



UBC iSchool Student Town Hall 4.0

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Date: December 11, at 2:30 p.m.

General updates – Dr. Erik Kwakkel, UBC iSchool Director

- A reminder that Winter Term 2 will be online. Faculty and staff now have a considerable amount of experience after Winter Term 1 being online. We have received feedback from students, and we have a good sense of what the challenges are and what you liked about the online learning experience. We have a good system in place to support faculty with online courses and teaching, and we will do our best to make the next term a successful term for everybody.
- We don't know what is going to happen with the Summer session yet. We will wait for the official UBC announcement, and we will follow the University's guidelines. We will probably have more information about the Summer session delivery sometime in the spring.
- I wanted to add that, in the scenario that UBC opens up in the summer, we will have to consider continuing with online course delivery. As many of our students are not here in Vancouver, we want to provide an equal opportunity for everybody to attend classes, get their credits and have the success that you deserve in your coursework.

Students' questions

Q: I was wondering if there has been any thought to transitioning to a pass/fail system rather than a graded system, at least in the interim?

Erik Kwakkel: I have not heard any formal consideration of this option at a University level.

Lisa Nathan: Please keep in mind that this is not a school-level decision. It would be UBC Senate and then Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies who will make that type of announcement.

Q: Will May graduation be affected by the date changes for Winter term 2?

Erik Kwakkel: I believe not.

Kevin Day: No, we don't think this will affect graduation. They are only pushing the beginning of the term back. May graduation dates will stay the same.

Q: Now that the semester is complete, will there be another survey? To capture students' experiences in retrospect?

Erik Kwakkel: Yes, we will do another survey to capture the transition from one term to another and hear what new students have to say about their experience. We don't know the exact date yet, but it's on our radar for early in the new year, when our new students have arrived and had the chance to settle in.

Q: For the instructors: based on the past terms online (and your own experiences with the shift online), do you have any advice or recommendations for students for next term on how to handle time management, work-life balance, etc.?

Julia Bullard: For synchronous courses, some students have set up study groups on their own to have a bit of discussion outside the class time. It seems to have made a big difference.

Tess Prendergast: I agree with Julia. You can use the time zone tool on Canvas to see what other students are in the same time zone and set up a buddy study group.

I would also recommend that, once you get the syllabus, read it and ask questions early. There are no stupid questions, and all questions are welcome. It is better if you ask ten times rather than panic at the end of the term. Contact your instructors by email, Zoom, Canvas, and just ask.

Heather O'Brien: One thing to keep in mind is the virtual office hours to connect with your instructors. If you can't make it, email your instructor to set up an alternative time.

It's also very important to stay healthy and take care of ourselves. You can block some time on your calendar, go for a walk or just disconnect and prioritize yourself.

Richard Arias-Hernandez: I agree with Heather, this is an exceptional time and it's ok if you need to drop other things to take care of yourself.

Erik Kwakkel: We will be posting the faculty virtual office hours on AIR soon and will announce it on the Digest.

Luciana Duranti: I'm on leave until December 31, but if there is any student that wants to talk to me before, please email me to set up a time.

Related comments on the chat:

Rio Picollo (LASSA Co-President): If students would like LASSA to create class discord groups, we are happy to facilitate that. There is a "quiet study" voice channel in the LASSA discord that students have used to do work in others' online company (it is people from all different courses right now).

Link to join the LASSA discord server: <https://discord.gg/Mv7MnngX>

Q: I've already submitted course evaluations but missed some thoughts. Is there anywhere I could submit those?

Lisa Nathan: Students can send these to Kevin Day (ischool.edsm@ubc.ca). There will be another survey soon, but you can send these by email now if you prefer not to wait.

Q: Will there be any new iSchool Work Learn positions posted for the coming term, and if so, when?

Kevin Day: Students can see what Work Learn positions are available online on their website:

<https://students.ubc.ca/career/ubc-experiences/work-learn-program>

Professional Experience positions are posted on the school's Job Board. There are a few that have been recently published: <https://ischool.ubc.ca/news/student-jobs/professional-experience/>

We don't have any GAA positions at the moment. We are looking for a Course Development Assistant, but this position is primarily for a PhD student.

Chelsea Palmer (iSchool Peer Technology Advisor): We will need a new Peer Technology next term. This position will be announced soon.

Q: Any recommendations for students who are not in Vancouver and struggle sometimes getting access to books/texts in person?

Erik Kwakkel: For students in Vancouver, the Library is offering different online services and book pick-ups. If you are far away and the material you need is not online, please contact the Library to explore other possibilities.

Lisa Nathan: If you are an incoming student, please keep in mind that your instructors are aware of this, and your readings and assignments will be available online. They will work with you to have the same access to learning material that other students on campus have.

Heather O'Brien: Many of us have submitted our reading lists for the next term to the Library. If you have any questions about these, please contact your instructors.

Erik Kwakkel: We will have posted drafted syllabi on our website next week for students to see what courses will be about. This is the link to this page: <https://ischool.ubc.ca/draft-syllabi/>

Q: As far as we know, how probable is having classes in-person next September?

Erik Kwakkel: No decision has been made yet by UBC.

If you still have questions, please submit them through LASSA or email us directly. We hope you have a great winter break, and we look forward to seeing you next term.

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