



COVID-19 UPDATE  
March 10, 2020

Dear Chairs and Directors:

On Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, Interim EVC Richard Moberly wrote to faculty asking them to prepare for the possible suspension of in-person classes. The Dean's office has received a number of questions asking for advice on next steps for particular situations. We must all follow campus-wide policies, so please stay alert to updates on UNL's COVID-19 site <https://covid19.unl.edu/>

As college leaders, you need to be prepared to make decisions and offer guidance within your unit in a situation that is changing quickly. Below I offer suggestions for addressing questions in three areas:

- 1) **Pedagogy:** I encourage you to work with an existing department committee (e.g. executive or curriculum) to develop discipline-appropriate recommendations/guidelines. Your goals should be to:

- Meet the learning goals of your courses while recognizing you will have to adjust how you teach and assess that learning. Be creative. You don't have to do things the way you have always done them to meet the learning goals.
- Do your best to ensure that the adjustments you make to courses do not disadvantage students' academic progress.

Please remember we are in preparation mode: As of March 11, courses have not been asked to move online and so they should continue to meet as scheduled. Unless, of course, the instructor is actively ill or has been advised by their healthcare provider to stay home.

- a. General guidelines are available for moving instruction online.
  - Go to "Prepare for Suspension of In-person Classes" section on <https://covid19.unl.edu/faculty-staff>
  - The Center for Transformative Teaching has a more detailed "Keep Teaching" guide available <https://teaching.unl.edu/keep-teaching/>
- b. Questions/topics for your department to consider:
  - What are effective ways for your department to modify exams or student presentations if you do need to move online? More resources will be shared but for now this UMN site may be helpful <https://cei.umn.edu/support-services/tutorials/integrated-aligned-course-design-course-design-resources/alternative>
  - What material is most essential? Is there agreement on what must be covered in courses that are prerequisites for other courses?
  - Keep internet bandwidth in mind for learning materials and assignments: for example, use discussion boards vs. Zoom, audio vs. video in PowerPoint, and be cognizant of students with technology limitations.

- What methods of delivery require the least bandwidth for students? Data-intensive modes (like Zoom) can cause problems for students with spotty internet access or limited data plans.
- Faculty who already have class material available on Canvas can encourage students to download the content prior to leaving campus for spring break as a way to mitigate the bandwidth challenge.
- Use UNL-supported technology to ensure faculty and students will have the tools and support when needed.

2) **Staff:**

- a. If classes are moved online, it is likely campus will remain open and staff will continue to observe normal practices and policies unless they should feel ill. Please be attentive to CDC guidelines that older adults and people with serious medical conditions are particularly susceptible to complications from exposure to COVID-19. In collaboration with your staff, please use your discretion to determine if certain job responsibilities can be completed remotely in the event that this is necessary. We recognize that this option might not be available for everyone and that this fact may create some short-term unevenness in the fulfillment of staff responsibilities.
- b. The university's guidelines for alternative work sites and sick leave policy related to COVID-19 can be found [covid19.unl.edu/faculty-staff](https://covid19.unl.edu/faculty-staff). Human Resources is also available to provide advice and direction in establishing non-traditional work arrangements.
- c. Assistant Dean Alecia Kimbrough is the point of contact for staff related questions. She will be back in the Dean's Office on Friday, March 13, 2020.

3) **Technology:**

- a. Survey faculty and staff to see who has the hardware and internet access to allow them to work from home.
- b. Take inventory of what technology your unit has to loan out to faculty and staff.
- c. Prioritize based on the need to fulfill the teaching mission before loaning equipment.

You will soon receive a form that will help us collect information about (1) events that you are organizing with more than 50 attendees and, (2) visitors from international countries. The college's Marketing and Communications team has listed the event information that we have but we ask that you review this information and add any additional events or international visitors that we may be unaware of. Please return this form to Amanda Metcalf before the end of business on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for all the great work that you are doing to help guide your units during this uncertain time.

Best wishes,



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Dean