

### Day 3 Remote Course Delivery

Ok ... I think we've had some time to internalize the challenges that will face us after spring break. Now it's time to begin planning and prioritizing steps needed so the entire college is ready for a successful execution. There are three segments to this message: (i) updates and clarifications, (ii) the student perspective and a suggestion, and (iii) training and resource prioritization.

**First things first: Immediate training.** I suspect most of us are still mentally tossing around options for our courses. To help focus these musings, we have scheduled **Rob Vanderlan's group** from CTI to lead an exploration of ideas and methods that are known to be effective (and practical). This will consist of a short (~15 minute) presentation, an extensive Q&A, and finally a brief introduction to capabilities within Canvas, Zoom and Panopto. Come with your concerns, questions, and trepidations. We've scheduled it late in the afternoon to minimize conflicts, but it will also be recorded as a resource moving forward.

**When: Today (Friday, March 13) at 4:00-5:00 p.m.**

**Where: Olin 155**

CTI has numerous other [trainings and webinars](#) on many aspects to online teaching and tools.

#### (i) Updates and clarifications (okay, I'm not always completely clear):

- Although it was intended that classes could/would continue normally through spring break, we are seeing significant numbers of students leaving early; some over COVID-19 concerns and others over potential travel bans. To the degree you are comfortable and equipment permits, consider moving now to co-synchronous or fully synchronous delivery during normal scheduled times. Prior to spring break, please do not reschedule out of respect for other classes still operating normally. No approval will be required prior to spring break for synchronous delivery.
- It is still my best understanding that undergraduates will not be allowed to engage in any activities **on campus** after spring break. This makes some lab/project/paid work untenable. However, if the existing projects are, or can be, structured to permit remote work from home, then it is a win-win. Students continue to have the experience and we continue to see our work (or class) progress. Be creative!
- Advisors: If you have seniors who still must complete the swim test or a PE, they have just been given a **"Get Out of Jail Free"** card by the University (some conditions apply).

#### (ii) Student perspective and requests / suggestions:

I met with a group of undergraduates in a Q&A yesterday afternoon. I've been so focused on the mechanics and policies that I nearly missed the **enormous impact it is taking on our students' mental state, and the stress it is creating**; this is even more severe for our seniors who face a real potential for cancelled graduation ceremonies. Think back to your own final semester and the activities that made it so memorable. We are forcing students to compress three months of those experiences into a couple of weeks, while simultaneously struggling with arranging for continuity of classes. I'm normally a Law and Order type professor, but I want to ask you to consider some significant "considerations" during the next few weeks to recognize and mitigate these challenges.

- **Consider cancelling or reducing the weight of any prelims coming up between now and spring break**, maybe substitute alternate forms of assessment that still measure your learning outcomes. If you do have a prelim, consider flexibility for students who may have already left campus or may have concerns about attending on-campus activities.
- President Pollack's message came out at 5:00 p.m. on a prelim day; if you had a prelim on that day, the students were almost certainly not completely focused on the exam. **Consider reducing the weighting, give students an option for extra credit, or completely remove it from grading.**

- Rather than trying to get through material before break, [consider intentionally reducing the workload](#) to give students time to have those critical experiences. After spring break, there will be time (especially if we are prepared to be effective) to cover the rest of the syllabus.
- [Express verbally](#) that you understand and empathize with the challenges they are facing. It always helps to be show yourself as the warm human being you are (outside the classroom).

**(ii) Rough schedule for training and resource allocation (preliminary plan):**

- **By Monday March 16:** Distribute survey to faculty regarding teaching requirements and needs. Finalize procedures and forms for approval of remote course delivery (will be required for every course in order to document our practices).
- **By Wednesday March 18:** All engineering courses have active CANVAS pages, or other identified plans, for continued interactions; all faculty/TAs minimally trained.
- **By Thursday March 19:** Completed survey of facility and resource needs from all faculty.
- **March 20 through March 26:** Individual and group training.
- **By Thursday March 26:** Complete and approved course delivery plans for all courses.
- **By Friday March 27:** All instructors have had at least one live-experience with remote delivery of content and interactions with their class through their primary identified plan.
- **By Monday March 30:** Draft room and time allocations for content recording (as required by faculty).
- **By Wednesday April 1:** All courses have published initial schedules for interactive sessions. All courses have a known, scheduled and verified if necessary, location for these sessions.
- **By Friday April 3:** All faculty have resources and training for their asynchronous or synchronous content delivery.
- **Monday April 6:** Classes resume with no hitches and life is good!
- **Tuesday April 7:** Thompson disappears into his lab and doesn't return for 24 hours.

Prof. Michael Thompson