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Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2020 1:41 PM

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Subject: Message from the Provost - Academic Continuity/Contingency Planning 2020

Importance: High

Dear Faculty Colleagues:

As we close out our spring 2020 semester in the next few weeks with finals and the Pass/Fail grading period, I congratulate you on keeping pace and good humor with all the challenges COVID 19 has posed to us. We will certainly have the opportunity in the days ahead to reflect upon and build on the “lessons learned” in this new online format. I know many of you, including me, have missed the very real camaraderie among students, faculty, and staff that is only best afforded in a face-to-face (f2f) environment. Although, the Pandemic Landscape is still unfolding, and unfolding unevenly across towns, counties, states, and regions, we at ESU are continuing to develop and refine our academic continuity/contingency planning for the months ahead.

I am pleased to share with you, that as evidenced with our recent Virtual Accepted Students Reception (April 26), we are moving full throttle toward our fall 2020-21 Academic Year Opening. In preparation for ideally a face to face opening, we are also simultaneously planning for online contingencies in the event that ESU needs to continue our academic operations remotely. With the help of the Academic Continuity Team (ACT) consisting of representatives from our local ASPCUF, UWCC, Chairs’ Council, University Senate, Registrar, and my office, we are meeting weekly in order to develop and share contingency planning that reflects state system guidance, government directives, and ESU senior leadership to support and guide our faculty and students into the new academic year. Although, we are uncertain at this time if we will be fully face-to-face or fully online, we are planning for tiered responses that will seamlessly fit together as our current pandemic situation unfolds and resolves itself. Please know the team is so constituted so as to ensure pipelines of communication from the various sectors of faculty, staff, and students.

At this time, the team and I encourage you to use your time after spring semester to best prepare for the fall by designing your courses and using D2L to migrate seamlessly from f2f to online to blended. Our course delivery is dependent upon the external constraints we may experience in the fall as a result of the virus and accompanying health precautions. Flexibility, creativity, and collaboration will be key elements for the success of our shared endeavor to provide and enhance quality educational experiences for our students. I also encourage departments to work closely with their departmental colleagues, with support and facilitation from your respective deans, on discipline specific issues and curricular needs that are more challenging for adaptation to an online format – e.g., labs, studios, internships, field placements, etc.

To further support you, online training is again planned for later this May and into the summer thanks to the ESU Instructional Online Support Team. You may recall that we sought through the department chairs and dean's your input as to what types and topics of online support and training are needed to ensure the best in online instruction. These suggestions were used to inform our May and future training offerings. We also have been able to secure the additional assistance of Ms. Sandy Shaika with our D2L Support for the summer courses. Suggested software as Articulate is currently being purchased. Currently, there is a small task force, consisting of the D2L team and led by Justin Amann, identifying recommendations in the form of labor, technology including hard and software, best practices, and professional development. In that vein, please see attached a helpful guide, provided by Ms. Kathleen Post, for conversion from f2f to online assignments, i.e., alternative instructional equivalencies.

In summary, please continue to refer to the following as we proceed from the end of spring 2020 to summer and the new academic year:

- Use your time after spring semester to best prepare for the fall by designing your courses and using D2L to migrate seamlessly from f2f to online to blended formats.
- Collaborate with your departmental colleagues, with the support and facilitation from your respective deans, on discipline specific issues and curricular needs that are more challenging for adaptation to an online format – e.g., labs, studios, internships, field placements, etc.
- Please continue to check [Provost Website](#) for Updates and History of ACADEMIC CONTINUITY/CONTINGENCY PLANNING at the [Office of the Provost](#).
- Check D2L Website for Training Updates and Contacts at D2L: [May Training Sessions](#) or https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vRJtx2QT-k8zIzUrC7VFv3N8IsFgihUqqUyl2o5IofwIiSyE6zBljLfovN-5Ai0JZ8q9n_PYebOoFb9/pubhtml
- Freely provide feedback to the Academic Continuity Team by asking questions, sharing suggestions, or making comments.

We will continue to share important information and guidance as it develops in light of the evolving pandemic landscape. Please be sure to "tune in" to our All University Meeting on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 3 PM <https://esu-online.zoom.us/j/98930458740>. At the meeting, you will be hearing important remarks by our President as well as hearing (and seeing) some of the innovative work of our students and faculty during this past semester. Please join me on Tuesday!

Best,

Jo Bruno

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