

Subject: Virtual teaching – Day 4 and time to reset and re-plan

I hope you took some time this weekend to relax and reduce some of the stress that we all have been facing as faculty. Garfield may hate Mondays, but they hopefully at least arrive after a bit of relaxation.

But what a weekend it has been! Only three days and two major changes to our situation. Yes, students are now expected to be gone and we have an unexpected extra two-week window to prepare for distance course delivery. But last night we received the message regarding research restrictions that will have a major impact on our programs and graduate students. I suspect most of us will be focused on those impacts today so I'll keep today's message short. But we will need to be back to planning and executing tomorrow.

Quick updates and clarifications:

- **Next two weeks:** Pretend that the next two weeks simply do not exist for students (though we need to use the time to get prepared). **No academic work can be assigned or due.** Then the week of March 30th is the normal spring break, with instruction starting again on April 6. Having assignments due on April 6 – while legit by the letter of the policy – is equivalent to making assignments due immediately after spring break. Consider spreading out assignments recognizing that they are facing similar challenges from all of their courses.
- **End of Semester:** Expect that the end of the academic calendar will undergo some revisions. However, you probably should equally expect that any additional time will barely compensate for the learning curve with both faculty and students in this new mode of instruction.
- **S/U grading:** Expect that you will have significant numbers of students shifting to the S/U option which will almost certainly be made universally allowed without penalty (affiliation, good standing). You can and should remind students that an S requires a C- or higher.
- **Senior thesis research:** If you have undergraduates in your lab, they have until Wednesday (March 18) at 5:00 p.m. to do an orderly shutdown of activities. This now coincides with expectations around shutdown of all experimental research. Encourage UG students to finish ASAP and go home.
- **Expect everyone to be overloaded and most to be working from home:** Phone and in person visits are now probably the least effective communication paths. Use e-mail and suggest ZOOM discussions as necessary.

Tactical steps to move forward with your courses:

- Do not imagine that you will be able to compress the remainder of the semester into the weeks after spring break. We are losing roughly 2 out of 6 weeks. **Prioritize** the elements remaining in your syllabus which are most critical to the success of your students. **35% of the remainder of the course is going to be left on the cutting room floor.** Move expeditiously through the five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance) and focus on planning the inevitable.
- **Send an e-mail** to your class letting them know that you are working on viable plans for course continuity, they should expect to hear from you shortly, and that nothing will be due before April 6. I would refrain from any further specifics until you are certain of the format, structure, and timing.

- Fortunately, the mixed local and remote teaching model is gone. Life will be somewhat easier with only the post-spring break model remaining. Think through the complications of synchronous delivery (including equipment challenges) and begin to focus on either synchronous or asynchronous. If you plan to teach synchronously, you also need to plan to record lectures for asynchronous delivery and recognize that those who will not be able to attend should not be penalized. The video from Friday's training session will be available shortly.
- Assess your ability to coordinate and teach your course from home; this may be the preferable model and could also become a necessity. Coordinate with your department and my team as needed.
- **Skip thinking about assessment (tests)** for now. I am having my team explore options and best practices for assessment in distance learning. We will get back to you with resources before you face that question.
- **Expect more training.** But, with the new emphasis on more severe social distancing, I need to reassess how this will be done.

Stay safe and confident! We are a caring community and we will be successful.

Mike