

From: Debra Larson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Chiara Ferrari, Chair, Academic Senate; Daniel Grassian, Vice Provost for Academic Programs

Subject: Maintaining Educational Continuity in the Context of COVID-19

March 6, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As you probably know, we have been receiving rapidly changing, continuing, and concerning reports of the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), especially in Northern California. While this is a fluid situation that can change day to day, even hour to hour, and the last thing we want to do is add unnecessary fear, there are specific steps we can plan for now in order to ensure instructional continuity, no matter how many or how few students and faculty may be affected. Doing so will help us ensure that our students will be able to succeed and will be minimally impacted, even in the more extreme scenario of an extended partial or complete campus closure.

Towards that end, Academic Affairs has assembled a small working group (Academic Senate Chair, Chiara Ferrari, Interim Academic Technology Officer, Kathy Fernandes, and Vice Provost for Academic Programs, Daniel Grassian) who is developing instructional contingency plans for various impact scenarios. This group has been and will continue to consult and engage with other campus constituents.

In the event of a prolonged closure, faculty will be asked to maintain continuity of instruction to facilitate student achievement of course learning outcomes. The administration's role is to help guide faculty by providing recommendations, tools, and resources to ensure instructional continuity, no matter what impact the COVID-19 may have upon us. The following are such recommendations, tools, and resources. We suggest you begin working on the following as soon possible:

1. Make sure that any course materials on your desktop computer have been backed up and are available to you remotely, in case the campus is unexpectedly closed.
2. Develop a plan to communicate with your students in the event of a campus closure. If you haven't already done so, download your roster(s) so you can email and communicate with your students.
3. Plan how to adjust your course policies related to class attendance, assignments, and assessment so as to best accommodate any instructional disruption.
4. Become familiar with ways to engage your class or classes online, using various features of Blackboard or other campus platforms. Our instructional technology consultants in the Technology and Learning Program (TLP) can help you with this. They can be reached

at x6167, [tlp@csuchico.edu](mailto:tlp@csuchico.edu), <http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/> or MLIB 457. TLP will also be providing in-person and online tutorials in the coming days, which will be posted on their website.

5. More specifically, since you might become ill or quarantined for an extended period of time (or the campus might partially or completely close), we strongly encourage all faculty to utilize and update an online gradebook through Blackboard. Alternatively, we strongly encourage faculty to regularly update their grades on Excel or in a similar document that can be provided to department chairs, should the need arise. TLP can also provide assistance for faculty who are not familiar or experienced with using the Blackboard online gradebook or Excel.
6. Please either upload your syllabus to your course shell or send a copy to your department chair as soon as possible.
7. Examine the remainder of the semester's work and consider ways that you could continue instruction, including the conversion of the assignments and in-class material to an online/digital format, should in-person classes be cancelled for an extended period of time. To do so, we strongly encourage you to look at the resources TLP has compiled at <http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/>.
8. If you think you may have special challenges developing an instructional continuity plan for any of your courses (e.g., a dance course taught in a studio), should in-person classes be cancelled, please contact and work with your Dean.

As more information becomes available, we will be in touch. We also encourage you to visit Chico State's active [FAQ web page](#) regularly, as it provides background about COVID-19; preventive measures for avoiding infection; how Chico State is responding to the COVID-19 threat; and other critical information for students, faculty, and staff.

We thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to support our students. Should you have any questions, please contact your Dean or TLP at x6167, [tlp@csuchico.edu](mailto:tlp@csuchico.edu), <http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/> or MLIB 457.