1. The Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee has considered the impact of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on the university’s ability to offer its normal array of courses in various formats during the 2020 spring semester. With a focus on issues critical to the continued academic progress of our students and the success of our faculty, the group is concerned about the impact on students and instructors now that the university is unable to offer traditional face-to-face classes during the 2020 intersession and summer sessions.

2. Given the foregoing, the Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee recommends the following concerning the scheduling of 2020 intersession and summer courses and the assignment of instructors to teach those courses:

   a. In framing this issue, it’s important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted all aspects of university operations. The beginning and end of this disruption is completely outside the university’s control; however, the university must address the impact of the disruption by continuing its essential functions including providing quality instruction to our students.

   b. Most impactfully, the disruption has prevented the university from holding traditional face-to-face classes since March 10, 2020. As a result, on March 16, 2020 all instructors who were teaching traditional face-to-face courses in the 2020 spring semester were asked to move their classes to temporary remote instruction while, to the extent possible, maintaining a semblance of the face-to-face experience for students enrolled in the class. Instructors have been advised and encouraged to use any and all technology available and pedagogically sound methods to transition their courses from traditional face-to-face classes to temporary remote instruction.

   c. On March 25, 2020, the University announced that traditional face-to-face classes would not resume during Intersession, Summer I and Summer II, with the possibility of extending this situation through Summer III and perhaps beyond. Instructors who are assigned to teach traditional face-to-face courses during, at a minimum, 2020 Intersession, Summer I and Summer II will again be asked to offer their traditional face-to-face classes via temporary remote instruction.

   d. Instructors of courses originally scheduled in a traditional face-to-face format should be mindful that students signed up for a synchronous in-person class. As a result, instructors must inform their students as soon as possible if the course will be offered with a significant amount of asynchronous instruction
and/or content. Additionally, instructors must inform their students as soon as possible what technology (e.g. device with camera and microphone, software requirements, etc.) is required for the course.

e. In all cases, instructors must maintain a significant and appropriate level of instructor presence and instructor/student interaction in the course. At a minimum, instructor presence and instructor/student interaction should be analogous to the amount of instructor presence and instructor/student interaction that takes place during the course when it is delivered in a traditional face-to-face format.

f. The minimum expectations developed by the Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee for remote course delivery for Spring 2020 remain in place for Intersession (https://www.kent.edu/provost/academic-affairs-response-covid-19). Starting Summer I, exclusive use of email and phone will not be sufficient to demonstrate significant instructor presence and engagement in remote courses. Instructors should enhance, to the extent possible, remote course offerings to provide our students with a successful and meaningful experience. Assistance with enhancing a course for remote delivery is available for instructors by contacting the Office of Continuing and Distance Education, or the Center for Teaching and Learning, or visiting https://www.kent.edu/keeponteaching.

g. The Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee has discussed the challenges that this unprecedented situation has placed on the normal curricular review and approval processes for distance education courses.

  i. The Committee recognizes that some traditional face-to-face courses may have been easily adapted to a temporary remote format while others have been found unsuitable or impossible to deliver in a remote format due to course content, learning objectives or instructor technological expertise.

  ii. The Committee also recognizes that this temporary shift to remote instruction should, in no way, be regarded as a permanent transition to a distance education format for a course that is usually delivered in a traditional face-to-face format.

h. During this ongoing disruption, the Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee recommends that all academic administrators consult individually with instructors who will need to make the transition from traditional face-to-face to temporary remote instruction to assure (i) the instructor has the needed
resources and expertise to make the transition, and (ii) that the course can be offered successfully in a remote format.

i. To the extent possible, based on timing and communication method, the Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee recommends that academic unit administrators consult their Curriculum Committee, Faculty Advisory Committee and/or Faculty Council, as applicable, concerning the suitability of offering courses in a remote format that were originally scheduled for Intersession and Summer 2020 in a traditional face-to-face format.

3. Given the unique disruption and challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee recommends that academic administrators and instructors communicate regularly and openly about the challenges of transitioning courses from a traditional face-to-face format to temporary remote instruction so that all instructors will be able to successfully carry out their instructional responsibilities and assure the success of our students.