



Faculty Town Hall – August 11, 2020

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m., Zoom

Agenda

Welcome and Opening Remarks – Mark Button, Dean

Today's town hall is a chance for us to share information with you and address your questions and concerns. We have received many questions already and plan to address as many of these as feasible in our comments today. To add your question for the Q and A portion – please use the chat function or the raise hand function, and you will be unmuted so that you can speak directly to the larger group.

As we approach the start of a new academic and a fall semester unlike any we have ever seen, I want to begin by acknowledging the personal concerns and the feelings of uncertainty and fear that many of us are going through right now – for our loved ones, our community and ourselves.

I also want to recognize that for so many of us, there was really no summer break – indeed there was an increase in work related to all of the preparations that we continue to make to get ready for the start of the fall semester. This has been true across the board: for our faculty who continue to conduct their high impact research and creative activities; for all of the instructors in the college who are preparing to deliver their courses, labs, and recitations in new and challenging ways; and for our staff who have been working diligently to prepare our classrooms and offices with the physical distancing and technology enhancements necessary to continue to meet our critical mission of providing access to public higher education.

Across the college and the entire university – our faculty, staff, and student workers have stepped up in extraordinary ways to help us respond to the challenges of this moment. If we maintain our focus on the core missions of the college and continue to exercise empathy and compassion with each other -- I am confident that we will come out of this period proud of what we have achieved together and equally proud of the manner in which we have conducted ourselves in the face of these challenges.

We don't know when the current disruptions to our important work will come to an end – and we should all be prepared for the possibility of needing to shift to fully remote instruction and research again – but you are not in this alone, we are here to help you, and we can and will persevere and succeed.

I very much look forward to recognizing the many notable achievements of our faculty and staff from this past academic year – far too many for me to list here. But look for more information soon about a Fall Awards Celebration that will be conducted in a video format.

Before addressing COVID related concerns and items related to fall course delivery, I would like to address briefly some key priorities for the college this coming year:

We will resume the important work that COVID-19 disrupted this spring and finalize the college's strategic plan: this will be a living and revisable plan that will both guide and hold the college accountable for the next five years. You will soon be asked to participate in the process of finalizing this plan for the college. It is critical that we complete this work – not despite of but because of our current moment, and this is so for a few key reasons:

- First, in this historic moment of national reckoning about systemic racism and racial injustice, the college must lead in advancing the necessary institutional and cultural conditions for racial justice and equity on our campus and beyond.
- Second, vitally important work remains to be done to address the work conditions and compensation of lecturers in the college – and we will provide a current update about this today.
- Third, I believe that we can be a national leader in integrating a comprehensive education in the liberal arts with experiential learning and preparing all of our students for life-long learning and career success
- And finally, our core values and our vision to be a world-leading College of Arts and Sciences must drive our approach to the implementation of the new incentive-based budget model, not the other way around.

Health and Safety of Faculty, Staff, and Students – Mark Button, Dean

The EVC Office and the college continue to emphasize with chairs, directors, and supervisors in every unit the critical importance of flexibility, empathy, and equity in finding feasible solutions to continue our critical missions of teaching, research, and public engagement. The chairs and directors in the college have stepped-up and have helped to make this happen.

An important guiding principle at UNL is that, “We will not force any student or employee to return to campus this fall if they don’t feel safe.” (See President Carter’s guidance on Fall 2020 Planning). “We especially recognize that certain members of our community may need to continue to work or study remotely in order to be safe.”

Reminders about Accommodations Process via Faculty/Staff Disability Services and an Alternative Work Arrangement Request* process that is reviewed by department chairs/unit supervisors – both options are available to all employees, including student workers and GTAs/RAs. You can find a link to both processes from the Information for

Instructors/Researchers page that is located on the University's main [COVID-19 page](#).

* Requests for alternative work arrangements are routed directly to chairs/directors for review and should facilitate a conversation between the chair and the employee about the best way to conduct the essential responsibilities of his/her position. Consistent with guidance from the EVC Office, we have encouraged chairs and directors do everything they can to be as flexible as possible, with the goal of trying to get to solutions. There is a range of options for course design and delivery that should be considered to meet the learning objectives of a specific course (see <https://cas.unl.edu/cas-approaches-fall-course-delivery>). The Dean's Office is here to help instructors and department leaders find feasible course delivery solutions that provide meaningful experiences for our students and meet the specific needs of our faculty.

- **Face Coverings and Policy and Compliance**

Cloth face masks will be distributed to all employees through your department/unit; disposable masks are also available for visitors who need them. Instructors will also have access to face shields through your department and windscreens for lapel mics.

Be sure to post the approved Face Covering Statement on your syllabi. You can include the full statement or link to the full statement. Please be sure that you have read this policy and that you understand the steps you are asked to take if a student isn't wearing a mask.

The university face covering policy applies to everyone indoors on our campus – faculty, staff, students, and visitors – and it also applies outdoors when social distancing of 6 feet is not possible.

Q: What should I do if a student isn't wearing a mask?

A:

- Ask if they have forgotten or need mask (all students will be provided two masks)
- If a student is not wearing a mask or not wearing it properly – remind the student of the campus policy – everyone must wear a face covering that covers the mouth and nose at all times while indoors.
- If the student will not comply, you will ask the student to leave the classroom; the student may only return when they are properly wearing a face covering.
- If the student refuses to wear a mask or leave the classroom, you will dismiss the class and report the student to Student Conduct and Community Standards.

Refusing to wear a mask is a violation of the UNL Student Code of Conduct and will be subject to student discipline. Reports will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by Student Conduct and Community Standards and will be addressed according to the circumstances of each incident. Consequences will depend upon various considerations

such as impact of the behavior, prior conduct history, and willingness to make the necessary changes in behavior.

Student conduct will use a progressive disciplinary approach, meaning penalties will become more severe with repeat violations or if there are circumstances that make the violation particularly egregious.

Other COVID-19-related points

By now, I trust that you have seen the steps that have been implemented to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 on our campus, that includes: Physical distancing and 30% capacity in classrooms and offices; hand-sanitizer dispensers across campus; extensive signage will be placed throughout buildings to direct foot traffic and reduce physical proximity; air handling with increase circulation of outside air and enhanced filtration; classroom disinfection supplies; increased cleaning.

- **Testing and Contact Tracing, Exposure, and Quarantine/Isolation Protocols**

We are all encouraged to self-monitor and report symptoms of COVID-19 by using the 1-Check COVID-19 screening app developed by the University of Nebraska Medical Center. 1-Check COVID-19 enables individuals to privately answer a series of questions and assess their risk of having COVID-19. Then the app issues a “low risk,” “urgent risk” or “emergent risk” assessment and guides users toward possible next steps specific to their needs.

For symptomatic individuals or those who desire testing, UNL will be providing free testing through a partnership with TestNebraska (location at 17th and R for walk through testing by appointment) and testing is available through the University Health Center. Additional testing will also be available when a high-risk population has been identified. Additional information, including hours available, will be provided prior to the start of classes.

Q: What will happen if a student in my class tests positive for COVID?

A: Important to understand that UNL is following CDC guidelines: Exposure to COVID-19 is defined as having been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes while being less than 6 feet from the individual.

Classrooms and other campus facilities that are following social distance guidelines may not trigger wider reporting of exposure. However, contact tracers from the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department will alert you and others if there is a concern regarding exposure to the virus. Per HIPPA privacy rules, names will not be released. While instructors will not automatically be notified if a student tests positive, students will be encouraged to contact instructors regarding any assignments or classwork they might miss while in isolation. The new guidance on attendance/engagement is critical

because we do not want sick students coming to class.

The health department has approved a process for isolation and quarantine for students who live on campus. Off campus students, faculty, and staff will isolate at their residence under health department supervision.

Q: A student has informed me that they will be in self-quarantine for 14 days – should I inform the other students in the class?

A: No. You should never disclose a student’s protected health information to any third party. Should an individual test positive, contact tracers will identify and notify persons who may be at risk based on interactions.

Q: What if I or someone in my family tests positive?

A: Contact your health provider or the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department Coronavirus Hotline: [402-441-8006](tel:402-441-8006). The University Health Center is now available to faculty and staff members as an acute care option.

You can also email covid19@unl.edu for guidance/concerns at any time. A text number will also be available soon for reporting on the university’s COVID-19 page.

Contact tracers will identify people who have been in close contact with a person testing positive and direct a 14-day quarantine period. As long as face masks are worn and the six-foot physical distancing is maintained, being in the same classroom as someone who tests positive does not constitute close contact. Employees who test positive are also encouraged to contact supervisors so that work assignments can be adjusted.

Q: What should I do if suspect that I have COVID-19 and am awaiting the results of my test?

A: If you have been exposed and are awaiting test results, you should pivot to remote instruction and self-quarantine until advised by a medical professional that you can return to a classroom. If you test positive, contact tracers will be initiated to identify those who may have been exposed. You are encouraged to contact a supervisor to let them know that you are being tested and the result.

Likewise, if a member of your household tests positive for COVID-19, you must teach courses remotely while undergoing a 14-day self-quarantine. If symptoms present, seek medical consultation until advised that you can return to campus.

Temp Emergency Admin Paid Leave: administrative paid leave may be used by any employee (faculty, staff, student worker) in the case of self-quarantine, quarantine or care of an immediate family member, childcare resulting from school and daycare closures, or other COVID-19 related scenarios.

Q: What if I am sick and unable to teach my course or carry out other responsibilities of my position?

A: Contact your department chair/appropriate unit supervisor; notify students of any

necessary cancellations and plans for make-up sessions or alternative assignments; stay in close contact with your department/program about your condition.

Q: Will we learn information about positive cases at UNL?

A: The university is not collecting this information and the health department does not have a dashboard with data specific to campus. However, UNL and the health department are in regular communication and the University will share campus-related information, including building or unit-specific information. Decisions at the UNL will continue to be guided by science and the recommendations of public health experts.

Let me conclude this portion of our agenda by making sure that you are all aware of some key resources to assist you:

- [UNL COVID 19 page](#) and the information for instructors/researchers: this page includes links to all relevant policies and additional information related to the fall semester – including [2020 UNL Instructor Training Video](#) that covers a host of issues that we know are important to faculty (face mask covering; classroom recording; assessment and finals). I strongly encourage you to take 20 minutes and watch this video.
- [Center for Transformative Teaching](#) has a host of resources – from planning for the first week of remote teaching; preparing for assessment given limited capacity in the DLC testing center; and supporting diversity, inclusion, and equity while teaching in remote and hybrid formats.
- [CAS COVID page](#) and [FAQ page](#) also have resources. [CAS Teaching Academy Fellows](#) are also a great resource for you – please reach out if you would like to be put in touch with one of our fellows for some one-on-one consultation. The self-guided online teaching curriculum is a valuable way to help all you feel more prepared for whatever curves COVID may still throw at us.
- Employee Assistance Program – remains open and available to all employees seeking additional support during this time.

Teaching with Flexibility, Empathy, and Equity in Mind – June Griffin, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education

Thank you – I know you have been working really hard this summer: planning your courses, adapting them to the meet requirements of physical distancing, the social and likely auditory impacts of face coverings, and the recognition that you will need to accommodate students who may need to quarantine during the term. It is a lot. I know you've done a lot to prepare. We in the dean's office recognize the work and appreciate it – and I know your students will too.

It is a good time to remember they are excited. They are so eager to be back in your classrooms. They know it will be different, but they are keen to know how.

Please Reach Out to Your Students Through Canvas as Soon as You Can to:

- Introduce yourself
- Let them know you are looking forward to sharing your discipline with them
- Give them a sense of the basic format of the class (how you will present course content, how the class will be split if they will be attending only some course meetings in person and what they should be doing when they are not in person)
- Highlight the resources you encourage students to use – important element in establishing a culture for academic integrity

If you are still thinking through your approach to the first week of remote, asynchronous classes, you can look at the suggestions posted on the [CTT's website](#). There are a number of fantastic suggestions as well as links to quick tutorials or tips on

- VidGrid
- Calendar in Canvas to allow students to set up appointments with you
- Yellowdig
- Canvas Discussions

Keep Equity in Mind

- Try to provide course content in ways that are asynchronous (that might mean recording a lecture you give and Zoom live for later viewing or preparing video or podcast lectures ahead). So students can access materials even if they have trouble with Wi-Fi or are struggling to find a place on campus to Zoom in to a class following immediately after they get out of another.
- Make sure videos are captioned. VidGrid's captioning is good quality, so even if you are live streaming a lecture through Zoom, you might record it with VidGrid to take advantage of the superior captioning.
- Use synchronous tools (e.g., Zoom) for connecting for office hours, discussion, workshopping, Q&A, recitation, problem solving. Provide other means to do these things when possible.

CTT's guide, [Implementing Inclusive Excellence into Virtual Learning Environments](#), has helpful ideas that apply in hybrid contexts, too.

Many of you have been wondering about the status of some of the policies put in place in the fall. We have gone **back to our standard policies for pass/no pass, incompletes, and attendance**. Please know the Faculty Senate has [shared guidance on attendance](#).

The main idea is that, because it is critical for everyone's health and well-being, **anyone who is sick or is engaging in self-quarantine in accordance with guidance either from the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department or their health care provider, should not physically attend in-person classes**.

But at the same time, we know regular engagement with a course is critical to student learning so Faculty Senate advises us all to interpret “attendance” to mean “physical attendance in the classroom, remote synchronous attendance, or engagement with the course in ways specified by the instructor in the course syllabus.”

So, specify in your syllabi what attendance and engagement means – what students need to do to stay current, and identify what activities, assignments, and assessments contribute to their grade.

Try to find ways to accommodate people who need to stay out of the classroom – for your safety and well-being as well as your other students. This can be challenging for labs and for exams; I know so many have you been deeply engaged in thinking about how to do this well. If you are unsure—consult the CTT, talk with your colleagues, and, if you don’t know who to contact, contact me and I’ll connect you with someone.

Finals

As I hope you have heard, the Digital Learning Commons’ (DLC) capacity has been greatly reduced this term and will not be available for finals.

I’ll be sending a spreadsheet to departments who will ask you if you plan to offer a final in your classroom and if so, do you need additional space to accommodate your whole class. If you don’t plan to offer an in person final. Please release the room so we can make the best use of available spaces for exams. Our goal is to find spaces to accommodate whole classes if we can, or two nearby rooms if we can’t. If your final will be in multiple rooms, you will need to identify another proctor to assist you.

Recording Class

- Recordings – if the faculty member is recording, make sure to announce to students. Focus the recording on the faculty member, not the students.
- Concerns about student’s recording class activities – you may want to include [the university’s full approved statement](#) on your syllabus, but only if the statement appears in your course information. A portion of the statement includes: *“Failure to follow this policy on recording or distributing class-related activities may subject students to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct.”*

Classroom Tech

Alecia and I wrote to you that there have been significant delays in receiving the cameras that were going to be installed in GP and some department-managed classrooms. They should arrive Aug 31. You will still be able to Zoom and share your screen with remote students, but they will not be able to see the instructor or the classroom.

The college has purchased additional technology for the high-traffic classrooms that did not meet minimum requirements of the ITS package. Unfortunately, that technology has also been delayed, but we’re hopeful that we will receive this and get it installed before the week of August 24th.

I know this is a huge inconvenience and that it is stressful – we will work with IT and the college’s amazing tech team to get the classrooms outfitted as quickly as possible once it arrives.

Training for the New Tech

- The EVC office is hosting the New Faculty Orientation classroom tech training on Thursday, August 20 from 10 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m. in Avery 106.
- Make requests for [1:1 classroom tech training via Footprints](#). The Learning Spaces team will schedule confirm times for faculty starting the week of August 17.

Update on the College’s Approach to the Budget Reduction Planning – Alecia Kimbrough, Assistant Dean for Business and Finance

Due to the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the college is planning for a \$5.9 million permanent budget reduction over the next three years; this represents 9.116% reduction in the college’s state-aided budget.

The college initiated its response to Chancellor Green’s request for FY2021 budget reduction contingency scenario planning by meeting with all Chairs and Directors on May 7. As a college, we have affirmed the importance of planning for budget reductions in way that upholds the core values of the college’s mission, its strategic plan, and the N150 vision for UNL. We also stressed four key guiding principles to help position the college for long-term success:

- (1) preserve and where feasible expand our research mission
- (2) build on core strengths while developing new opportunities for student enrollment/majors
- (3) improve efficient and flexible course delivery and timely degree completion for all students
- (4) maximize operational efficiencies across the college

All units in CAS submitted budget reduction contingency plans equal to 5%, 7.5%, and 10% by May 18. The Dean’s Office drafted a college-wide budget reduction contingency plan and discussed this plan with the college’s Budget Advisory Committee (May 22). A second meeting of the college’s Budget Advisory Committee was held on May 27 prior to the college’s budget reduction plan submission on May 28.

Upon learning the final budget cut numbers (9.1%), the college reassessed its initial contingency plans and prioritized cuts across three years. The college identified and included cuts that had the least amount of impact on our overall mission. The college discussed the revised plan with its Budget Advisory Committee (July 24) and discussed this plan with all chairs and directors on August 6th.

Update on Lecturers – Mark Button, Dean and Pat Dussault, Associate Dean for Faculty

- Since receiving the report and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Lecturers this spring - we have consulted with the chairs of the committee and the college’s Executive Committee.
- We initiated action on one recommendation of the committee in time for the spring

- faculty meeting by recommending a change to the college's bylaws to include lecturers in the definition of faculty.
- Over the summer, we have worked in close collaboration with EVC Spiller and Associate Vice Chancellor Judy Walker to develop some proposed new guidelines for lecturers. We have also consulted with all chairs and directors about these draft guidelines this summer.
 - Because categories of faculty appointments, ranks, and promotion processes are determined by universities, not colleges, more consultation needs to take place across campus as we consider possible changes in the rank of lecturers.
 - However, based upon the things we have learned and the progress we have made, there are some things that the college and departments can do even in the context of a system-wide salary freeze that I think will make a difference. We have EVC Spiller's support for these steps, which will include:
 1. Offering multi-year contracts of two and three years, based upon length of service
 2. Ensuring annual faculty evaluations and opportunities
 3. Addressing salary both in the context of contract renewals and on the basis of strong annual performance
 - We will have more information to share with you about these items this fall, but I am optimistic that, as the college enters into the new incentive based budget model, the college will be in an improved fiscal situation to improve the salaries of lecturers.

Anti-Racism Journey and CAS – Mark Button, Dean

- We are planning for our upcoming work and future coordination between the college's IDEA Committee and the Chancellor's Anti-Racism Journey, with valuable leadership from three members of our college: Kwame Dawes, Lory Dance, and Sergio Walls.
- What I want to see in the college is that we are taking a systemic approach to advancing inclusive excellence—this will require, among other things, looking at all of our procedures, policies, and budget decisions to ensure that we are recruiting, investing in, retaining, and helping to advance diverse faculty, staff, and students. You will see for more about this in the college's forthcoming draft strategic plan.
- Related to these goals, we are planning for a new page on the college's website that will outline our action steps and help hold us accountable for our annual progress in advancing diversity in the college.
- Starting this year: the new College Distribution Requirement, Human Diversity in the United States, for every student seeking a degree in the college.
- This summer we initiated a new fundraising effort called CAS Cares—focused on the equity gap in persistence and graduate rates but also connected to addressing exigent financial need. \$80k raised so far.

Open Q and A