

Calendar Options and Ideas for 2020-21

Selected Excerpts from Posted Comments¹

Randomly Arranged

1. If professors are aware the last 2-3 weeks of school will be remote, they will try to complete most of the course during the on-campus portion, rendering the last few weeks of online school NOT very valuable.
2. Thank you for these options. I don't see option zero as viable, I see it as too risk avoidant. I appreciate being able to post anonymously because I don't see how we can go to option zero and remain stable financially. Educators are essential workers, in my opinion – therefore, only faculty who are highly statistically at risk (or living with those who are) should be the one subgroup of faculty who teach 100% online. The other plans are interesting and present different challenges, but also opportunities to be creative with my course. I trust the committee will choose well, and I could make any of the options work for my fall class if asked. I'm willing to work harder than ever in 20-21 to maintain the quality educational environment at Cornell University – I am lucky to be a faculty member here and I would like to preserve the job of every worker on our campus. I want thank the committee for taking on this difficult job, knowing that no choice will ever satisfy everyone and lives are at stake, both from COVID and job loss consequences.
3. There's a lot of talk in these comments about risk to student lives, but no one seems to be sharing data about the actual statistics on that. The CDC offers such number in an ongoing updated way (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid_weekly/index.htm#AgeAndSex). As of May 20, the number of deaths due to Covid-19 in the 15-24 yr. old age group was 76. The number of deaths due to the "regular" flu was 46. There are almost 43 million people in this age bracket in the US. To put this in some perspective, the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism estimates that in any given year, 1825 college aged students will die of alcohol related causes. And we've never closed down for the flu or for alcohol induced risks. I strongly suspect that there is an overestimation happening here of the risk to our students. Even those who got sick would likely recover without incident. The principal issue would be faculty in the older age bracket who are at much more risk; they could be given the option to teach online until a vaccine becomes available. This could mean that students would have a mix of online and in-person classes. If we convert to strictly online, I strongly suspect many students will opt out of the 2020-21 school year. I can't imagine many would consent to pay Cornell tuition rates for what they would perceive, rightly or wrongly, as a second-rate form of instruction and college experience.
4. Option 5 is simply grotesque. Semi-crash courses in the 11-week module are already a bad idea for subjects — I'm thinking of language courses — that require a certain number of days of exposure as much as they need to convey a certain amount of information. And an all-out crash schedule in the 5-week module would be chaos.

¹ Assembled by Charles Van Loan, Dean of Faculty

Six- and even eight-week summer courses in such subjects are bad enough. Of the remaining four, option zero is the worst.

1. It's an extreme solution that has no more business being adopted than would its polar opposite — i.e. everyone on campus all of both semesters exactly as usual.
2. It amounts to doubling down on a policy that was hurriedly decided upon last March, in the face of the utterly unknown, on the basis of predictions that uniformly turned out to be orders of magnitude wrong, and always wrong in the same direction — i.e. vastly over-estimating the numbers of the critically ill and the mortalities. It thus turns the worst fears of the most panicky among us into guiding principles.
3. Instituting a year of online “teaching” can be expected to convince a large number of undergrads to take a semester or a whole year of academic leave. Courses given online are in and of themselves simply substandard. Labs and other hands-on parts of the learning experience cannot be replaced. There is also no way to produce worthwhile assessments of students' performance in courses in which written prelims and a written final exam have long been the practice for the simple reason that they enable the kind of fine-grained assessment that translates into, say, A- vs. B+ etc. in courses of that kind. I know that if I were the parent of a kid at Cornell or any other expensive private institution, I wouldn't be willing to pay even a significantly reduced tuition for this. I'd say “Stay home with us. Read some good books in the field(s) that you're interested in and turn this period of sub-par instruction into a tangible benefit that way.” And why worry about taking an extra year to complete the BA? The job market into which kids will be graduating for the next while will have been devastated by the economic depression that national and NY State policies have created and will further exacerbate for quite a while. Much of what many of the best students come to college for— e.g. music performance groups, drama groups and on and on will simply not be available. I won't even mention the social networks that so many of them seem to spend so much time constructing — and often depending upon and profiting from the rest of their lives. The effect that a substantially reduced number of students paying a substantially reduced amount of tuition will have on the university's well-being need not be explained.

4. The absence of the great majority of undergrads from Ithaca for a whole year will make this city, where the local economy is disproportionately dependent on catering to the wants and needs of students, cease to exist as an economic entity. It could be forced to declare bankruptcy, as have many other small towns already have. This would be a disaster for Cornell.

Option 4 is not clear enough to allow a judgment. Is the idea that a given course will run for two “half-semester” but has its exam in the middle? If so, does that make sense?

Options 1, 2 and 3 are what's left. None is really very attractive because they all end the fall semester online, which makes a meaningful final exam impossible in the courses where a final exam is the only way of the best way to assess the students' performance. But perhaps Option 3 is the least bad, since it allows for in-person exams after a full ten weeks of instruction.

But why not modify Option 1 to start as proposed, but then substitute Option 3's “final-exam-like” week for the teaching week of Nov. 15 and then schedule another (online) teaching week for some part of the study + exam period that now runs from Dec. 8th through 19th?

One last note, if an earlier start is not possible, and if only the above plans are being considered, I would like to pledge my support for Option 5. I would also like to revise the plan, though, to put a “Reverse 5” in for the spring term. This would involve a 4-week period with one online class occurring first in the spring term, then the 11-week on-campus session, starting in March. This would allow for the most on-campus time, of the above options.

5. And what happens if a student gets sick and can not complete the semester since they can be sick for many weeks with COVID-19? At least home in-line they will be safer and all earn their credits. Without insurance for COVID-19 like they have tuition insurance plans, we stand to lose the whole semester and tuition fees room board etc... and students after weeks of being ill may have long term effects and not be able to resume in Spring. Not everyone is feeling ok enough to study with COVID-19. Again, I agree with option 0 fall should be online to protect students and teachers. If not online the school has to also provide insurance for COVID-19 care on campus as well as tuition reimbursement insurance if the student can't finish the semester and can't get their credits.

6. Vet students should be exempt from these schedule options. Instead, I think it would be reasonable to have DVM students return to campus like normal. We're housed in a separate building at the farthest end of campus, and we live in off-campus housing rather than in dorms. We don't utilize any other buildings or spaces on campus beyond the buildings associated with the vet college. We would be able to keep ourselves appropriately and adequately separated from the rest of campus. We're taught principles of epidemiology, disease spread, and population medicine. We would be aware of and readily accept routine testing, contact tracing, etc. At the very least, if lectures were to be online, we should be able to return to campus for our normally-scheduled labs and clinics in order to maintain our progression through the curriculum.

7. Also, I have to make a comment on housing issues regarding students. The city of Ithaca and the community of Tompkins haven't been providing much help or insight for students with off-campus housing. It's becoming a big issue and there are tons of students who have signed leases but cannot act on them because the school schedule has YET to be released. Most rents start on June 15th and I am losing my mind over what to do. It would be an absolutely tremendous financial burden if students would be forced to pay rent regardless

8. I support a modified option 4. I am an undergrad, studying electrical and computer engineering. A number of courses I hope to take revolve around invaluable lab work and the ability to participate is a crucial factor in deciding whether attending school is worth the price of full tuition. I also live in NYC and understand the impossibility of running classes in the midst of a disease outbreak. I am skeptical of the university's ability to guarantee student safety, even if it invests in testing and tracing measures, due to the campus's density and the school's culture.

Cornell students work hard and party hard. Upwards of 30% of undergrads belong to frats and 99.99% of students go to class with a cold. Academic and social structures would have to be systemically altered to maintain hygiene such that coronavirus spread wouldn't outpace measures to isolate. This sounds difficult, but doable.

Secondly, Cornell runs a packed campus. Student housing is dense and revolves around shared rooms, suites, and bathrooms. Libraries reach seat capacity frequently. As do dining halls. These are social spaces that can't be replaced or structurally altered to reduce potential spread, let alone comply with NY State social distancing guidelines.

What I advocate for is a quarters policy, similar to option 4, with the principle difference that the student body is

divided in half, with half at home for a quarter, and half on campus, with the halves alternating each quarter. This idea is roughly inspired by Columbia University's efforts to de-densify the campus. This policy allows students to take courses with in-person components during their on-campus quarter and take more online-friendly courses entirely online. It also allows the university to structure its essential environments to be compliant with social-distancing (such as mandating dining hall and library capacity and seating structure; removing most double and triple rooms in dorms).

Most importantly, I think policy that doesn't de-densify aggressively is a glass cannon. The university may miraculously avoid any covid spread or may contain small outbreaks, in which case restructuring a schedule provides little benefit. Otherwise, a likely and disastrous outbreak occurs in spite of policy and results in an unprepared shift to online education, with many students potentially infectious and forced to return home.

9. Option 2 is the safest option in my opinion. I live very close to campus and due to the essential animal work, I come to campus. I have seen groups of young people on campus without masks and not following social distancing rules quite often. I have also seen multiple student houses in college town with more than 10 people hanging out on their porch (again) with no masks or any concern for social distancing. What I have witnessed during COVID-19 shutdown with the young population in Cornell/Ithaca is that we can not trust their judgment. Therefore delaying their return (from all over the places) to campus and continue teaching remotely whenever possible will be the safest way for all of us.

10. To put it briefly, Zoom University sucked. I know staff and faculty did their best and that moving online was an absolute necessity, but it was the most un-engaging, mentally draining, pointless six weeks that I've had in my 3 years at Cornell. Lecturers got little to no response when they asked questions, giving group presentations was a nightmare, and trying to meet outside of class with group members, TAs, or advisors was so tiring since it felt like I was on Zoom all day for class only to get back on Zoom for more meetings. All I did for 1.5 months was sit on my bed at my parents' house on my laptop. That is not the Cornell experience I signed up for, and it is not one that I'll be paying for in the fall. I'm taking out approximately 40k in student loans between my undergrad and grad education, and while I can justify that cost for an on-campus education at an Ivy League institution, I can't make the same justification for an online graduate degree. I've spoken to several peers in my program who feel the same way, and some of them are already initiating the process of taking a leave of absence.

11. Older faculty member who hates on-line teaching but takes this virus as seriously as the rest of us: First of all, thank you for the hard work of the committee. I have a few questions to throw into the mix. First, a PCR antibody test is cheap to run and Cornell has the ability to do that. Is there work being done to get verification and licensing of an in-house PCR antibody test that can be used on campus? Second, none of these options discuss the responsibilities that we will ask people to assume. For example, can we insist that if students or faculty leave campus to go home (students) or to another area that they agree to go on-line or quarantine after? I am not sure what that would look like, but travel away for weekends could create problems for here on campus and in Ithaca. So, as an older (62) faculty member who hates remote teaching, I almost inclined toward option 0: all on-line. That being said, I think starting one month later in person, and continuing until one week before Thanksgiving (to avoid crowded airports) and then going on-line is a good idea also, as long as faculty can be allowed to opt out of in-person teaching. This later start allows people to regulate and test exposure after the Labor Day weekend. One concern I have is that students will avoid classes that are all on-line if that is not a default option, but faculty choice, which will create a flooding of in-person classes and put those faculty who teach on-line in peril of not meeting their enrollment quotas for their classes counting. Those quotas would have

to be dismissed. I go back and forth every single day in my thinking: If I have the option of teaching in person will I do it? I miss the classroom experience, but realize I am facing a risk. This is consuming a lot of my time thinking about what I will do and so I will welcome a decision. My gut feeling is that we should opt to take the most cautious approach here. This one truly requires the wisdom of Solomon, with so many factors to consider. There is no one right decision here and it will be up to all of us to make our best decisions when the committee decides. Please give older or vulnerable faculty and students the latitude to make those decisions without repercussions.

12. I've been on campus recently, and I've been in and around Collegetown, so I'll say this from seeing first-hand what a fraction of students on campus looks like. If you want to have on-campus instruction and have any hope whatsoever of controlling a potential outbreak, you're going to have to create something that looks very much like a police-state. It's that simple. And that essentially negates the normality that so many on this comment board are advocating for.

I can only assume, through what I've seen up on the hill, that many young individuals are not concerned about themselves contracting COVID.

If students demand to be near their peers, and the threat of a gap semester, or gap year as a response to the safest option deters Cornell from making the most utilitarian choice, faculty and staff should have the option to work remotely. Classes should all be equipped to broadcast instruction to students in-class, if the professor feels unsafe. Honestly, how could anyone feel safe in a room without windows with 30+ students for any length of time, with AC circulating air throughout the room. Would a mask honestly protect you in that situation?

Testing is essential, but I'd like to remind everyone here that testing is not a cure or a vaccine. It is a metric used to measure when a problem exists. Confidence is maintained so long as the tests come back negative. The moment there is a surge in positive cases, you've lost the semester. It's that simple. I've read through the comments here—first hand experiences from students that felt the transition to leave this spring was chaotic. And that was when we were tracking the situation down-state, not a situation that was happening in real-time on our campus.

Whatever the decision, no one should be forced to risk their life, and no repercussions should come to those advocating for their own safety. This event has already cost the lives of nearly 100K in this country alone, in merely 3 months.

Lastly, I'd like to say this: the value of a Cornell degree, the doors it opens for you and the prestige it carries, is not diminished because students had to take online classes to save lives. No future employer is going to reject the power that degree holds because we all had to think and act flexibly and empathically during this moment in history.

13. As an undergraduate student, I absolutely understand the want to be on campus and the challenges of online learning. However, I cannot bring myself to want to be on campus for the Fall semester because of the enormous risk to public health that comes with being on campus. While the vast majority of students would recover should they contract the virus, the virus would cause great risk to many faculty and staff as well as the Ithaca community, all while Ithaca does not have the resources to support the consequences of a serious outbreak.

So far, I haven't seen any plans for how the university would plan to enforce social distancing, and I'm not sure that it's possible, with the nature of living in dorms and being on a college campus in general. Seeing as there were rampant parties the week that we were told to leave campus and after it was announced that there was a case of coronavirus in Ithaca, as a student who knows other students, I simply cannot imagine a Fall where all students choose to be responsible and refrain from parties and other large gatherings.

Effectively, this means that if we are to be on campus at all during the Fall semester, we are choosing to put the lives of many, many people who are a part of and have supported the Cornell community on the line, and I personally do not want to be responsible for the propagation of a deadly virus for the sake of having a more convenient learning environment for one or two semesters of my life. I also personally just don't want to be put at greater risk for contracting the virus since there are many things that are still unknown about it, and I don't want to put my family members at risk by travelling home from school and potentially carrying the virus home with me.

I recognize that there may be heavy costs to students who have apartment leases or in general, other concerns about not being on campus during the Fall, and I think prior to making a decision, the University should work with those students to help alleviate those concerns.

Ultimately, I think that the university's top priority should be to protect the health and safety of the people in the Cornell community. Both from a personal preference perspective, and with the sake of public health in mind, I believe that option 0 is the most sensible choice.

14. I am an undergraduate in the College of Arts and Sciences.

I am surprised by the number of people who want to go online until there is a vaccine. In my mind, they are simply in denial about this virus. It is incredibly unlikely that a vaccine will be available earlier than a year from now. It might take another year for it to be distributed enough that the Cornell community is effectively immune to the virus. Are you going to ask undergraduates to waste two years of college waiting in vain for a vaccine that may never come? The most likely outcome is this virus will become endemic and we must learn to live with it. The sooner we accept the fact that the virus isn't going away and we can't hide from it forever, the sooner we can begin working on actionable solutions to keep the community as safe as reasonably possible.

To those who argue option 0 is the safest: Yes, it is. Even before this, it was. Online learning will prevent the risk of flying to campus from all over the world, the risk of a car accidents in snowy Ithaca winters, and the risk of any other viral outbreak on campus. We risk our lives every day in ways we don't realize because we don't see and hear every day how many have died doing these activities. Yet no one seriously advocated for online learning before the COVID-19 outbreak. Are we going to upend the way colleges have run for hundreds of years for a virus with (according to the most recent CDC best estimates) a 0.26% infection fatality rate, and 0.033% for those aged 0-49? Are we going to stifle the education of 20,000 undergraduates who represent the future of this nation? Are we going to ask those who are disadvantaged systemically to continue risking their health to provide us the resources we need to teach and learn from the safety of our homes (which comes ultimately from a place of privilege, as we have the financial means to work from home)? For these reasons, focusing on measures to keep high risk members of the community safe (such as faculty over the age of 65) and encourage hygienic practices by the rest of the community (such as mask wearing, and finding some way to stop sick students soldiering to classes through illness) would be the most efficient ways to ensure a safe semester.

Please do not consider option 0. It seems like the safest option, and in the short term indeed it is, but in the long term it will do undergraduates a great disservice, and it is not a sustainable option for any extended period of time. Please consider the "Notre Dame plan" of starting two weeks early and ending by Thanksgiving, or even a

regular semester on campus. The priority should be eliminating any required online learning (faculty and students could opt in as they see fit), and developing effective and reasonable strategies to keep the student body safe. Of course this is all subject to change pending any new research into the virus that occurs over the summer.

15. It will only take 1 death of a student and parents will start to panic. It'll only take 1 death of a professor and faculty interest for a continuation of in-person class will drastically drop.

Consider the chaos of evacuating if matters got worse. It's not like everyone is going to wait around to see how many die if an outbreak occurs. People will obviously assume the worst. It's not like when 30 kids show up to Cornell Health with COVID suddenly everyone is going to break out their calculator and tabulate the likelihood of survival.

16. I encourage everyone to look at the big picture of this entire situation. With all of the necessary precautions, is it really worth it to come back to campus and sit alone in your dorm room taking courses? We need to face the reality that at least for the near future, campus life will cease to look the way it was instead of romanticizing the on-campus experience.

17. As a college professor and a parent of a Cornell sophomore, I think only Option 0 is reasonable under current circumstances. All other options would be logistically disastrous. It is very difficult to satisfy all distancing conditions and maintain both in-person and online teaching in the same class. Of course, in-person teaching is more effective, but the administration just needs courage to recognize the reality of a very dangerous situation when the second wave of the virus happens. I suggest that all the teaching is done in online format. The students who want to live on campus may be allowed to do so and attend online classes from there, but the students and faculty who don't want to be on campus need to be given an opportunity to work from home.

Why not reverse it, Professor? Students who want to stay, can stay home and take online classes while students and parents (looks vast majority) who want to have a different education in an on-campus setting can opt for that, which is option 6 (start 2 weeks early and end by Thanksgiving).

18. I think that graduate students should get a say in how instruction for the undergrads will resume in the fall. Research graduate students that MUST be on campus to conduct their research are also at risk depending on the behavior of the undergrads in our community. I see a lot of comments concerning faculty exposure to students, but graduate students will also suffer. We TA many of the large undergrad courses, have cramped office hours with them, and are often the ones teaching them lab procedures on the bench. I realize that as grad students we don't pay the same tuition, but we have made many other sacrifices in our lives to come to graduate school. I don't believe the undergrads will act responsibly enough for there not to be an increase in Covid cases-this is evidenced by the many parties that still occurred in collegetown after campus was shut down, and also many of them returning to campus to take "graduation" photos. Not only does this reckless behavior increase our chances of contracting covid, but it increases the likelihood that an increase in cases will once again shut down labs which is extremely detrimental to our degree progress.

19. A decision that errs on the side of caution. Don't try to choose a middle-ground option that may backfire and end up causing more stress and upheaval during the Fall 2020 semester. This reminds me of how the

administration announced that school would be online after spring break, but still held in-person classes and tests, while expecting students to arrange move-out logistics in the middle of prelim season. Then they realized the poor decision they had made and accelerated the timeline of ending in-person class. If they had erred on the side of caution, as other universities had, they could have avoided a period of very high stress for students.

20. My other main concern is that of off-campus students such as myself. Most leases are 10-12 months, and it is not fair for us to spend an even smaller portion of our time at our rented properties than during a regular school year. Since I followed Cornell's suggestions to leave Ithaca in mid-March, my family has already paid rent on an unoccupied apartment for a couple months (plus the time it was unoccupied during winter break), a waste of money that is even harder to deal with due to pay cuts and job insecurity. I have seen other people commenting that rent money isn't a big deal, but it's definitely not negligible, even for people who can afford it.

21. Personally I feel there are a few major points that are fundamental for the decisions made on the following semester. First, the idea that having the rest of the semester online after Thanksgiving is a potentially risky idea. By looking at the majority of student responses, finals were ineffective measurements of academic achievement and prone to cheating. Both of these factors nullify the idea of having online cumulative finals. Faculty members seem to not understand that just saying have exams online is a perfect fix for next semester. This past semester proved that this idea is ineffective and unfair and repeating this mistake would be detrimental to students learning and mental health.

Second, I feel it is too early to make decisions on the Spring semester currently. While it should be discussed, it seems unreasonable for every one of these plans to include a delayed Spring semester. There is time over the next few months and the beginning of the fall semester to help form the decisions making process for the spring semester.

Third, it seems that the faculty have an unfair opinion of the student body. The faculty are seeing a small sample of students not following protocol during this pandemic. While they should be concerned about students not behaving as they should, that is no reason for making sweeping claims about the student body. In order to have an effective discussion on the issue of reopening campus, the faculty need to respect the opinions of students and recognize that most students are very concerned about the current situation.

Fourth, it is illogical to expect that the level of learning and size of enrolled students will be the same in a fully online setting. It is utterly ridiculous to expect that learning would not drop off if everything was online in the fall seeing as many students feel it already has in the half-semester we have spent online. Also, if we were fully online, it would be unfair to expect students living off-campus to pay full cost for housing to not be at Cornell this fall. There should be a balance so neither students nor landlords are completely thrown under the bus financially. I did notice one comment above faculty member that "Yes, rent is expensive, but you can replace money". This is incredibly disrespectful. If \$12,000 in rent is "just money", why don't all faculty and administrators take pay cuts to help students cover financial costs associated with in-person instruction. After all, it's "just money". You can replace it by working hard when students are in person.

Thus, of all these options, the best seems to be option 5. This option allows for students to be in person for the duration of many classes including for finals for those classes. This fixes my first and fourth points and elevates risk during a time of year that is notorious for having a spike in the spread of infectious diseases. Also, this semester should be hybrid so students and faculty who feel they are at risk can still participate. However, if

every faculty member opts to stay remote for their health, this would effectively turn the semester fully online in the fall, so it would not be fair to give the students one expectation only for that to drastically change once the fall semester starts.

Just to be clear, this option does not fix the complete lack of respect for students from the faculty as shown on this thread as well as the overly preemptive planning for the Spring.

22. In previous communications it seems that faculty and staff have had opportunities to dialogue, contribute feedback and make input into the decision-making process. Maybe I'm missing something, but I only count four students on all of the reopening committees: two graduates and two undergraduates. This seems pretty minimal. Why is that? Students are the heart of Cornell; every university's primary mission is educating students. Without them universities don't exist.

I'm an older person and a parent of a student. My parents lived through a polio epidemic, life before refrigeration, homogenized milk and antibiotics, the Second World War, the atomic age and the Great Depression. They did not scare easily. How would they, given their upbringings, live in this moment we're in?

Universities are not "enbubble-ized" environments. They are part and parcel of regular society, and as society reopens, so must universities. We can't hole up in our houses, in our bedrooms, in front of our computers, afraid and alone any longer. We can't live in fear. We need to get on with our lives. Note that during the HIV crisis, the term "safe sex" became "safer sex" because no sex was truly safe. There's a sentence in President Pollack's letter that makes me uncomfortable: "In order to find a safe path forward for our community..." When I hear that, I lose hope. I lose hope because finding a safe path forward is impossible. It will be the reason Cornell decides not to reopen, and the excuse provided for why it can't be done. If we change that language to "safer path forward" then I feel more hopeful because I know that finding a way forward is doable and can be done. Let's lose the perfectionism. Let's forget 100%. Let's live into the unknown here.

23. We can and will protect ourselves, just like we did with HIV. We'll do it with the understanding that nothing is completely safe. There are ways we can make congregate settings safer. The stance of youth—the biological mandate of youth—is to stride forward, not to stand still, not to be isolated and "on hold." Young people have great capacity to adapt, understand, make adjustments, assume reasonable risks in return for getting the good stuff out of life like freedom to chart their course, independence, self-reliance, privacy. As we age, we contract, we lose that tensile resilience, and what I hear in a lot of the communications is a much older adult voice: weighing, deliberating, fearing, treading with trepidation.

24. The options are somewhat overwhelming and confusing. That's going to make some people fuzz over and fall silent. I don't know if this is one of the options, or a hybrid, but I vote for starting early, testing students when they return. Require that all returning students complete an online "orientation" educating them about how things will be different. Make this education the primary focus of in-person orientations for returning students. Train students to teach other students how to practice social distancing, handwashing, wearing masks, monitoring their health, avoiding settings where caution is thrown to the wind. Go all the way up to Thanksgiving, have study days and final exams/papers/projects take place online or submitted online on the normal schedule after Thanksgiving. Start spring semester at the normal time. Test students over a two-week period when they return. Wait to make decisions regarding spring semester until much later in the fall. Make teaching/studying in person optional; if students and teachers prefer to teach/learn remotely, make that possible for them. If students want to eat together with 6 feet of space between them, let them. If students feel more comfortable getting their food to go and taking it back to their room, let them.

25. Cornell is land- and building-rich. Build contingency plans, and watch those metrics, as Cuomo says. Set aside a building that can become a field hospital if necessary. Work with neighboring counties to augment in-county medical personnel and services if necessary. Designate a building that can be used to quarantine students who develop symptoms, or test positive at any point. We have to get back up on the horse again. We need to have courage and be brave. I have a healthy fear of this disease, but we can't let it stop our young people from living life. They only get four years at Cornell. Their formative college years are brief, super-important and irreplaceable.

26. We don't want emergency evacuation again (was horrible from dorms and studios with no help, broken elevators, lack of bins, throwing out many items)! The semester will be terrible on campus, no events, students in their rooms most of time. Students can't bring as much in case of emergency changes, so dorm life will not be cozy. No sports likely. If no breaks there will be such stress in condensed schedule students will be calling home in a daze. Normal online schedule option 0 is best option.

And the Isolation alone in isolation dorm maybe if they get sick will be scary for many without their families. Wearing masks will be incorrectly done. Not washing cloth masks daily because they are working longer hours in a condensed schedule with 5 classes on average and intense hours. Touching doorknobs that can't be cleaned constantly. UV light would be dangerous, could cause cancer. Studio for AAP students sharing equipment and crits in social distance space will be a challenge, note that online worked well. The campus will be a petri dish, buses full – with students not knowing if they are just exhausted from regular all nighters or sick. Can they get an appointment at the health center to be checked with no time for that with academic stress and lack of normal schedules. Scared if they come in contact with a case they will be put in isolation dorm, they will pretend they are well until they can't anymore. Teachers scared and suggests to isolate a student if they have a sniffle. Not to mention if they arrive home sick or not a systematic carrier they can make the family sick, some parents are in their 60s with grandparents at home, and then there goes the parental support for the rest of their lives if the parents health is permanently impacted or worse .

At least at home with a full semester pace it will be much better for student health and I realize everyone is different, but I would like to have an online option – students are young and long term health is most important rather than getting sick or having long term health impact or worse forever. This is not a regular flu. This virus might weaken your heart, cause blood clots and and some symptoms like toxic shock syndrome in tie age group up until 21.

One semester is not that long and students need options – there is no one size solution for all students or families. Hopefully what I am felling could happen here is the worst case, and the second wave will have a vaccine or better treatment option. A better option could be for online fall and Spring semester to go into summer after the vaccine is found.

Tuition paid should also have insurance whether online or in person in case a student gets sick and can not complete the coursework. The insurance option must be continued otherwise there should be an option for a refund or make-up semester provided by the school in case a student gets the virus and can not finish.

As a tiny small family with a single parent with no support nearby in NY, safety is the highest concern. Online studio went great and even at home online I am very proud of the education with the great teachers – online was stellar at Cornell AAP and for humanity classes ! So I don't mind option 0 for these reasons. And the savings will be in room and board for those in dorms and it is fair to pay for the great teachers and the Cornell education I am receiving. The beautiful campus needs upkeep, workers need to be safe, and we all want to have Cornell survive. There should be some discussion on tuition changes only if the cost and endowments to run the institution are less than normal, which is unlikely with all necessary costs to keep students safer.

In the fall on campus there will be no safe social life guarantee even with masks, social distance is hard and staying in dorm room is going to be the norm for many with the intense workloads. Not eating right. Not sleeping right. Stress. All a cocktail for illness to increase in a campus environment and add to that disinfecting dorms, libraries, studios, equipment, washrooms, classrooms, dining halls and maintaining social distance from staff and students and on busses and in town ... Online at home is a better option for many of us. Sorry for all that this pandemic had to happen at this time, but it won't last forever. After 1918 flu remember the roaring 20s! I'm sure we have something to look forward to if we can all avoid getting this virus that is much worse than a normal flu. Stay safe! Thank you!

27. Option 5 assumes that 14-15 week courses can be compressed into 11 weeks simply by moving faster. My experience teaching at a university on the quarter system is that that is not true. Even if students are taking fewer classes, there is a maximum rate at which they can absorb material. Time off between class sessions, casual repetition, opportunities to return to previous material and re-integrate it: these are all part of the learning process. I am not opposed to 11 week classes on principle, but if we have 11 week courses I suggest that during those sessions, faculty be asked to cover 11/15 of the material from a typical full term.

I am against the fully online Option 0 unless there are significant new flare-ups between now and August. However, for the in-person options it would help to know what other preparations are being made. Will we live-stream large lectures and encourage students to watch them from their rooms if they prefer? Are we adding ceiling microphones to classrooms to facilitate simultaneous instruction to remote and in-class students? Will the university discourage or restrict visitors to campus and unnecessary trips away from campus by students? Will masks be required on campus, or at least indoors? My preferences between some of the options will depend on the answers to some of those questions.

The above point notwithstanding, Option 1 seems preferable for various reasons. It maintains the expected start and end dates for the semester, keeps to the 15 week schedule, and minimizes student presence on campus during the winter months. The biggest cost will be to courses that rely heavily on an in-person final exam or lab-based final project, which would typically occur after Thanksgiving. Instructors of those courses could be encouraged to hold 10-week cumulative midterms immediately before Thanksgiving. Starting 1-2 weeks early would also allow us to cover more content before Thanksgiving, if that is possible, though that could be disruptive in various other ways.

28. Thank you very much for soliciting input. That is very inclusive and helps with change management. My view is that we need to maximize time on campus and minimize or eliminate virtual learning. Virtual learning was not as effective, had significant inconsistencies among classes / professors, and is not what we have come to expect from a Cornell education. Can you possibly start the fall semester earlier and finish everything on campus by Thanksgiving? That seems to be a great compromise and is similar to what other universities are doing. I know it is a lot of work to get done in 2 months, but with a more standard approach, then hopefully less prep effort is needed. If not, then option 5 is nice because it minimizes the online impact to just one course. Similarly, starting the spring semester later and doing all on campus would be great too. I guess a remote start to the spring is not too bad, but please minimize the time until they get back on campus.

29. As a senior with one semester left before graduating, I would prefer to spend at least some time on campus this fall. I would prefer option 1 because I think starting as early as possible would maximize the class time on campus which was the most frustrating part of distance learning. Option 5 also seems like a promising option as it does not require a transition during the class from in person to distance, but I would like to know more about

how the credits would work for the two sub semesters. If full credit for the classes can still be received, then I would actually prefer option 5.

I think a better idea would be to come a couple weeks earlier in August, cancel breaks, and finish the semester before thanksgiving break. This eliminates having online courses in the fall and lets everyone stay the entire semester. Cornell dining and housing can charge for a full semester (which means you guys get more money) instead of reduced rates for a cut off semester and students get their money's worth as far as tuition (because we all know the online schooling last semester was not up to the standard that we are paying for). Please consider this option as it gives your students an actual college experience and gives you more money! This option is better than pushing the semester back because one, the virus is supposed to get better in the summer, so why not have us come back as early as possible so we can leave before it gets cold again and the virus (possibly) spikes again and two, most internships this summer were cancelled or pushed back/shortened, so why would you want to extend into the summer (again) and give students less time for internships the following summer? Most of us aren't doing anything this summer because of covid so I'm sure many students would love to come back early. Please think of your students!!!

30. As a physician in the hardest hit area and a Cornell alum/parent, I feel uniquely qualified to at least offer an opinion.

1. Nobody knows what is going to happen with Covid. Vaccine? Go away on its own? Recurrences? No 'expert' has any idea. So we are we even talking about the spring semester a year from now? You have demonstrated the ability to go on line quickly if need be.
2. Cornell at home is NOT Cornell. A huge part of the University is social/academic interaction in person. Zoom is no substitute. Nor is it a substitute for the library, the lab, the extra-curricular lectures etc. Learning STEM in particular from a computer at home is not the same as being on campus. Not even close. And a huge part of the magic that is Cornell is Ithaca itself.
3. Cornell did the best it could under the circumstances, not knowing what was about to hit. But to continue to sacrifice education of the students is not acceptable. That does not mean damn the torpedoes, but it does mean do not pretend that what is being offered is educationally/financially equal.
4. Why not start 2 weeks early, and get through (hopefully) a real semester by Thanksgiving, and plan to start again Jan 2? While social-distancing is impossible in dorms, huge lectures can be viewed remotely (ie Psych 101), every lecture can be offered online, discussion sections/labs are small and masks help. Longer dining hours can decrease crowds.
5. Ultimately, our student age population is not at high risk for a bad course of disease, and in that bracket Covid is almost analogous to influenza. The students are probably better off semi-isolated in Ithaca, away from older parents/relatives who will get sicker.

I am very nervous to see that the only options presented are leaning towards doomsday scenarios, at least as far as the spring goes, when nobody knows what will happen. I really believe that you should be hoping for the best, but plan for the worst. Too much is at stake for the students.

31. The options largely presume an on-campus experience will be followed by an online experience, which presumes COVID-19 will play out in a particular way. Is that a premise that all solutions must abide by?

I don't think any of the options is credible unless it comes with clear, realistic assessment options. Do not once again leave it as a gaping hole that faculty have to piece together with almost no real institutional guidance, support, or investment. For example, if an option has students on campus during a period when assessment would normally occur will large classes be able to do traditional exams but with students spread out far more, potentially across multiple rooms? If assessment is happening online, how close can we come to traditional assessment, particularly for large classes?

Here's a random list of issues that came up for me this last semester, that we take for granted in a "normal" semester's assessment: How do you answer student questions as they take an exam if it's offered over an extended window (say, 24 hours) due to time zone issues? Does it create non-academic differentiation among students with access to high-end computing and networking infrastructure from those who struggle to be online? Cheating happens with opportunity, and doing assessment online – particularly with a poverty of thoughtful options – creates numerous new opportunities for cheating. (As one example, 10% of the students in my class this spring lied about having watched 1 or more extra credit lectures.) How do we mitigate the additional stress that online assessment imposes on the many of our students who already live lives of unnatural stress over exams and assessment (particularly when obviously not thought through institutionally)? How do we do online assessment without greatly increasing the workload on faculty – for example, in my case, crafting the equivalent of 3-4 times as many exams as would otherwise be the case so that exams would give students randomized questions out of a much larger yet still roughly comparable set of questions?

3. Will we change our grading basis to be honest about the impact that going online will have on assessment and learning more generally? S/U wasn't just valuable if a student was facing COVID-19-related challenges, but also to reflect the nature of going online and that we weren't teaching and grading with the reliability of in-class experiences.

As an example from this spring, I repeatedly reminded students in my ~200-person class that all department requirements would be satisfied by an S and that Cornell was giving them a free opportunity to learn without having the stress of grades weighing down on them on top of the difficult situations that many of them were facing. 60% of the students ultimately went S/U (despite the median grade being B+), which is both a statement of the value that the option gave students, and a surprise that 40% of the students – including some in the most difficult of circumstances – insisted on seeking letter grades.

4. I'm happy to see an acknowledgment of the difficulties that parenting might have on teaching over the summer. Consider this a reminder of the additional differential impact that various options for fall and spring might have on those with parenting constraints (particularly for single parents). The easiest to anticipate is if K-12 schools are again online, but they arise even schools resume. Options that involve shifting classes over more hours of the day or days of the week – for example, using evenings and weekends – can be absorbed less or more easily for faculty with differing parental responsibilities. I would have an easier time supporting options that might be challenging as a parent if the option acknowledged the need to be thoughtful about how it is implemented because of the differential impact it might have on parents.

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33. Option 0 is the best. It's not fair to low income students to have them travel back and forth (many stay on campus the entire year or only leave in winter break) and it's not fair to let faculty choose whether they want to teach their class online or in person or some sort of hybrid because then you put some students at risk and not others

34. However, Please define "online". It's one thing in a sudden emergency to bring the classroom to our homes. It's another to plan for it. Some of us have young children home part of the day (or all day during lockdowns).

I'm perfectly happy to teach in a room on campus with blackboards, camera and area mics. The students don't need to be in Ithaca. My plan in such case would be to record my lectures, have students watch, then spend all of class time on questions (which would be submitted before or in real time).

I am more worried about lay-offs in ipd and fd when the students don't come back.

35. Another option should be to have the fall semester online only and resume as normal in the spring semester. Otherwise, I am in favor of option 0. Option 0 is the safest for everyone, especially for professors. No one can learn or teach if we are all sick with the virus if Cornell opens publicly too soon. (Beware of lawsuits.) Cayuga hospital also does not have the equipment or space to support a large number of people sick with the virus if it were to spread from returning to campus too soon. The other options do not consider the various barriers students who do not live in/near New York will face (such as plane tickets which will now be more expensive than before, the possibility of contracting the virus – if it is still around in the fall- during airplane travel, and the possibility of bring the virus from a higher risk area to a lower risk area such as Ithaca). Constant moving from campus to online can cause an unfavorable disruption in learning, worsening students' ability to maintain concentration.

36. Agreed, online option 0! and will there be nurses in the isolation dorms to assess breathing and oxygen, fevers, etc to take care of sick and very sick students? Will there be a separate isolation dorm for asymptomatic students? How will false positives or negatives be handled as no test has shown 100% accuracy? Will Ambulances be available if students are sick? Will tuition be refunded if the student can't finish the semester because they have Covid-19 symptoms for 4 weeks and feel like a truck hit them? With tuition room and board so high, if 20% 4,000 of the 20,000 students (more with teachers and other staff) get sick, and can't study well for 4 weeks, and 2-5% say 250 of those need Intense urgent care quickly and can't complete the semester.... and some will be ok but develop something like toxic shock syndrome which has been seen until age 21 to those whom were positive for the antibodies, which is an emergency that has to be treated within a day to resolve before there are detrimental health complications.... Yes there is a lot of news, we are all well Informed! If Cornell requests health waivers like the NY stock exchange for Covid-19 death I don't think students or teachers or staff should Sign them!

37. All of the careful planning and expenditures it would cost to try and enforce any other option will be wasteful for everyone in the Cornell community. Universities were designed for collaboration, sharing, social interactions, parties, co-habiting, etc. We are not living in a world where those things are possible right now. To try and force it will be devastating to a small town with an even smaller hospital...Ithaca does not have the resources for a spike in cases. All of the students and parents who are pushing for an on campus return should go take a tour of the resources available here if their child suddenly came down with the virus...they might quickly change their tune.

38. I want to put in another plea for option 0. A student in one of my classes was diagnosed with Covid-19 soon after s/he returned home — not clear where it was contracted, but considering the dates, it could easily have been here. As is we have learned is common, as the student suffered only mild symptoms, and while s/he had written to inform that s/he might be less active than usual once we went online, actually s/he continued to participate, and to be present at all lectures and sections. But had s/he brought that Covid into the classroom, we could have had our very own super-spreader event. Just before hopping on here, I saw yet another article pinpointing indoor gatherings as the sort of event most propitious to spread, and thus most to be avoided. I think we need to take the whole show online, with exceptions that could be requested on a case by case basis. There is just no way, with the space concerns we *already* had prior to Covid, that adequate distancing can be assured for all classes in all classrooms. And while there has been a lot of discussion of lectures, actually it would

seem, from the research, that smaller classes (in smaller rooms, and with more talking and more droplets) are just as risky if not more so. I vote 0. I am not willing to put my life on the line when my own classes, as has been demonstrated this semester (and I was a reluctant convert!) can be just as successfully taught online.