Monday, March 16 – Some updates on teaching and learning continuity

Dear Associate Deans,

As announced late last week, classes are suspended for two weeks to allow us to prepare our business continuity plans and to be prepared to move instruction online. We continue to update our Teaching and Learning Continuity website with new information, and are also following (and learning) from the experiences of others who have already done so. Here are some updates and requests for help from you. Please feel free to share this with others in your units:

1. The USG has released a Rapid Guide to Teaching Online that may help faculty move their courses online. We have created a more UGA-specific version of this and have released it as an eLC course, HERE. Anyone with an instructor role on eLC has already been enrolled in the course. Others may request access, HERE. This course can help faculty make a rapid transition to online learning.

2. We are learning that a significant challenge in moving instruction online is internet speed/bandwidth. Some students may not have access to high-speed internet access or the sheer volume of live lectures may limit the quality of the webcast. For this reason, faculty should consider increasing the amount of content delivered asynchronously. Asynchronous video content can be prepared within Kaltura, Zoom, or Blackboard Collaborate, or simply done through a narrated PowerPoint presentation uploaded to the Kaltura media server. Instructions for these are available on the Teaching Continuity website, and in the above eLC course Rapid Guide to Teaching Online. Please encourage your faculty to use asynchronous mode of instruction whenever this is appropriate. Please note, as well, that the Division of Academic Enhancement and the Libraries are collecting resources for students without internet accessibility.

3. While we are prepared to deploy all support to faculty, there is a reasonable chance that we may not have the bandwidth to handle all the calls during the initial period of deployment. We encourage you to identify some faculty within your units who are familiar with eLC and other teaching tools to serve as initial help for your faculty. If you need help identifying such individuals, please let us know and we can try and identify faculty within your units who are expert eLC users. Alternatively, we can also help you identify faculty who may not be using eLC at all.

4. Many students with health issues, those registered with the Disability Resource Center, and others may not be able to return to campus even when the two-week hiatus is over or if instruction moves online. Please encourage your faculty to accommodate those students as much as possible. In addition, please encourage your faculty to stay in contact with their students during the next two weeks, as students will have lots of questions and concerns. However, please make it clear that faculty cannot require students to attend class remotely, submit assignments, work problems etc. while classes are suspended.

5. The Withdrawal deadline has been pushed back to April 17th to allow students time to re-assess their coursework and preparation and to make an informed decision regarding continuing in their classes.

We will be sharing this information directly with the faculty as well but wanted to get this to you as you begin your own planning and conversations. We appreciate your flexibility and nimbleness in this rapidly changing time.

Sincerely,

Rahul Shrivastav

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