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Louisiana and New Orleans are in the same state or worse than when we closed the campus in April... with aerosol transmission and viral load being better understood, length of time in a setting (such as 3-hour classes), classroom and office windows that do not open for ventilation, and numerous students and faculty using limited closed-in bathrooms during short breaks between classes seem to present high risk conditions for transmission.

—SOCIAL WORK
Although the University is working with elderly faculty or those with underlying conditions, they have made it difficult to ask for accommodations to teach online because it comes with the condition that if you make such a request, you may not be able to teach the classes you’re currently scheduled to teach. There is the threat that they can put you in much less desirable classes that would be a lot harder to teach online. For that reason, I only asked for one course online...other colleagues with medical conditions are also reluctant to ask.

—LIBERAL ARTS

The process for requesting accommodation is unwieldy and opaque. Nearly 3 weeks later I have not received a single communication.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

I am afraid to submit a [request for] an accommodation.

—PUBLIC HEALTH & TROPICAL MEDICINE

I did not apply for accommodations to teach fully online because I am not eligible under any of the conditions listed. It irritates me also that now universities are protected against lawsuits by people that got sick.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

Appropriate Pedagogical Models

There seems to be conflicting information and non-information on the technicalities about how these hybrid courses will actually work ... For discussion-based classes, it’s increasingly difficult for online students to simply log on to a webinar of the class and actively, meaningfully participate

—ARCHITECTURE

It is hard to imagine how a professor wearing a mask keeps lecturing in the classroom for 4 hours if he/she teaches three sessions back to back. I tried to wear a mask in an air-conditioned room for two hours without talking, I couldn’t breathe easily, not to mention wearing a mask while lecturing.

—BUSINESS

This reopening plan is insane... I can do a good job teaching online and could foster more interaction with students than if they are sitting away from each other and wearing masks.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

The SLA Task Force on Teaching produced an excellent report with several important top-line recommendations (e.g., a recommendation for faculty autonomy in the design of hybrid classes, and for formally making teaching evaluations have reduced weight in merit/promotion cases). It’s not at all clear to me whether and how those recommendations are being implemented by the administration.

—LIBERAL ARTS
The Faculty are not prepared, and it is not going to be quality instruction without time and attention dedicated to course design for online only, hybrid, or hyflex instruction. How reasonable is it to ask students to sign a waiver? ...respect CDC guidelines outside of class? The university experience for all involved is compromised... instructors, students, parents, community at large.

—LIBERAL ARTS

I am now in 3 different classrooms all over campus (one is temporary, and I don’t know where it is). To think that this is a realistic ask, for me to come to campus some number of days a week and teach in a face mask and/or face shield after wiping down all the surfaces in each new classroom. And then go home and scrub down before interacting with my house... I will be the most exposed person in our family... I am paid $4000 per class. I want the university to know that I DO NOT CONSENT to teaching in person. I will, because I have to get my meager pay, but I DO NOT CONSENT.

—LIBERAL ARTS

What happens of an instructor gets COVID and has to be out for an extended period of time for recovery?

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

My other concern is the strain of hyflex instruction: if a class is too large for the room, it should just go online. How can a faculty with 100 students in a 50-person room do exams? All online? Multiple days? 1/2 online and 1/2 paper? That is absurd. Some of us WANT to teach in person, and we WANT a room that fits everyone. Probably too late to change things for fall, but it could be considered for spring.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

I have polled my graduate seminar students, and almost all expressed a preference for online education.

—LIBERAL ARTS

Due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19, the hybrid form could put more stress/financial burden onto the students if after a couple of weeks, all the classes have to be online.

—PUBLIC HEALTH & TROPICAL MEDICINE

The amount of effort put into planning for social distancing, PPE, and sanitation would, from my perspective, be better channeled into just planning for online education.

—SOCIAL WORK
Student Adherence to Health Safety Protocols Outside the Classroom

I just don’t trust the undergraduate population to follow social distancing measures in their “personal” time.

—LIBERAL ARTS

Adolescents and young adults do not have fully developed judgement or impulse control and given that they may perceive themselves to be invulnerable or at low risk for severe outcomes, they may ignore safety measures such as distancing and masking.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

The concerns of some of us have been intensified by cases of inappropriate behaviors witnessed on and beyond the campus this summer... Staff members and contract workers...without social distancing nor masking. Faculty members and graduate students...not masking indoors as they pass or converse in narrow hallways. Fraternity members clustering in large groups outside their houses on Broadway, shirtless and unmasked.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

We can social distance in class but there is no way the students will social distance effectively outside of class.

—BUSINESS

College students are late adolescents/emerging adults, and they are known to not always make the best decisions. Students WILL engage in risky behavior outside of the limited time they are on campus / in-classes.

—PUBLIC HEALTH & TROPICAL MEDICINE

Unfortunately, students are proving to be the main vector of transmission right now, jeopardizing the health of community and faculty. They do not reliably follow requirements to mask and distance.

—MEDICINE

Childcare and Schools

I have children and this has been a huge source of stress. If day cares and schools close but I am still expected to teach…it will be near impossible.

—ARCHITECTURE

Concerned about having to teach in person with my kids’ school moving to online only or not 5 days a week.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

I have school-aged children. If their schools go virtual, which is increasingly more likely, I will be responsible for their schooling and daily supervision. I won’t be able to be on campus and homeschool my children.

—LIBERAL ARTS
TU needs to create safe reliable babysitting options. 4 months. Still no childcare support. Newcomb Child Center’s reopening is not safe.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

Faculty will only be able to teach and fulfill their responsibilities if childcare and schools are open. ...I would like Tulane to work on this issue such as expanding the capacity for Kidopolis and Newcomb or perhaps opening new centers (with precautions in place).

—MEDICINE

Responsibility to the Greater New Orleans Community

Tulane doesn’t just have a responsibility to its students and employees, it also has a responsibility to all the residents of this city — 60% of which are Black and disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

—ARCHITECTURE

Let’s be frank. The arrival of the students will ultimately jeopardize the city’s effort to flatten the curve.

—LIBERAL ARTS

I am very concerned about our facilities staff and Sodexo workers’ health and safety.... I’m sick at the thought of our campus workers getting exposed to COVID. Plans for this fall have to take their health and safety into account. This cannot just be about the students.

—BUSINESS

I am worried how well the students will adhere to distancing rules outside the university.

—PUBLIC HEALTH & TROPICAL MEDICINE

Bringing several thousand people into a city where the majority of the population are at higher risk of death or serious complications from COVID-19... we will be pushing the problems of enforcing mask wearing and social distancing out into the community, creating higher risk for them.

—LIBERAL ARTS

The U.S. has utterly failed to contain the virus and it is on a rampage, with Louisiana one of the hot spots. ... it would be nigh miraculous if there isn’t widespread infection among the students, staff faculty, and the New Orleans community if thousands of students from all over the U.S. converge on the tiny Tulane campus in a few weeks.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

I’m sympathetic to the administration for the dilemma they are faced with, but I don’t think it is in the best interests of our students or our local community for Tulane to have an on-ground semester... We still have no vaccine and new cases and deaths are higher now than they were when we made the decision to move online. My fear is that we will directly contribute to more cases and deaths and negatively impact our community.

—SCIENCE & ENGINEERING
Tulane has worked hard over the past decade to become a better partner to the larger New Orleans community and I think potentially becoming a COVID-19 hotspot and possibly spreading this virus to the greater New Orleans population is very troubling.

—LIBERAL ARTS

What is more worrisome is that some people are just careless about this situation… These people’s irresponsible behavior puts other people’s health and life in danger and in turn, affects our community at large… At the same time, I can also take the perspective of those people who support reopening. I understand that. So, there may be no perfect solution with regard to this matter; it is a tradeoff we have to make, depending on what we value more.

—BUSINESS