Executive Summary: Instruction and Student Support Task Force Report

In May 2021, the Instruction and Student Support Task Force was charged to reflect on lessons learned related to instruction and student support during the COVID-19 pandemic that if adopted or adapted could support student success. As a task force, we met every Friday in June and July to reflect on this question, while each week gathering feedback from as many partners and communities as we could, recognizing that a limitation of our discussions and recommendations is that we have not done a comprehensive study or survey, and we were unable to engage the faculty and students who were not available during this conversation. Thus, our lens for understanding pandemic lessons learned is filtered through our experiences and informed by colleagues that we were able to reach out to during this time frame. Using the data we received and in reflecting on our own experiences, we identified five areas where practices and policies could be adopted, adapted or reconsidered for post-pandemic use for instructional and student support, including recommendations for:

- **Technology**, including **leveraging existing investments in academic enterprise technologies** to support teaching and learning, and ensuring that faculty and students have **equitable access to the technology** they need to be successful.
- **Teaching and Learning with Technology Practices**, including prioritizing the **importance of teaching** (pandemic or not), creating a technology training class (**Tech 101**) for both students and instructors, expanding **just-in-time pedagogical support services**, providing **more digital/open resources to reduce student costs**, providing **templates for communication**, and encouraging instructors to **follow a range of best instructional practices** that support student learning.
- **Student Support Practices**, including the **need to have standard, university-wide practices for supporting students,** a **shared understanding of how to support our students**, **enhancing our student support network**, and **increasing the accessibility of our student support services**.
- **Course Delivery Options**, including **defining terms with matching course designations** so it is clear to students what type of course they are taking and when those course meetings will be, **creating guidelines on how decisions are made regarding the types of course offerings available**, and **expanding flexible offerings in the non-credit and extracurricular parts** of the university.
- Revisiting **Policies** that can impact student success, including **the creation of a mechanism for reviewing academic policies and related procedures with equity and student success as guiding principles,** and **identification of specific policies and procedures that have been suggested for such a review.**

Each of these areas has recommendations for moving forward that are further detailed in the relevant section of this report. Our task force invites the campus community to reflect on what is missing from these recommendations, and to consider any feedback for the recommendations that we have provided. We view our report as the start of a conversation rather than a list of "must do now" recommendations. Task force reports were due to the task force Steering Committee on August 2, 2021, who will review and consider next steps.

Introduction

More than a year after a pandemic forced us to quickly respond to and reshape how we supported students and how we delivered instruction in an unprecedented crisis, the Post-COVID-19 Instruction and Student Support Task Force was charged (Appendix A) with assessing the novel, pandemic-related changes in academic practices and policies adopted to weather this emergency, considering how these practices and policies could be embraced as part of our new normal to enhance student learning, provide flexibility for students, assist faculty in more effectively using technology, and address inequities in student and faculty access to technologies. While none of us want to experience remote emergency teaching and learning again, certain adaptations made during the past year, if continued as is and/or altered for a non-emergency situation, could indeed positively impact the student success focus of [NC State University's strategic plan](#), empowering students for a lifetime of success and impact, and creating a more inclusive environment for all of our students.

Within a short timeframe, task force members reached out to the NC State Faculty Senate, NC State Student Government and a multitude of campus partners involved in instructional and student support. One limitation of our work is that we could not engage many of our nine-month faculty and students who had already left for the summer, and we have not done a large scale survey or a comprehensive study. Another important note: even in engaging within our task force, every task force member may not have had the opportunity to engage with every idea presented, as to achieve the work we grouped into smaller teams. Nor, does every task force member necessarily agree with every recommendation. We are simply presenting areas and ideas that should be explored further, and we hope that our recommendations will engage stakeholders in future conversations about how we might move forward with adaptations made in the following areas:

- **[Technology](#)**, including **leveraging existing investments in academic enterprise technologies** to support teaching and learning, and ensuring that faculty and students have **equitable access to the technology** they need to be successful.
- **[Teaching and Learning with Technology Practices](#)**, including prioritizing the **importance of teaching** (pandemic or not), creating a technology training class (**Tech 101**) for both students and instructors, expanding **just-in-time pedagogical support services**, providing **more digital/open resources to reduce student costs**, providing **templates for communication**, and encouraging instructors to **follow a range of best instructional practices** that support student learning are highlighted.
- **[Student Support Practices](#)**, including the **need to have standard, university-wide practices for supporting students,** a **shared understanding of how to support our students**, **enhancing our student support network**, and **increasing the accessibility of our student support services**.
- **[Course Delivery Options](#)**, including **defining terms with matching course designation**s so it is clear to students what type of course they are taking and when those course meetings will be, **creating guidelines on how decisions are made regarding the types of course offerings available**, and **expanding flexible offerings in the non-credit and extracurricular parts** of the university.
- Revisiting **[Policies](#)** that can impact student success, including **the creation of a mechanism for reviewing academic policies and related procedures with equity**

and student success as guiding principles, and **identification of specific policies and procedures that have been suggested for such a review**

Within each of these areas, we see opportunities for adopting or adapting practices and policies that were helpful to both students and faculty during the pandemic in order to support student success. In framing conversations about lessons learned that we wish to implement to improve student success, it is important to keep in mind potential impacts (intended and unintended) on all students; not just undergraduate students, but also graduate students; not just first-year students, but also continuing students and transfer students; not just full-time students, but also part-time students; and not just traditional learner populations but also those from non-traditional communities. To move this conversation forward, we invite feedback from campus on our recommendations, and we ask that the appropriate stakeholders move these conversations forward (we've tried to identify who we think those stakeholders might be in various areas of the report).

This report will need to be shared widely across campus, with special emphasis on getting feedback from the following communities:
- Faculty. Many of the faculty had already left for the summer when this task force was convened. Faculty communication channels include providing the full report, and an overview of recommendations, to the Faculty Senate, with specific recommendations needing focused discussions via various faculty governance channels (e.g., policy recommendations in this report will need to be vetted through governance processes). Notices to faculty about this report can be shared through other communication channels as well; e.g., the Provost's Newsletter to faculty.
- Students. As this task force report is focused on how lessons learned during the pandemic can better support students, the Student Senate should read and react to this report, and engage the student body in conversations about what recommendations they find of most importance and provide feedback on what should be prioritized.
- Staff. The recommendations in this task force report impact a number of support staff across campus, and as such, the Staff Senate should have an opportunity to review and react to these recommendations. IT support staff across campus and those staff who work with and support students should especially be aware of these recommendations and have a chance to provide feedback.
- Administrators. Channels for communication about the content of this report include the monthly Administrative Leadership Meetings (ALM) led by the Chancellor, the Dean's Council, the Provost's cabinet and staff meetings, the Chancellor's cabinet, and all other senior level leadership meetings.

NC State University's new Strategic Plan provides us with the unique opportunity to take all of the lessons learned from COVID-19 and identify initiatives from these lessons that would support implementation of the strategic plan. While we will continue with many of the practices that we have made investments in during the pandemic that we already know are working (for example, expanded lecture capabilities and telehealth/telemedicine), we know that additional conversations will be needed to review policies that we've identified that should be revisited, and that resources will need to be allocated to expand some service areas to ensure that both instructors and students get the support they need to teach and to learn.

Recommendations by Area

Post-Pandemic Technology Recommendations

The technologies we choose to use — and choose not to use — reflect our values. We value learning, we value inclusion, and we value student success. Surveys of NC State students and faculty as well as a broader literature review show that many of the responses in higher education to COVID-19 positively impacted these values. We have an opportunity to identify, retain, and strengthen these positive changes and carry them forward.

A June 2021 survey polling more than 3,000 higher education students across the country (Kelley, 2021) noted that post-pandemic, **students want and expect technologies to support their learning**. Key takeaways from this survey included 75% of students polled want to be able to view course lecture recordings and half want to use other types of engagement technologies (e.g., discussion tools, polling, live chat). 49% of students surveyed want instructors to continue the option for virtual office hours. A recent Chronicle of Higher Education article (Puang, 2021) noted that students with disabilities especially do not want to "return to normal," in that technology enhanced courses often helped meet their unique learning needs better, giving them the opportunity to learn from home, to have transcripts created by web conferencing software and other lecture capture tools for them to review and study, and allow them to in some cases to more equitably interact with their peers. While remaining a residential campus, NC State can take advantage of available technologies to provide students with learning tools that help them learn in ways that work for them, leveraging the experience of our faculty, many whom are more confident now in their ability to teach effectively online (a Spring 2021, Office of Faculty Excellence survey indicated our faculty are more confident in teaching online). We want to maintain this momentum.

Recommendations: Academic Technologies

A number of enterprise academic technologies were either extended or adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic that merit consideration for long term usage. Taking advantage of increased faculty expertise in using digital learning technologies, we can continue to leverage the technology lessons learned during the pandemic to support student success. Technology recommendations from our task force are as follows:

Continuation of Lecture Capture

Lecture capture is the process of using technology to record classroom lectures and make those recordings available to students outside of class time for review. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, lecture capture was available in 103 of NC State University's 110 technology enabled general use classrooms classrooms. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ClassTech and DELTA expanded lecture capture capacity across campus, with lecture capture available in 237 classroom spaces as of this report. We have also transitioned from an "opt-in" to an "opt-out" model of lecture capture, meaning that every room with lecture capture equipment with a scheduled class automatically participates in lecture capture unless the instructor chooses to opt-out. We propose that we leverage the university's investment in lecture capture technology to continue the current increased lecture capture availability with an opt-out process post

pandemic, recognizing that our students, and students as a trend nationally, want to be able to review course content (Galanak & Brooks, 2019; Kelly, 2021; NC State University Resnet Surveys, 2009-2015; NC State University DELTA ASHE Report), with the following caveats:

- **Strongly recommend, but do not require, that instructors use lecture capture for courses held in technology-equipped classrooms**. Class recordings can especially be supportive when students are absent from in-person instruction. Recordings are also helpful for English as a Second Language (ESL) students and for those who need other accommodations such as a written transcript of the lecture, which is part of the lecture capture. Some instructors may have other ways of getting course material to students or may be holding a discussion based class where a recording does not make sense; thus we recommend leaving the choice in the hands of the instructor and/or the department for opting out of lecture capture. (Suggest a communication from the Provost).
- Create a **Lecture Capture FAQ for instructors to help address faculty concerns about lecture capture privacy/copyright**, etc. (Assign this task to DELTA and ClassTech).
- Review lecture capture rooms for audio and recording quality, and create an **inventory of ClassTech rooms where HyFlex teaching could be supported** by either existing or with the addition of other technologies. Propose a budget for the creation of HyFlex teaching rooms. (Assign this task to DELTA and ClassTech).
- Identify a **long-term, centralized funding model for enterprise lecture capture resources** in all technology enabled general use classrooms (also known as "the 110 Classrooms"). A centralized funding model will result in both cost savings and efficiencies in working with lecture capture vendors for the university. (Assign this task to DELTA and ClassTech).
- Create and share **best practice resources (training, guides)** with step-by-step visual guides for using lecture capture in classrooms, and similar resources for capturing lecture content in mini-studios, on site, etc. for multiple models of instruction that use recorded content, including flipped classrooms, HyFlex rooms, etc.
- Address the need for **real-time technical support for instructors to ensure widespread adoption of capture** (this may require additional resources).

Support the Increased Use of Web Conferencing

Web conferencing is now a key part of our infrastructure. Zoom, a web conferencing and synchronous learning management system implemented by DELTA in spring, 2019, became synonymous with meetings during the pandemic, providing business continuity for a variety of university meetings as well as being used for synchronous courses, dissertation defenses, advising, counseling, professional development, and more. In the feedback received by our task force about technologies and practices that should be kept post-pandemic, Zoom was specifically mentioned dozens of times as a business and academic necessity post-pandemic, and noted for its ease of use and its features. We propose continued resources for web conferencing software, with the following suggestions:

- Update the crosswalk of web-conferencing tools at NC State University and continue to **provide users with the information and support they need to use these web-conferencing tools successfully**, including best practice information for hosting office hours, providing closed captioning/meeting transcripts/recordings for later review, etc. (Assign this task to OIT and DELTA).
- Web conferencing needs go beyond the classroom. Explore the feasibility and costs of

creating **HyFlex rooms for meetings and other non-teaching needs across NC State for instructor, staff and student use**, creating a proposal for a number of these rooms in spaces across campus. Post-COVID-19, one can easily imagine the need for a group of individuals to be both together in-person and remotely for meetings and activities with a need to support both an in-person and a remote office. (Assign this task to Facilities, OIT and DELTA).

- Create **training/user information for best practices in running HyFlex meetings and HyFlex instruction**. (Assign this task to the Libraries, ClassTech and DELTA).
- Continue partnerships to **customize web-conferencing software in ways that best meet the needs of a particular group of constituents** (for example, the secure [Telehealth Zoom instance created for use by DASA](#)). (Assign this task to DELTA).

Continuously Evaluate our Academic Enterprise Technology Toolkit

During the pandemic, instructors found themselves heavily relying on the [enterprise academic technology tools supported by DELTA](#), by publishers (e.g., Cengage, McGraw Hill), and by finding and using other tools outside of the NC State University supported toolkit in order to conduct their courses online. With the **increase in both the depth and breadth in the use of technology, some instructors noted additional features and/or tool improvements they would like to see in the enterprise toolkit**. In practice, instructors often asked students to use tools outside of the supported toolkit, meaning students are creating accounts and logging into multiple systems in order to successfully complete a class because of the tool choices made by the instructor, and sometimes incurring additional costs as a result of those choices. While there will always be a balance between instructional preference, pedagogical choices and what is available in the academic enterprise toolkit (thus an ever present tension between supported and unsupported tools), moving forward, we recommend:

- Increase the **visibility of the [feature request process](#) in WolfWare Governance**, and continuously improve the awareness of existing tools and the process for suggesting additions or changes. (Assign to DELTA).
- Provide **additional resources** for the improvement of and/or purchase and support of new tools to meet instructional needs. There are a number of features that have been approved via the WolfWare governance process not implemented because of the resources needed to implement them. (Assign to DELTA & the Provost's Office)
- Regularly ask that departments and course coordinators evaluate the tools used across their curriculum; are the tools used in their courses supported by NC State? If not, are they accessible? Inclusive? Appropriate for the discipline? We would **encourage faculty to use supported tools to the extent possible, and minimize extra software requirements (and costs) for their courses**, as students can find it difficult to have different programs being used in different classes and/or multiple programs in one class. They find that they spend too much time learning how to access and how to use these tools rather than focusing on the course's learning objectives. (Assign to the Academic Deans, Department Heads and Program Directors and Coordinators).
- Provide additional **visibility (through training/workshops and news stories) about what the current tools in the toolkit can do** (e.g., features/upgrades mean that new possibilities are added to existing tools each time that faculty may not be aware of). (Assign to DELTA).
- **Inventory our academic enterprise technology toolkit for feature overlap**; e.g., how many tools should we support that do similar kinds of things (balance a robust toolkit

with the cost of support and the cost to students and faculty of having to learn/manage multiple accounts). (Assign to DELTA and WolfWare Governance).

Encourage Alternatives to Exams and AI Exam Monitoring Software

When the [DELTA proctoring center was forced to close during the pandemic](#), some instructors asked for the implementation of video/AI based exam monitoring software as an option for exam monitoring. Respondus Monitor was used; however, a number of concerns related to student privacy, well being and equity arose when using AI software exam monitoring, with both students and instructors expressing concerns. **In practice, when needed, in-person proctoring has proven more effective and practical than virtual proctoring software**. Post-pandemic, with a return to the use of the DELTA Testing Center, DELTA is no longer supporting AI-based software exam monitoring, and based on feedback received from this task force, we are recommending the following:

- Create training and provide support for instructors in **considering alternative assessment methods** (Assign this task to DELTA and the Office of Faculty Excellence).
- Identify **resources** instructors would need in order to successfully implement alternative exams (e.g., teaching/support resources). (Assign to the Office of Faculty Excellence).
- Advancing NC State's in-person and network of proctoring support is crucial. Having a **robust Proctoring Center** with adequate resources to support hybrid and DE courses is an important piece of supporting comprehensive assessment practices at NC State, and a way to equitably administer exams. To be more welcoming and inclusive for our students, the location and type of space needed for this center is important; providing students with access to both study spaces and food while waiting to take their exams. This space also needs a location that can contract and expand with the ever-changing space requirements required for testing (e.g., a core space that can expand several weeks each year). (Assign to DELTA, the Provost's Office, Facilities and other potential partners).

Recommendations: Student and Faculty Technology Resources

Inequities in student and faculty access to appropriate technology and Internet access during the pandemic was evident on our campus, and across North Carolina, with the NC State University Libraries extending the scope and reach of the technology lending service to help both faculty and students during the pandemic. While the pandemic laid bare the need to address the **lack of broadband access** across North Carolina (Bringle, 2021), on our own campus we noted that some students and faculty lacked access to hardware and software for equitable participation in the campus community; for example, equipment that was not able to support web conferencing software for class and meeting participation. In moving forward, we need a campus conversation around how both instructors and students receive (and then refresh) the technology they need for participating in courses and communities both in-person and remotely, as post-pandemic we expect to see more examples of hybrid course and community participation. Having a **baseline technology expectation** for faculty and students would be more equitable and inclusive for teaching and learning.

Individual Hardware and Software Needs

- Ensure **faculty have access to up-to-date technology**, such as web cams, microphones, laptops or other devices powerful enough to successfully work and teach

in and from multiple locations. For some faculty, this may call for more specialized equipment (for example, tablets with the ability to draw/share drawings and formulas for students, multiple input devices, second monitors, etc.). Wifi hotspots that can be borrowed may also be needed depending on their access points. (Assign to the Provost's Office/Colleges).

- Ensure **students have access to the technology they need** to be successful at NC State. We do not have a university device requirement, however, we do have a large number of students who bring laptops/desktops to NC State. The 2020 Incoming First Year Survey indicated that 96.2% of students brought a laptop (61.2% purchased in the five month window prior to the start of the fall semester) and 8.6% of students brought a desktop computer (28.2% purchased in the five month window prior to the start of the fall semester). Only about 14% of students bring a tablet with them. In thinking about inclusive and equitable access, we recommend the university look at the potential for a device requirement that levels the playing field for a baseline measure of student technology for all students; understanding that some disciplines may require an additional device if specialized hardware or software is needed. (Assign to 1-2-1 Device Exploration Task Force).

Laptop Lending Service

- In March 2020, the Libraries rapidly converted technology lending devices such as laptops from hourly to long-term loans (weeks or months) to support students' and instructors' needs. With university support and in partnership with OIT, the inventory of laptops more than tripled, and new software imaging procedures gave borrowers administrative privileges and the ability to download and install software. The Libraries will **continue to provide long-term laptop lending**, will monitor demand, and will work to ensure student awareness of this service. This **service remains complementary to the personally owned equipment that students bring to campus, and it could be adapted to augment a baseline 1-2-1 device requirement if that is what the university decides to pursue**.
    - Long-term laptops **address affordability and equity of access**; they support students who have experienced failure or theft of an owned device; and they provide alternative platform and software access for specific needs.
    - The Libraries continue to provide **short-term loans of laptops, chargers, connectors, and other equipment** crucial to productivity.
    - The Libraries also provides **access to multimedia tools and other equipment and technologies for their coursework.**
- We recommend the continued support of the Libraries Technology Lending Service with resources directed to the NC State University Libraries as needed for this endeavor. (Assign to Libraries).

Connectivity

- Some instructors and students had difficulty with **reliable broadband access**, and others had problems with its affordability. This **is a crucial, long-term infrastructural need that the campus and the state of North Carolina needs to address**. The NC State University Libraries tested lending of wireless devices during the pandemic, and will likely continue to do so on a limited basis, but this practice is not scalable and does

not address the widespread challenge of broadband connectivity across the state. (Assign to NC State's Legislative Liaisons).
- On our own campus, ensure that we have the resources to upgrade networks and wifi for any problematic areas and to meet demands for increased bandwidth with the deeper use of technology for teaching and learning.

Student and Faculty Technology Support

- **Continue options for remote computer support**. Since March of 2020 OIT's Walk-In Center has used Google Meets to provide more than 1,100 remote support sessions for students. A number of IT support groups/college support staff also leveraged LogMeIn to support their customers remotely as well (with over 1,700 sessions). Continuing to provide remote support can often save time for and be helpful to customers (students, faculty, staff), and can potentially save time for professional staff (with reduced travel to locations), thus expanding their capacity to help more people. We recommend continuing to review and to invest in remote support tools, and to identify any additional resources that colleges need to expand the reach of their IT staff to provide remote support. (Assign to CITD and OIT).

Timelines/Prioritization/Metrics for Technology Implementation

Additional communities will need to be engaged in these discussions; however, possible initial timelines and prioritizations include:

Ongoing:
- Lecture capture service remains in place and usage data captured.
- Web-conferencing services remain in place and usage data captured.
- Ongoing training and support for faculty using lecture capture, web-conferencing and other technologies evolves and is offered by DELTA, Office of Faculty Excellence and others for tools and spaces and training attendance/knowledge based reviews documented. Students will also need training, support, resources and potentially orientations on how to use the technology.
- The Libraries continue the laptop lending service and usage data captured.
- Re-iterate to our legislative liaisons the importance of providing equitable, digital access to students across the state by investing in broadband for underserved communities.

Fall 2021:
- Recommend that faculty in classrooms with lecture capture use it (Provost's Office).
- Document not only the usage metrics but also the increased load on the campus infrastructure and support services to offer the service at a larger scale (DELTA and ClassTech).
- Create lecture capture FAQ for instructors that addresses both technical and privacy and copyright concerns (DELTA, ClassTech, Office of General Council, NC State University Libraries Open Knowledge Center).
- Discuss options, best practices and resources needed for remote customer computer support at the Campus IT Directors group (CITD), and leverage that group for ideas on how to make this type of support more scalable for the campus.

- Continue conversations and make progress on plans about where and how to move forward with a more centrally located on-campus Proctoring Center (DELTA, the Provost's Office, the Libraries).
- Discuss options for how instructors can have access to the devices they need to successfully teach their classes from anywhere (Provost's Office/Deans Council), and make recommendations for whom/how to approach addressing this issue.
- Update documentation of current status of Enterprise Academic Tool Set (DELTA).

Calendar Year, 2022

- Assess faculty and student satisfaction after one full year of usage of the lecture capture service and use the data to inform improvements; assess faculty training and support needs; assess faculty's needs for additional (TBD).
- Leverage the findings of the 1-2-1 Device Initiative Task Force (recently charged by the Provost to look at the need for and feasibility of students having a shared device requirement with a report due in December 2021) to make a recommendation about an enterprise student device initiative. Tom Miller has been asked to lead this task force which has representatives at this time from DELTA, the Libraries, DASA, OIT and several colleges; the group has a kickoff meeting scheduled on August 9, 2021.
- Document the need for HyFlex classrooms to include demand (who is asking for these) and then assess/document the resources needed to create these spaces (OIT/Registrar's Office).

This timeline can and will evolve as needed.

Best Practices for Teaching and Learning with Technology

A Spring 2021 Office of Faculty Excellence survey indicated NC State faculty are more confident in teaching online; however, "it would be a mistake to assume that all faculty suddenly developed essential skills or an enthusiasm for online teaching as a result of the emergency remote teaching" (Nworie, 2021). In order to build on the lessons learned from the great remote teaching experience, we need to continue to provide robust training and support programs for our faculty, including just-in-time training and instructional design support and the expansion of faculty communities of practice and faculty mentoring opportunities. Through opportunities provided by the Office of Faculty Excellence and DELTA, we have excellent opportunities and programs in place that can be leveraged to build additional training and support programs that further assist our faculty in using best practices for teaching and learning with technology, and to help prepare our students to use various technologies for learning.

The recommendations that follow are primarily directed to the direct support of instructional faculty, and were derived from data collected from instructional faculty from across our campus, Evaluation of Teaching Committee members, and staff who have been working with faculty to assist in moving to remote teaching.

Recommendations

Students appreciate courses that are organized with clear expectations about technology, grading, attendance, and information about what they can expect regarding turnaround times for communications and feedback. Instructors need support with clear and consistent communication with students, especially regarding changes in expectations, class schedules and policies. Instructors also appreciate having learning opportunities for proper use of technology and just-in-time support for designing, developing, and facilitating online and face-to-face courses.

Short-Term Recommendations

The committee felt that the following recommendations should be addressed in the next year. Some of these pieces exist in pockets (for example, there is a orientation online for Distance Education students and there are workshops available via DELTA for faculty); however, there is not a course or courses we are aware of target to all students and/or all faculty that outline the basics needed by everyone). Additionally, to help the number of individuals on a campus as large as ours, and to enhance communication, additional resources and better communication strategies are needed.

- Offer a course called **Tech 101 for both faculty and students**. Faculty and students are forced to constantly learn to use different technologies. This should include how to use all technologies [covering topics for both hardware needed and software available, including covering academic enterprise technologies.] With the likely increased use of technology for teaching as we move forward, this will provide all faculty and students with the same level of base proficiency and awareness and avoid overestimating technical capabilities. With a larger digital footprint in courses expected, the support available needs to remain at high levels. access to recording materials and software, time, purposeful discussion of the use of technologies (rather than just emergency implementation).

- **Expand HELP services at DELTA so that faculty can receive just-in-time support for designing courses in both online** and F2F using technologies such as Moodle, TopHat, Panopto, etc.
- Provide **instructors a template or boilerplate text for communicating to students about changes** such as those we have seen concerning calendars, breaks, mandates, etc., especially for changes in requirements, new developments, or policies they are expected to enforce. Faculty received information but struggled when communicating that information to students.

Recommendations for Administration in the Longer Term

The most important recommendation we have for the long term (and we should start this now) is to, as an institution, really focus and **place more emphasis on the importance of good teaching whether there is a pandemic or not**. Good teaching can make the difference between a student staying connected to our institution, or deciding to leave, and it is up to us to make sure that excellence in teaching is valued, rewarded and supported with the resources that will allow us to follow the best practices of instruction, from ensuring that instructors have the time for professional development, the time for learning how to use the technology that best supports their instructional situation, and the TAs/GAs they need for the management and assessment of large courses. Instructors would appreciate having professional development opportunities that discuss best practices for how to offer flexibility, inclusivity, and grace for students when teaching. Students would appreciate building community in courses with the opportunity of maximizing learning by engaging more effectively with other students and offering course materials that can be easily usable by students.

- Continue to allow **flexibility, inclusivity, and grace** for faculty to teach students with **compassion and care**.
- Develop **best practices and promote professional development opportunities for faculty** in the areas of how to be flexible, inclusive, and provide grace to their students.
- Allow badges or indications that faculty have completed certifications or other professional development in teaching in the registration system so that students can make informed choices when signing up for courses.
- Offer professional development on **best practices for designing student-centered courses** that focus on supporting students in understanding content knowledge and maximizing student learning.
- **Fully utilize the plethora of features** of applications like Zoom during class time with things like the chat function and direct messaging for more private comments as needed.
- **Provide resources to help faculty reduce time for grading when moving away from proctored exams.**

General Recommended Best Practices for Instruction

In creating training, support and communication for our faculty about what best practices ARE for our students to have the most optimal learning experience, our task force outlined the following best practices that all faculty should be aware of AND practice. And, as a high priority, the task force would like to see an expansion of the adoption and use of digital textbooks (including no and low cost textbooks and resources). Best practices **can include (but are not limited to) encouraging and supporting faculty** in doing the following:

- **Expand** the adoption and use of digital textbooks through the Libraries/Bookstores and others, **with an emphasis on open educational resources and/or low cost materials, wherever possible**.
- Provide **weekly checklists of tasks** for students and/or help students create their own checklists to learn how to manage their time.
- Incorporate intentional, **flexible** deadlines, **accessible** content offered in multiple formats for students to make choices in how to demonstrate mastery of content through vehicles such as learning contracts. The **multiple ways of providing content** can include written response, a presentation, one-on-one demonstrations, individual/group projects, developing video or audio-only, etc., and can be created over time.
- Provide **closed captioning and/or transcript on all videos** for use with assistive technologies.
- In synchronous online courses, **encourage but do not require cameras to be turned on**. Include a **section in the syllabus stating such accommodations related to camera usage**; for example: "If you are able, I would encourage you to keep the camera on while on in class as this a way to better engage with course material and your peers; however, if you are unable to or uncomfortable having it on for the course duration, that's okay. I would ask that you turn it on at the beginning of the class if at all possible for our initial greeting and checkin, then turn it off as needed during the course time.
- Offer **both virtual and in-person Office Hours/ Meetings**.
- Provide students with **dedicated time to work on projects/assignments in a constructive and collaborative environment**, facilitated by either the instructor or TA.
- Provide **course materials in student friendly and multiple modalities**.
- Offer students **more opportunities for practicing** hard concepts and problem solving.
- Provide students opportunities to **engage in communicating with peers** about ideas.
- **Build community into courses**. In large enrollment courses, provide alternative opportunities for students to engage in class such as backchannel communication tools.
- **Provide students with information** on turnaround times for returning graded assignments and returning emails, and expectations for student responses to instructors for asking about assignments and responding to faculty emails.
- Offer students a chance of **sharing** what works and does not work when solving problems creatively.
- Use **personal response systems** (for example, TopHat) to create safe spaces for students to use their voice.

For all recommendations in this area, the Provost's Office, DELTA, the Office of Faculty Excellence, the Libraries, and other communities of practice on campus that support good instruction can help support these practices. Note: we recognize that faculty may have concerns about finding the time they will need to implement these practices in a manageable and equitable way, thus implementing these recommendations often occurs in the context of instructors trying one new practice at a time, and implementing ideas when and where it is feasible to do so. Time and support are key!

Best Practices for Student Support

As World War II approached, Winston Churchill is said to have observed that it was important to "Never let a crisis go to waste." In a like manner, it is important to reflect on the incredible creativity, compassion, and support that our faculty, staff and students demonstrated in responding to the crisis of COVID-19. What we have learned about student support through the pandemic spans a wide variety of areas, but can be broadly grouped into three categories: the **need for University-wide student support standards** (i.e. having standard, university-wide practices for supporting our students), **enhancing our network of student support** (i.e. pulling together individuals, groups and communities who all work together to support students), and **increasing accessibility to student support services** (i.e. making it easier for students to get the services they need from where and when they need those services).

During the pandemic, a number of "**communities of practice**" (different groups across our campus) came together to support our students, faculty and staff. One such example is the self convening group of Associate Deans of Academic Affairs who met multiple times a week and expanded to include DELTA, the Registrar and University Libraries in their regular meetings and proactively invited content experts and members from other university areas to discuss and solve student support issues in a timely and holistic manner. Communities of Practice are comprised of interested and aligned people (both horizontally and vertically, including students) from across the university, who convene around areas of interest to identify and incorporate best practices, solve problems, with outcomes that advance NC State student success.

University-wide Standards — Student Support Practices & Collaboration

In order to support our students well, we need to cultivate a community of compassion, understanding and belonging. We need all of our campus community (faculty, staff and students) to be aware of and able to communicate to students what resources are available to them. We need our campus community to know how to connect students with those resources, and we need to be constantly collaborating with each other, no matter our campus roles, to support our students. Some specific recommendations for our entire community include:
- **Communication**
  - **Communicate actionable steps** to faculty and students when transmitting information about policies, deadlines, practices to campus audiences.
- **Mental Health Awareness and Acceptance**
  - **Increase messaging** about student well-being and **emphasize the importance of well-being**.
  - **Educate faculty about how to support students in distress** — let them know it's acceptable/appropriate to reach out to students to make sure they are okay.
  - **Educate faculty on resources available for assisting students** (Counseling Center, CARES/Prevention Services, QPR, Title IX training).
  - **Demonstrate compassion** in teaching and interactions with students.
- **Teach students how to approach faculty for support**:
  - Identify the best time to introduce this to new students
  - Reinforce asynchronously through video and actionable steps like those in the [Keep Learning website](#).
- **Collaboration & Shared Experiences**
  - **Continue increased collaboration across colleges, units, divisions**. The

pandemic/zoom meetings allowed and encouraged intentional conversations across different constituencies.

- ○ Invite our students to get to know our campus, our faculty, and what we care about through **shared common experiences.** Examples of two new common experiences explored over this year included:
    - ■ **Clifton StrengthsFinder** (available for first year students) - is a proprietary assessment to foster **intrapersonal development**. It identifies areas where an individual's greatest potential for building strengths exists so that one can turn talents into strength (the ability to consistently produce a positive outcome through near-perfect performance in a specific task). It is a reflective tool that can help promote discussion with other students, advisors, faculty, and different types of counselors.
    - ■ **Wicked Problems, Wolfpack Solutions**, WPWS course. WPWS is a credit/no credit course, designed for all incoming undergraduate students, that serves as an introduction to the **critical importance of interdisciplinarity** and the **value of general education.** As an **example** of a common academic experience, WPWS (or a similar course) could be used to serve many goals related to (1) **welcoming and introducing students to the NC State academic community**, (2) providing a **framework** for their general education program, and (3) providing a **common foundation** on which other courses and experiences can build.
        - ● WPWS could serve as a **model** for how to create a well-produced set of online teaching materials (especially in high enrollment, content-heavy courses). A collaborative approach across disciplines could be used to **create courses that introduce students to broad disciplinary areas or to major societal issues** (e.g., social inequities), providing a common general education foundation on which other courses can build.
        - ● This type of interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary course could be a new way for NC State to teach what it values most to all of its students, if appropriately incorporated into existing curricula [And while this course is listed in the student support section of the task force report, this type of course is also an example of how to teach a large enrollment online course and could serve as a best practice for online teaching & learning].
        - ● One challenge for interdisciplinary courses involving faculty from all across campus can be the lack of a clear (to the faculty involved) mechanism for housing such a course administratively. Moving forward, there needs to be clear identification of and support for space for these discussions, and explorations and acts of co-creation without deference to any one division, college or group of colleges.
        - ● Another challenge is that the production/development of this type of course is a big lift for both faculty and staff resources, and if there is a desire to continue with these types of courses, the intensity of efforts like these will need to be appropriately

resourced.
- ○ Continue **increased discussions** within colleges/units to support people who provide front line support to students.
- ○ **Include student representation** within relevant communities of practice to ensure that our conversations are informed by the experiences of the end users — the students.

Enhancing our Network of Student Support

We have many excellent support resources available on campus, and a community of practitioners in multiple roles across campus that can be leveraged to support all students; and, we need to continue to build and add resources especially in the areas of financial support and advising in order to support student success. Some specific recommendations for enhancing our support networks include:

- **Build communities of practice** that bring together interested and aligned parties from across the institution around specific problem(s) to develop solutions, outcomes and metrics that benefit and support NC State student success.
- **Increase Financial Support**
  - Continue to fundraise for the **Student Emergency Fund**.
  - Continue to provide **emergency funding** to students in need.
- **Increase Access to support services and Conversations about Mental Health**
  - Continue to support students' mental health by giving students the **option of in-person and online counseling**. DELTA and DASA worked together to set up a telehealth system during COVID-19 that allows secure telehealth appointments that should be kept and utilized. Ensure sufficient funding for Student Health mental health services.
  - Continue to provide the **options** of virtual drop-in groups and virtual group counseling.
  - **Increase awareness of mental health services** through a variety of methods, such as student care packages/swag bags/events for mental health and wellness.
  - **Consider *common* courses to serve some General Education goals** [e.g., mental health, Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) themes]; and in line with these thoughts, it may be time to think more broadly about General Education requirements and to incorporate within these courses general themes that have emerged that we should be addressing with our community of learners.
- **Enhance academic advising support**
  - **Support and resource professional academic advisors** through communities of practice, supporting analytics, professional development, a clear career ladder, and advising ratios that align with National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and NC State standards.
  - Provide **support and training for Faculty advisors** and ensure that advising loads are commensurate with assigned responsibilities. Faculty advisors were overwhelmed by demands of pivoting to and maintaining online courses and online advising.
  - Provide centralized support through the **use of data and analytics** to help identify students who are struggling.
  - Continue to **develop online student resources**, like the Keep Learning website, with actionable steps to assist students in addressing common problems. An example of this approach can be found in the step-by-step topics (https://dasa.ncsu.edu/step-by-step-help-topics/)
    - **Develop a section** on how to **create structure and accountability** for themselves when instructors/courses do not.

Ensure the Accessibility of Student Resources

In order to **create the most inclusive environment possible** for our students, we must acknowledge that meeting students where they are most able and comfortable to meet with student support services is the space in which we should work, and this includes both virtual and in-person options. We learned during the pandemic that often our virtual options for support were well-attended and allowed participation for students with disabilities, illnesses or anxiety in a way that an in-person only option would not have allowed. This was true for meetings, support, student communities and student learning options. Some specific recommendations for providing our students with better student support include:

- Provide **flexible meeting/appointment/drop-in/conference options** (e.g., virtual, HyFlex)
    - **Faculty office hours**
    - **Advising**
    - **Graduate student milestones** (e.g., dissertation defenses)
    - **Student support services** (e.g., campus community centers, Academic Success Center, Career Development Center, Student Segal Services)
- Continue to **develop asynchronous communities**, such as chat rooms, for faculty, staff, and students that support and encourage discussion among communities of practice, courses, and other areas of student support.
- **Course Flexibility**
    - Continue to **pursue hybrid offerings** to realize benefits of both online and in-person instruction
    - Provide **flexible access to lectures and other instructional materials** in synchronous courses (in-person or online)
    - Continue discussions about **HyFlex/hybrid teaching** and **best practices**
- Address **Policies** that Impact Student Success

A key to supporting our students well will be to not only ensure that we partner with our entire community to **create a supportive and inclusive campus**, **provide the financial resources** needed to ensure students can focus on learning instead of scraping to get by, **provide the advising resource**s needed so that our staff and faculty are not overworked and the students have support when they need it, and enhance our current services, but to also make sure that we **provide flexible course options** for our students and **address policies** that can make or break a student's success at NC State. For student success recommendations, DASA can take the lead, and pull in partners (e.g., Graduate School, DELTA, the Colleges, Registration and Records, Faculty and Student Senate) and other communities of practice on campus to move these support services and student success practices forward.

Flexibility in Course Delivery Options

In fall 2019, more than 8,200 NC State undergraduate students were taking a DE class, not because they weren't on campus, but because this option allowed them the flexibility to take a particular course that fit their schedule. Because of the pandemic, **our exposure to and comfort with new learning modes, techniques, and tools dramatically increased** for both instructors and students. While emergency remote learning was not ideal, we did find opportunities for new ways of teaching and learning that can provide students with a variety of well-designed learning options. This flexibility could also provide advantages to faculty who need flexibility due to health concerns, childcare, and/or family care issues that make it difficult to teach in a F2F classroom and yet who could remain excellent online instructors for our students.

As a university, knowing that we will remain a residential campus with numerous hands-on experiences for our students is an important consideration, however, we have an opportunity to provide a range of course experiences for our students that allow them to decide what works for their needs. We also have the opportunity to even consider adding additional online degree-completion programs as an option for non-traditional learners, which are an increasing population in the higher education community.

The exposure to new academic learning technologies, and the deeper digital imprint now evident in all of our courses after a year of remote instruction offers a unique opportunity to permanently expand the variety of delivery modes for courses and programs, to assess the efficacy of these modalities, and to keep what is effective for our students. Benefits of flexible modes of course delivery include:
- **Flexibility in course scheduling** for both students and instructors.
- **Taking advantage of different modes** and preferences for learning for different learners that allow them to balance their education and personal situations.
- **Expanding our reach** to more nontraditional students, students dependent on jobs, students with families, etc.
- Making **use of online resources and learning activities already created** to reduce classroom contact hours, potentially **leading to less pressure on classroom space limitations**, **less pressure on the need for classroom space on campus**, and an **opportunity for smaller in-person class sizes** when a portion of the class is online (a benefit that students appreciated during the pandemic).
- **Allowing faculty to teach and play to their strengths** by choosing their instructional mode.
- **Allowing students to become more flexible learners by choosing their instructional delivery path**, which can increase their progress toward degree and which better equips them for increasingly digital careers in a digital world.

To move forward with flexible course offerings, we recommend **defining terms with matching course designation**s so it is clear to students what type of course they are taking and when those course meetings will be, **creating best practice guidelines around how decisions are made regarding the types of course offerings available**, and **expanding (and and engaging in assessment the success of) flexible offerings in the credit, non-credit and extracurricular parts** of the university.

Definitions of Terms

There is an increasingly wide range of options for modes of delivery of courses. Campus-wide adoption of a concise set of course delivery related terms with agreed upon definitions would benefit the community. We recommend a group be formed to work on this task. This group should include instructors as well as appropriate staff from DELTA and Registration and Records.

Below are some common terms used that should be defined within our instructional context. Some have consistent meaning and some do not.
- Synchronous
- Asynchronous
- Hybrid
- Blended
- HyFlex
- Face-to-face
- In-Person
- Internet
- Remote
- Distance Education
- Flexible Access
- Web-Based
- Flipped

The **variety of different delivery options is likely to increase** in the coming years. As a result, along with coming to some **common definitions and expectations for different modes of learning**, we need to consider **how courses are displayed and described** in the scheduling center so that scheduling officers are using similar processes and students and advisors know what various designations mean. For example, currently sections labeled 6xx are described as Distance Education — Online and sections labeled 3xx are designated Hybrid (internet or in person), however, more information about the meaning of these terms is needed. For example, if a course is designated as Hybrid, what does this actually mean for a student taking this course in terms of attendance in person and online? What portion of contact hours are online? Is that the same for all students or is there flexibility?

Designations, notes, or attributes for classes should help instructors, students, and advisors understand which components of a class are synchronous vs. asynchronous, which elements are in person and which are able to be remote, whether an online class has requirements for being on campus or synchronous online at any point, e.g., for tests or specific activities, discussions or experiences. Many of these can be discovered in the enrollment wizard currently, but it can be tricky for someone unfamiliar with the system to find the information they need. We recommend there be an explainer of some sort to **show examples of class modes** and how they might appear in the class search and enrollment wizard.

In order to have clear examples, we recommend **creating a catalog of different styles of courses as exemplars**, including:
- How the course is described/presented to students
  - Syllabus

- ○ Welcome video
- ○ Welcome message
- ● How the course looks in the class schedule and enrollment wizard.

Guidelines/Resources for Colleges/Departments/Instructors

We know that we need to provide additional flexible course options, while remaining a residential campus for most of our undergraduate students. To ensure that we provide enough flexibility for our residential students, and especially our non-traditional students, **we need guidelines for discussing what the ideal mix is for course options we should consider**. We recommend that the Provost's Office and the colleges work together to answer the following questions:

- ● What **proportion of offerings of the various types should we have** (e.g., don't want to be a fully online university, so how much is too much?). Should this be different by college and department?
- ● **Can** individual **faculty choose** how to offer their courses? e.g., online, HyFlex, hybrid, face-to-face only?
- ● **Are particular courses always delivered** in particular modes?
- ● Can we ask that instructors consistently **use a toolkit of enterprise supported learning resources to ease the burden on students** of being asked to use too many different platforms across their courses?
- ● Could we **consider offering another online degree-completion program for undergraduates** in an area of high need and where our inventory of flexible course offerings is strong?

We also recommend collecting the following information to help inform the discussion of course flexibility:
- ● Collect data on **how faculty would prefer to work and teach**
  - ○ How does type/level/subject relate to preference?
  - ○ How does this breakdown to different groups (e.g., early career, professional track, tenure track?
  - ○ Can we use this to adapt to meet goals like increasing faculty diversity?
  - ○ Other questions as determined.
- ● Collect data on **how students would prefer to learn**
  - ○ How does this breakdown to different populations? (e.g., transfers, nontraditional, race/ethnicity/gender/SES)
  - ○ How does type/level/subject relate to preference?
  - ○ Can we use this to adapt to meet goals like better supporting transfer students, increasing diversity of the student body, with equitable learning outcomes?
  - ○ Other questions as determined.
  - ○ Knowing the rough percentage of students who prefer asynchronous (or any mode of learning, really) can give us a target for how many seats should be offered in that mode and help us assign instructors to the different instructional modes.

A **resource challenge**/consideration for the interest in offering certain types of courses is **the availability of classrooms that can support the desired mode of instructio**n; for example, some faculty might be interested in HyFlex courses (where students are both in person and online and have some choice and flexibility about when to do each), and this does require special rooms and equipment for the optimal experience for remote students.

Flexible Offerings for Professional Development and Extracurricular Programming

- **Professional development and extracurricular programs should also be encouraged to be flexible with delivery options**. With flexibility, these courses can serve a larger population and expand their reach. Some professional development programs noted greater attendance when there was an online attendance option during COVID-19. With everyone online (including other schools and organizations), we saw some innovative partnerships form allowing online attendance to professional development opportunities and communities across multiple institutions (for example, during COVID-19 we were able allow students to participate in Accelerate to Industry (A2i) programming at other universities, (Ohio State, UVA, MUSC, Penn State-etc., and those students joined NC State classes. We had more than 847 grad students from NC State participate).
- NC State clubs and organizations found themselves having online meetings and programming. Moving forward into the future, **having some online options for extracurricular activities may provide the opportunity for participation that some students would otherwise not have** due to a disability or a lack of flexibility in their schedule.

Flexibility in these key areas, with the appropriate resources to support that flexibility, can help us support both students and instructors who need to manage their participation in the NC State community with other factors in their lives. This type of flexibility could help us better retain both faculty and students in our community.

Revisiting Post-Pandemic Policies and Procedures

Institutional policies and procedures are necessary to guide institutional functioning. Policies and procedures should be designed in ways that maximize both equity and efficiency, while complying with requirements imposed by agents external to the university. Importantly, policies and procedures should reflect university values and help to create the desired institutional culture. We value inclusion and we value student success and these should be guiding principles in the continued review and revision of policies and procedures in all arenas.

The COVID-19 pandemic created an incubator for innovative practices as the campus community worked to maintain instruction and student support structures in response to unprecedented disruption. Within the wide ranging response, policies and procedures were temporarily amended to facilitate student success. What lessons were learned and how can the university reflect and build upon the response became the focus of our recommendations. We recognize that making recommendations regarding any given policy requires a careful examination of the purpose of that policy, the external constraints within which it was created (if any) and the impacts of any changes, with appropriate consideration of best practices at comparable institutions. **Therefore, the recommendations of this task force regarding policies and procedures include: (1) the creation of a mechanism for reviewing academic policies and related procedures with equity and student success as guiding principles, and (2) identification of specific policies and procedures that have been suggested for such a review**, with some explanation of the concerns and questions relevant to each.

In addition, we have two general recommendations to consider with regard to all policies and procedures at NC State. The first is to **continue the move toward the use of available technology to replace all paper forms**. The second is to **include a statement explaining briefly why a policy or procedure was created** — clearly stating the intended goal of a given requirement. This statement should not be so lengthy as to obscure the actual policy or process, but should be enough to clarify the purpose of that policy or process, the context in which it was developed, and improve transparency for those impacted by any given policy.

Recommendations

(1) **Creation of an inclusive group(s) that systematically addresses issues that affect programs, policies and procedures**. This group would serve as an advocate for the voice of both undergraduate and graduate students and faculty by r**econsidering the status quo**. The work of this group should be driven by university values and a university-wide vision and must not be constrained by competing interests of individual colleges or units. Most relevant to this report, this group would **create working teams (drawn from units across campus) to systematically review academic policies and procedures, starting with those included in this report.**

(2) Begin a **review of policies that were revisited during the COVID-19 pandemic**. The table below identifies specific policies and procedures that have been raised as being in need of reconsideration in light of our experiences during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. We start with academic policies that were modified by the university in an effort to adapt to the conditions under which we operated during the worst of the pandemic (e.g., enhanced SU grading, late drops, academic calendar adjustments). In addition, adaptations made by

individual instructors and units across campus gave rise to conversations about other academic policies and procedures that we also recommend be reviewed.

Current PRRs To Be Considered

Table 1: List of Policies, Rules and Regulations that Need a Review by the Inclusive Group Created to Review These

PRR	Theme	Comments, Suggestions, Observations (This is a compilation of all that we heard -- not recommendations from the task force, just ideas that should be considered.)
REG 02.20.15	Grading (enhanced S/U)	1. Allow within first *x* hours (e.g., 30) to allow for exploration and transition without GPA penalty. 2. Keep enhanced version we implemented full time. 3. Maintain existing policy. 4. The enhanced version was confusing to students and created grade gaming. 5. Concerns about some students choosing an S over a B.
Multiple	Grading more broadly	1. Eliminate grades (consider alternatives with fewer categories — S/U, CR/nCR, high pass/pass/fail) — if not for all courses at least for some courses (e.g., GEP). 2. Eliminate +/- grading. 3. Continue grading in some form but only for internal purposes — report out alternatives on transcripts. 4. Allow instructors to place more emphasis on formative assessments and feedback. 5. Consider badges / certificates of skills.
	Transcripts	1. Consider a credit / no-credit approach in order to use the transcript as a record of accomplishments only. 2. Are other institutions (still) taking this approach? 3. Why do we report our students failures (especially knowing that failure can happen for many reasons)? 4. If a course is completed successfully, then the student has achieved those learning outcomes — so why not report out only the last grade earned in multiple attempts?
REG 02.20.03	Attendance	1. Attendance policy creates an adversarial relationship between instructor and student, placing an unproductive element in the learning process. 2. Eliminate university-wide attendance requirements and allow instructor holistic discretion. 3. Maintain attendance requirements internally to be proactive with these data to address challenges faced by at-risk students.
REG 02.20.02	Dropping courses	1. Extend drop deadlines for students to make decisions based on a better understanding of their performance in the course. 2. Allow more drops without W's on the transcript. 3. Require instructors to provide students with a "grade-to-date" report that includes their "possible final grade range" given the remaining points available. 4. Create a common tool (perhaps in Moodle) for instructors

		and students to use in calculating #3.
	Academic calendar	1. Have a compressed calendar that ends prior to Thanksgiving break or that starts later in January, which provides more time to recover between semesters for both students and faculty. 2. Return to a calendar that includes Fall and Spring break as important periods of rejuvenation for students and faculty.
	Scheduling	1. Consider more time between classes as students are again learning to navigate campus.
REG 02.20.17 UNC policy instructional formats	Contact hours	1. What do contact hours mean in the online space? 2. Interplay between contact hours and academic calendar seems to restrict the calendar unduly. 3. Clean up the "instructional formats" list (If this list serves contact hour purposes, why distinguish the categories based on style of teaching? Why are Discussion Sections and Problem Sections given different names but the same descriptions and same contact hours? And since terms vary in length, why not define based on total hours, as Carnegie does, rather than per week? And why does the "Research" category require 42 contact hours per week?)
	Admissions	1. Eliminate use of standardized test scores for undergraduates (SAT/ACT). 2. Eliminate use of GRE scores for graduate students. 3. Changes might be more about culture and procedures, given UNC constraints on policy (e.g., requiring SAT/ACT).
Procedures	CODA decisions	1. Concerns raised about a *lack of transparency* (about why decisions are made) and a *limited access* to majors, even for qualified students (decisions based on program capacity). 2. Suggest having committees make decisions rather than one individual. 3. Suggest a formal process allowing us to provide recommendations for students who might not meet GPA standards. 4. Suggest examining students more holistically (motivation, demonstrated interest) rather than just a grade in a course.
	Graduate defenses	1. Maintain the ability to conduct defenses virtually.
	Course approval process	1. Ability to have the committee meet in the summer allowed for quicker creation of a new course for students. 2. Temporary GEP approval applies only to one offering, requiring a second CUE review of the same documentation -- should allow for 2-3 offerings. 3. Concerns remain about the college territoriality of this process, especially with regard to gen ed and with interdisciplinary courses/programs (e.g., Wicked Problems has no prefix because we requested that it not be housed in any one college, and that request was denied).
REG 05.20.10	Quantitative student evals of teaching	1. Do these really provide the data necessary to improve instruction? 2. Do they provide reliable data needed to evaluate teaching

	(ClassEval)	as part of RTP? 3. Evaluate the basic cost versus benefit of continued use.
	Academic Continuity Plans	1. Every course should have an academic continuity plan both for short-term adjustments due to circumstances like faculty or student illness in addition to planning for more comprehensive disruptions. 2. Every course should have a backup instructor in the system, with access (just in case access is needed quickly).
General Procedures	Online "paperwork"	1. Use technology to make life easier. 2. Review (policy by policy) the signature (routing) requirements — why does this or that person need to sign and when might we be putting students in an unnecessarily awkward situation. 3. Examples: Schedule Revision Form, grad defense approval forms.
	Training	1. Consider mandating (additional) key faculty trainings such as Title IX and QPR Suicide.

Timeline

The launching of a new NC State Strategic Plan also provides an opportunity for the strategic review of academic policies, regulations, rules, and procedures for alignment with and in support of the goals of that plan. **Creating or identifying a body with the charge and authority to undertake this review should be a priority** coming out of the pandemic and moving forward with the new strategic plan. The **charge and review should be initiated during the fall 2021 term**.

Concluding Remarks

Expanding access to Higher Education that ensures the opportunity for all students to be successful is paramount. The current college student profile is drastically different from that of the stereotypical 18-year-old living in a dorm. The college student population today includes adults struggling to balance demands such as family responsibilities, work, financial hardships, living with a disability, etc. all while trying to complete a degree (Bernherd, 2020; Seale, 2019; Setser & Morris, 2015). With this changing demographic in mind, current practices and policies may be antiquated and may not provide an equitable opportunity for all students to successfully complete their degrees. Advances in technology and lessons learned from COVID-19 have opened the door to new opportunities for us to really think about **who we serve** and how we can do that in an **inclusive way**. To fulfill NC State's commitment to the success of our students, to take advantage of lessons learned during the pandemic, and to leverage the technologies adopted by the institution with instructors and staff that are more prepared to use these technologies for teaching and supporting our student community, it is time for a long term reconsideration of both our practices and our policies. For many of these recommendations, units should simply continue supporting inclusive practices that helped during the pandemic (i.e. expanded lecture capture, access to telehealth). For the continuation and expansion of some recommendations, additional resources and support will be needed, and for other recommendations, especially those in the policy and curricular realm, additional review and input from others is required before there can be permanent change. However, let's not lose the momentum of what we learned during COVID-19; let's move this conversation forward.

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Appendix A: Task Force Charge

(modified from original charge with elements particularly applicable to this group; original, full charge can be found on the Task Force Website)

From Steering Committee Meeting; what is our primary focus?
Key adaptations that have been made to instruction and student support in the past year that we should adopt permanently to positively impact student success.

From Charge Document:
As a university leader, we are asking you to co-chair one of the four innovation task forces as summarized above. We ask each of the task force co-chairs to quickly establish governing principles to guide your work for your topic, recommend committee membership which reflects our university community, and develop a communications plan for engaging our community in the conversation. Again, it is important to remember that we are limiting our scope to initiatives activated over the last year that the university should embrace, while recognizing that further development may require alignment with the goals and objectives set forth in the new strategic plan.

Deliverables and Reporting Expectations for the Task Forces
Once formed, each task force is requested to provide a status update report to the steering committee on a monthly basis. Task force chairs and members are requested to communicate and collaborate with each other, as necessary to share ideas, discuss goals and obstacles, and, where appropriate, develop common approaches to policy, technology and training in the best interest of the university. Each task force is requested to provide a formal written report to the steering committee and Chancellor by August 2, 2021. The report should contain proposed actions that the university should enact to ensure success, and should be sure to consider and make note of any equity issues identified or potentially addressed by the action. Actions may consist of policy changes, new procedures and/or guidelines, new technology and new training.

Task Force 1: Instruction and Student Support
Co-Chairs: Charles Clift and Donna Petherbridge; Co-Chair Emeritus: Louis Hunt

Goals
● Assess the novel, pandemic-related changes implemented to support and expand access for our students, and identify best practices that should be continued.
● Enhance student learning by leveraging the increased experience and comfort level of the faculty in the use of technology for teaching and learning to continue and improve upon online teaching modalities that benefit students and improve learning outcomes.
● Make more recorded content available on demand, which is highly desired by students, and leverages the university's investment in lecture capture technology (Care will need to be taken to protect faculty and student intellectual property and privacy.)
● Continue, where advantageous, the "HyFlex" model of course offerings where classes are offered simultaneously online and face to face, giving students the flexibility to choose modalities that work best for them, including increased summer online offerings that are highly desired by students.

● With increased faculty expertise in the use of learning technologies to accelerate the digital transformation of higher education at NC State, provide an instructional framework which combines the most effective technology enhanced learning and in-person experiential learning.
● Address inequities in student and faculty access to appropriate technology and Internet access.

Background
Despite much of what has been reported in the popular press about student difficulties with the switch to online learning, the data shows a somewhat more nuanced story. A recent survey by Inside Higher Ed on student satisfaction during the COVID-19 era which included 2,000 undergraduates from 120 institutions yielded some interesting findings. Students were asked to select their "top three" aspects of campus life that they missed most. The number one response (72%) was "friends and social life", while less than half (44%) included "in-person lectures" among their top three. When asked to pick a statement that best describes their post-pandemic learning desires, 31% chose "I can't wait for classes to be held in person again and I never want to take another Zoom class again." However, 50% had a somewhat different viewpoint: "There are things I like about remote learning that have worked for me and my learning style, but I'm anxious to get back to all or more in-person classes," and 9% indicated that they preferred the online experience: "Remote classes really work for me and I don't want to go back to learning in person."

Data from studies at NC State support the robustness of our own online offerings. A rigorous study connected by DELTA to explore student and faculty perceptions of, and experiences with, online and F2F courses analyzed survey and grade data for 839 undergraduate students and 63 faculty sampled from across the university from the Fall 2019 semester. All of the courses included were offered in both online and face to face (F2F) formats by the same faculty. Across the board, student outcomes (grades and completion rates) were not significantly different between F2F and online. No statistical differences were observed between online and F2F students in regards to their perceptions of a) course quality, and b) course satisfaction. Overall, students in both online and F2F courses viewed their course as exhibiting a moderately high level of quality and reported a moderately high level of course satisfaction. Interestingly, faculty perceptions of online vs F2F course quality and satisfaction exactly mirrored that of the students.

The DELTA study did find significant differences in student motivation and feeling of connectedness between online and F2F. These findings were mirrored exactly in the Inside Higher Ed study. A pre- and post- pandemic transition survey conducted by the Office of Faculty Excellence supports the assertion that the faculty are more confident in their ability to teach effectively online. Prior to the transition, 58% of instructors surveyed had less than two years of experience in teaching online, with 53% of those reporting no prior experience. Pre-transition, 31% of faculty felt "totally or somewhat unprepared" to deliver course lectures online, whereas post-transition that figure dropped to 6%. Similar pre- and post- differences were found for comfort levels with using technology in instruction, maintaining communication with students, and assessing student learning without the use of proctored exams.

Over the summer of 2020, a massive build-out conducted by OIT's ClassTech group and DELTA resulted in lecture capture capability being installed across 220 teaching spaces across

campus, resulting in coverage of 94.4% of all 110 classrooms. This was probably the single most important infrastructure investment to maintain academic continuity during the pandemic. Due to our prior experience with classroom lecture capture technology, the build-out was extremely robust and is positioned to serve the university well post-pandemic. Student surveys conducted for six years by ResNet have shown a very strong desire by students (98%) to have access to recorded lectures for review and study. A recent student survey conducted by DELTA yielded the same result, with 100% of students reporting that if they knew that recorded lectures were available they would utilize them to help with concepts they were having trouble with, and to study prior to exams.

Among the most challenging issues that we encountered during the pandemic were significant inequities for both students and faculty in accessing appropriate technology for remote learning, and also in the availability of adequate and reliable broadband access. We were able to address the first issue to some degree by ramping up a long-term equipment lending program through the Libraries. The broadband access issue was largely out of our control. The net result was that while we were able to produce and deliver quality eLearning content centrally, the ability of our students to take advantage of it varied greatly as a result of these inequities.

Key Concepts
● As an institution, we successfully pivoted much of our student services and support to a virtual environment as a result of the pandemic. These newly delivered modalities have increased access for students, and for some, increased engagement in different, improved ways. For instance, in a recent satisfaction survey administered by Counseling Services, 1/3 of students who responded to the survey preferred virtual appointments, 1/3 preferred in-person, and 1/3 are fine with either.
● We now have a much better understanding of faculty and student perceptions of technology-based teaching and learning, as well as what works and what doesn't work. What we've learned at NC State closely mirrors findings from national studies.
● Our faculty are now better prepared to utilize technology in teaching, and more confident in their ability to do so.
● We now have a robust infrastructure that spans virtually all of our classrooms which allows us to stream and record lectures.
● We now understand how important it is for our students and faculty to have equitable access to sufficient end point devices and high quality broadband.

All of these things can and should be leveraged to improve instructional efficiency and effectiveness, with the ultimate goal of improving student success. This includes (but is not limited to) more hybrid and "HyFlex" models of delivery, making more classroom recordings available to students for study and review; making more online summer offerings available for students to make progress toward a degree while allowing them to pursue employment, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities; ensuring equitable access to quality technology and broadband for all students and faculty; and setting the stage for our new strategic plan objectives in the digital transformation of higher education.

Appendix B: Task Force Members

Co-chair, Emeritus, Louis Hunt, Senior Vice Provost, Enrollment Management and Services (through July 1, 2021)
Co-chair, Donna Petherbridge, Interim Vice Provost, DELTA
Co-chair, Charles Clift, University Registrar (from July 1, 2021)
Molly Fenn, Teaching Professor, Assistant Department Head and Coordinator of Classroom Instruction, Mathematics
Karen Young, Assistant Dean and Director of Undergraduate Programs, CHASS, Psychology
Lina Battestilli, Teaching Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science
Paul Williams, Professor of Accounting, Graduate Faculty, Faculty Senate
Stacy Nelson, Interim Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Professor, College of Natural Resources, Faculty Senate
Jerome Lavelle, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, College of Engineering
Jane Lubischer, Associate Department Head, Biology, Teaching Faculty
Lisa Zapata, Sr. Associate Vice Chancellor, Division of Academic and Student Affairs, DASA
Bret Smith, Sr. Assoc. Dean, Curricular and Academic Affairs, DASA
Mark Newmiller, Director, Disability Resource Office
David Ladrie, Assistant Director for Help Desk and Learning Space Support
Diane Chapman, Teaching Professor and Executive Director, Office for Faculty Excellence
Lian Lynch, Assistant Dean for Student Administration and Academic Affairs, The Graduate School
Tae John, Director, Educational Support Services, College of Veterinary Medicine/Campus IT Directors
Rob Rucker, Chief Strategist for Student Success, Libraries
Deveshwar Hariharan, Student
Sheariah Stevens, Student
McKenzy Heavlin, Student Body President