

March 18, 2020

Dear Fellow Faculty,

Yesterday you received emails from Chancellor Marshall and from President Schilling/President Schulz announcing that in-person instruction has been suspended indefinitely district-wide. While any loss of instruction to our students is regrettable, the health of faculty, staff, and students must come first. Suspending in-person instruction is a responsible way to protect public health and aligns with recent federal, state, and local responses to the COVID-19 outbreak.

For those faculty whose classes cannot be taught remotely, you should contact your dean if you haven't done so already so they can advise you on next steps and provide some guidance on communicating the suspension to your students.

For faculty who are able to teach some or all of their classes remotely, Chancellor Marshall's email stated that Spring semester classes that can be taught remotely will resume on Wednesday, March 18. The letter from Presidents Schilling and Schulz stated that they expect that as many courses as possible will begin in a remote format on March 18. The interpretation of these messages has caused some concern among some faculty and students, I want to take an opportunity to clarify those statements, reflecting the conversations that have been taking place over the past week among members of the Response Team and other campus leadership groups that faculty have been a part of.

To be clear, the messages yesterday from the Chancellor and College Presidents do not mean that faculty must have all of their instruction or counseling for the foreseeable future figured out or even able to be fully implemented today. You aren't required to begin conducting online assessments, present finished learning units, or have your Canvas shell or other virtual learning or counseling environments fully developed today.

Faculty should, however, be communicating with their students to promote engagement with them and with your course material. This can take many forms and the form

it takes is up to each of us. This could be as simple as a review sheet to reacquaint students with what was being taught before we suspended instruction, or a link to online content that you think would serve as a bridge between instruction from last week and where you're heading next in your courses. Of course, if you've already been in contact with your students, have communicated this week's expectations to them, and have addressed any concerns they've expressed to you about the transition to remote learning, then you should feel free to have a more robust return to instruction.

If you feel that there are still barriers between your future plans for remote instruction and where you or your students are in terms of preparation, you should immediately communicate these concerns to your dean, who can help connect you with resources provided by our Distance Ed team and others that can help.

Regardless of your current level of preparedness, please do take the time to communicate to your students and look for opportunities to return to some level of instruction, as minimal as that might be. Student engagement after a week away from class should be a concern for all of us, and taking steps to promote engagement and ease back into a learning environment are encouraged.

Regards,

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