



Faculty Announcement from the Interim VP for Academic Affairs

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

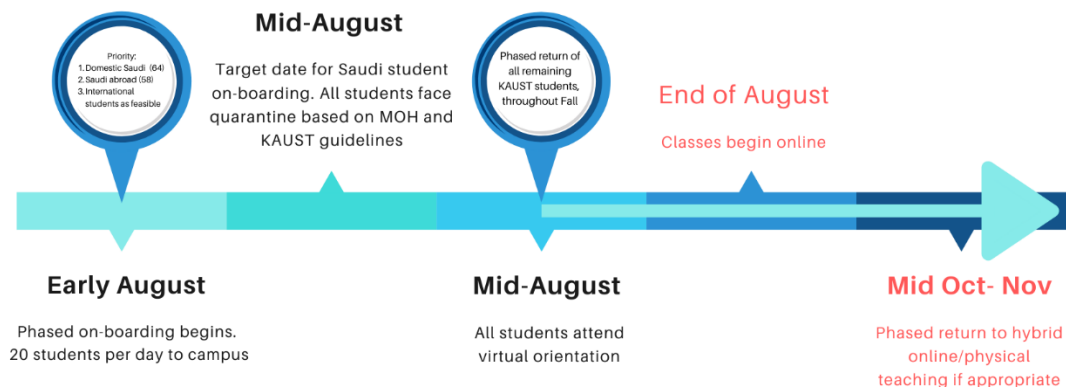
Dear Faculty,

As our spring semester has now come to an end, I would like to take a moment, first and foremost, to thank you for your adaptability and responsiveness in moving to an online learning environment. The circumstances of this past semester are nothing any of us had anticipated, and yet, I feel strongly that as a community our resiliency has allowed us to rise to the challenge.

Looking towards the future, I appreciate that many of you have questions about the upcoming Fall semester and the impact of the current situation on course delivery. While the situation continues to be dynamic, the decision has been made that in the Fall classes will be conducted online, at least in the beginning. Certainly, if the circumstances allow, there is a possibility of a phased transition to physical classes later in the Fall semester, again dependent on the current circumstances at that time. However, making the decision now to start online allows us to prepare with the necessary clarity for online teaching/learning in the Fall.

PHASED ON-BOARDING AND RETURN TO CLASSES

Note: Subject to international, Saudi, and KAUST public health requirements and restrictions



Our primary focus will continue to be on leveraging technological tools and training, ensuring delivery of a robust Fall semester, and supporting our students in achieving their educational goals. To assist us in these aims, we are currently reviewing student feedback from this semester's class evaluations. Soon another survey will be run among faculty. Once we have completed this review, we will announce tangible recommendations that will better prepare us for online classes in the Fall.

As you are aware, August would usually see a large cohort of new students arriving on campus, bringing with them new energy and excitement. We would like to reassure you that KAUST continues its effort to recruit and enroll students. Our new students may not physically be able to join us, but they, like current students, will be starting the Fall semester online. *New students will likely* have a phased arrival to the campus, dependent on advice from the Saudi Government and the KAUST Taskforce. As new faces begin to arrive in your virtual meetings and classes, I strongly encourage you to reach out and welcome our new students to the KAUST community, being mindful that transitioning to a new program under current conditions likely carries additional difficulties and obstacles. As it has already been demonstrated, I am confident that we will continue to rise the current challenge and deliver an excellent educational experience for our students.

Once again, I thank you for your continued commitment and flexibility during these unprecedented times. Throughout all of this, the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff are of the utmost importance.

Thank you, stay safe

Best wishes for the Eid break to you and your family

Yves Gnanou

Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs