

Dear Faculty Member,

I write today to address the status of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC) current multi-year contracts (MYC). Over the past several months, it has become evident that we are on track for a steep first-year undergraduate student enrollment decline. A month ago, we explained to the Part-Time Concerns Committee our intention to cancel the MYCs as a result of the anticipated enrollment drop and our likely need for fewer courses. After lengthy and productive conversations with the Part-Time Concerns Committee, we have agreed instead to reduce the guarantees in all adjunct and lecturer MYCs to one course for those adjuncts and lecturers who taught at least one course at the undergraduate level in the last academic year. This will preserve all MYCs. Due to stronger graduate enrollment numbers, we will not alter the contracts of those who only teach in the graduate program.

We will host a question and answer session for those adjuncts and lecturers impacted by these actions with the Part-Time Concerns Committee on Monday, August 3, at 3:30 p.m CT.

[When it's time to attend the meeting, click here.](#)

Password: SAIC803

You can also call in if you're unable to join by video:

Dial 312.626.6799 or 646.876.9923. Webinar ID: 933 2468 3256

International numbers are available [here](#).

As this letter details:

- Impacted adjuncts and lecturers will have the courses promised to them in their MYC, plus any incremental course they've been contracted for, remain on the schedule, even as the guarantee is reduced to one course;
- Impacted faculty members' rank will not be affected
- Impacted faculty members' Per Course Rate (PCR) will remain the same;
- Courses promised to adjuncts and lecturers **will only be** canceled due to low enrollment;
- Adjuncts who experience the cancellation of their guaranteed course will be paid their PCR (and owe the School a course at a later date) and will

- receive the standard Course Cancellation Fee for each non-guaranteed course that is canceled;
- Lecturers who experience canceled courses will receive the standard Course Cancellation Fee;
 - Adjuncts who fall below two courses per year because of under-enrollment will be able to maintain their health care coverage in 2020-21; and
 - It is the School's goal to reinstate the guarantees in the MYC contracts to their previous levels once enrollment returns to normal levels (potentially as soon as Summer 2021).

Part-time faculty members are valued members of the SAIC community, so much so that the School maintains policies authorizing the multi-year engagement of certain adjuncts and lecturers (Policies). These are unique Policies befitting a unique institution; they help us maintain the world-class level of faculty that is a hallmark of SAIC.

Built into these Policies are flexibility and discretion that allows the School to adjust assignments and contractual obligations depending upon projected enrollment. The Policies specifically recognize that there may be circumstances in which MYCs are modified or even canceled due to enrollment deficits. Section 9 of the policy specific to adjuncts provides as follows:

9. Effect of Unanticipated Under-Enrollment

Notwithstanding any other terms of this Policy or an adjunct's contract, including the Additional Terms and Conditions for Multi-Year Contracts for Adjunct Faculty that are part of each contract (the "Terms and Conditions"), the following applies in the case of unanticipated under-enrollment:

b. Undergraduate Under-Enrollment

If by June 1 the anticipated first-time freshman headcount enrollment for the upcoming fall term is less than 90% of the enrollment goal used in the budget approved by the Budget Planning Committee and then formally documented in the preliminary major budget assumptions reviewed by the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees by April 1, then for each adjunct who taught at least one course in the affected department or program in the just ended academic year, the School has the discretion to reduce the Guarantee in the adjunct's multi-year contract, declare the adjunct's contract null and void, or leave the contract as is.

In making these determinations, the School will consider curricular need; rank; and length of service within rank when feasible; and will give priority to faculty members on multi-year contracts when feasible.

The School will pay adjuncts affected by this term the cancellation fee in the Course Cancellation Fee for Part-Time Faculty policy then in effect for each guaranteed course they lose for one academic year.

Section 10 of the policy specific to lecturers provides as follows:

10. Effect of Unanticipated Under-Enrollment

Notwithstanding any other terms of this Policy or a lecturer's contract, including the Additional Terms and Conditions for Multi-Year Contracts for Lecturers that are part of each contract (the "Terms and Conditions"), the following applies in the case of unanticipated under-enrollment:

b. Undergraduate Under-Enrollment

If by June 1 the anticipated first-time freshman headcount enrollment for the upcoming fall term is less than 90% of the enrollment goal used in the budget approved by the Budget Planning Committee and then formally documented in the preliminary major budget assumptions reviewed by the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees by April 1, then for each lecturer who taught at least one course in the affected department or program in the just ended academic year, the School has the discretion to reduce the Guarantee in the lecturer's multi-year contract, declare the lecturer's contract null and void, or leave the contract as is. In making these determinations, the School will consider curricular need; rank; and length of service within rank when feasible; and will give priority to faculty members on multi-year contracts when feasible.

The School will pay lecturer affected by this term the cancellation fee in the Course Cancellation Fee for Part-Time Faculty policy then in effect for each guaranteed course they lose for one academic year.

The School has never before taken action under Sections 9 or 10, respectively, of these Policies to reduce guarantees or cancel contracts consequent to under-enrollment. But we have never faced a crisis like the present COVID-19 pandemic. As of June 1, 2020, the School was confronted with an unanticipated under-enrollment and a deteriorating financial condition. The School closely monitored enrollment projections and trends since before the shutdown began in

March of 2020. As concerns sharpened about the prospects for fall enrollment across higher education, we adapted our recruitment efforts in an attempt to forestall class cancellations, program adjustments, or contractual changes. As spring progressed and the crisis deepened, we continued to actively consider alternatives, even as it became more and more likely that enrollment deficits might necessitate some form of action under Sections 9 and 10, respectively, of the Policies.

As of June 1, 2020, we determined that anticipated first-time graduate and undergraduate enrollment for the upcoming fall term was projected to fall far below the enrollment goals included in the preliminary major budget assumptions reviewed by the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees prior to April 1, 2020. The first-time undergraduate enrollment goal presented to the Board was 602 students. As of June 1, we had 523 deposited and enrolled students, which represents a drop of 13 percent. Unfortunately, projected enrollment has continued to decline since June 1. As of July 27, we were down to 513 students, which leaves us 15 percent off of our goal. Given the level of uncertainty surrounding the ultimate impact of the pandemic on our fall enrollment numbers, the School's initial instinct was to cancel the multi-year contracts altogether. However, after further consideration and much discussion with the Part-Time Concerns Committee, the School has decided to leave the contracts in place and instead reduce the guarantees in each contract to a single course.

As stated above, SAIC will offer you all of your previously scheduled courses during the upcoming academic year.

In addition, the School recognizes and is sympathetic to the fact that the likely increase in course cancellations due to under-enrollment may have a direct impact on the ability of adjuncts to retain medical, dental, and vision coverage, as the current School policy requires adjunct faculty members to teach at least two courses per year to remain benefits-eligible. To address this concern, we are in the process of amending our health plans for the next academic year. **The change will ensure that those adjunct faculty members who lose courses due to under-enrollment will remain benefits-eligible, even if their courses drop to zero in 2020-21.**

I also want to assure you that it is our sincere hope that should enrollment prove to be more robust than presently projected, it may be possible to reinstate your guarantees in part or full. Please know that the School deeply values you and all of our part-time faculty. You serve as great resources to your students, to your colleagues, and to the entire campus and museum community. We will continue

to communicate about enrollment trends and teaching opportunities throughout the summer, and we want nothing more than to run all of the courses previously contracted under the MYCs this fall.

I close by offering my very sincere regrets that circumstances have necessitated this action. If you find yourself with questions, please contact Faculty Employment Resources at saic-fer@artic.edu. Further, we are working with the Part-Time Concerns Committee to host a question and answer session for those adjuncts and lecturers impacted by these actions to be held on August 3 at 3:30 p.m CT.

Sincerely,

Martin Berger
Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs