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11-15-2021

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Recommended Citation

Hagar, Ashley and Kalmykov, Zhangir, "WQ Registration: Weighing the Importance of Online Courses" (2021). *The Spectator Online*. 463.

<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/463>

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WQ Registration: Weighing the Importance of Online Courses

Ashley Hagar and Zhangir Kalmykov, News Editor & Volunteer Reporter

As students registered for classes this past week, it allowed for the Seattle University community to plan ahead for next quarter as well to ensure graduation requirements will be met for all. As Seattle U continues to transition back to in-person courses in winter quarter, students learned that some courses will remain virtual despite the university moving toward primarily in-person offerings.

David Powers, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, touched on the modes of teaching that will be utilized next quarter.

“In terms of the proportion of in-person and online courses, we expect winter to look very similar to the fall. This means the vast majority of undergraduate courses will be in-person. The key exception in Arts & Sciences are the language courses, which will again be almost exclusively online due to difficulties learning and teaching pronunciation with masks on. Our faculty and students have found it much easier to teach and learn languages over Zoom without masks, compared to being in person with masks,” Powers wrote in a statement to The Spectator.

Dean of the College of Science and Engineering Michael Quinn echoed Power’s statement.

“We have very few [courses] that are online this quarter and will continue to be that way in winter quarter ... We are running pretty much a normal schedule,” Quinn said. “We are trying to do everything in person and what I heard from the students is that they really want the lab classes in person. Students were talking about appreciating being in person because there is more opportunity to build community.”

Many students are looking forward to taking more classes in person after over a year of classes online due to COVID-19. Powers emphasized the excitement he hears from students about in-person classes.

“It is difficult to tell if students are ‘favoring’ online courses...Most of the anecdotal information I hear is that despite the challenges of in-person courses in this phase of the pandemic, most people are happy to be back in person and are following the guidelines to help us stay in person.” Powers said.

However, some students are opting for online courses as they allow for more freedom in their schedules and control over their education. For third-year Finance student Jay Grant, this was the case.



Rachel Bentfield

"I chose an online course next quarter to be able to have more time in the day. Being able to work the class around my schedule allows me to have more time for everything else I have to do. The flexibility of doing my class from anywhere is super beneficial for when I'm on the move," Grant said.

For the College of Science and Engineering, Quinn assembled a Student Advisory Council made up of student representatives from each undergraduate major to hear their input on what modalities they hope to see in the course offerings.

"Four or five years ago, we started the Student Advisory Council so there would be more opportunities for students to talk with the dean. So much of what I hear about how students are doing, I hear indirectly when I'm talking to faculty members and I appreciate the opportunity to talk directly to students rather than through faculty," Quinn said.

Isaac Ibara, a third-year chemistry student, took a gap year last year due to the pandemic. Returning to classes this year, Ibara relied heavily on his academic advisor when registering for classes.

"She helped me facilitate that process, and so this year coming back to everything and having to get used to the programming, I have someone to talk to about that. I feel like my advisor really lifts the weight off my shoulders in terms of thinking about classes or who I can ask my questions to," Ibara said.

So far, many students have already gone through the tense period of advising, making their next step a full registration for winter classes. Students feel a general sense of excitement for in-person education regardless of the circumstances. Some students learned through the pandemic about the upsides of online classes while others began to cherish the traditional in-person approach even more.

Quinn emphasized the importance of learning from the past year online. He noted how Seattle U hopes to bridge the gap between online and in-person classes by utilizing the strengths of both modalities in the future.

"There are some things about online [learning] that students appreciate, such as the ability to go back and hear parts of the lecture again. So one of the ideas going forward is can we find a way to use what's best in each modality. So we're teaching in person, but we don't forget about ways that having material online can be beneficial to students," Quinn said.

Though it was less than ideal to conduct a fully virtual year of classes, Seattle U has integrated the benefits of online education into its primarily in-person class schedule for this academic year.