

Date: March 11, 2020

From: Chuck Taber, Provost and Executive Vice President

To: Deans, Department Heads, Vice Provosts, Associate Provosts, and Directors

RE: Guidance for anticipated impacts to student instruction

As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, we are closely monitoring the developments. The University has groups meeting daily to evaluate the situation and make recommendations for potential action. The best place to review updates is the [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) website](#).

This is an everchanging situation and we are operating under the assumption that it is not a matter of *if* we will be disrupted, but more of a matter of *when*. We are working through a variety of scenarios and developing plans for the likely prospect of future disruption to university operations. We are best served if we begin to prepare now.

I ask that you exercise leadership in a few critical areas to help ready your colleges and departments for anticipated impacts to student instruction and continuity of university business. The following is a list of steps to ensure we are supporting you and the rest of our faculty as we continue our instructional duties.

1. **Remain flexible to support faculty, staff and students.** You may have members of your college or unit who are directly impacted by illness, preexisting health considerations, and/or the care of family members who may be impacted. If a student needs to miss class because of illness or choosing to self-isolate, please accommodate them. Please suspend any course policies requiring a doctor's note. If a faculty or staff member is concerned about reporting to work, Human Capital Services has provided [guidance](#).
2. **Review the active courses in your college, including any 8-week courses scheduled to begin, and work with your faculty.** In the event university operations are suspended,
  - a. To the extent feasible, faculty will be expected to move their courses online or exercise another remote teaching option, which could include low tech means such as emailing assignments. We know that this will not be easy and will require us to think differently about how to hold to our learning outcomes and allow our student to demonstrate their knowledge. Resources are available to assist faculty in this process and are listed below.
  - b. Given the point in time in the semester, we are not supporting submitting grades based on work conducted to this point or issuing incompletes. If the timeline for disruption continues further into the semester, we may revisit these options.

- c. Faculty should consult with their department head in determining the most appropriate actions to take, placing student health and success first in selecting the best options.
3. **Track what action your faculty determines for each course.** We are proactively collecting this information to document our good faith efforts to provide educational instruction within the context of the present circumstances. The Registrar's Office will distribute electronic spreadsheets of the courses offered in your college. Please return the completed spreadsheets to Brian Niehoff at [niehoff@k-state.edu](mailto:niehoff@k-state.edu).
4. **Refer your faculty to the available resources.** Assistance is available for your faculty as they prepare. The [K-State Keep Teaching](#) website is updated daily with additional resources and practical tools and advice. Virtual meetings will be scheduled to provide overall guidance by course type (e.g., lecture, lab) and these will be recorded and made available on the website. We also encourage you to use the online community created by Global Campus staff called [Keep Teaching: Resources for Higher Ed](#) to network with K-State and other educators across the globe as we quickly deploy strategies to continue our teaching and our students' learning.
5. **Utilize the Checklists for Faculty and Students available on the [K-State Keep Teaching](#) website to help guide expectations.** We realize that students and faculty alike will be adjusting to changes in modality, schedule, and other fundamental factors associated with their courses. We understand that faculty make deliberate and informed choices regarding the pedagogies employed for their courses. When circumstances make it impossible to continue teaching as planned, we want to provide options that will minimize the disruption to learning. We want students to understand that their engagement is still required, and that they need to communicate any circumstances that prevent their timely progress or ability to connect to content or resources.
6. **Work with your technical support and instructional design teams.** We will continue to share remote teaching resources, help sessions, and other support available. Your internal teams will be an additional layer of support to our faculty as they work to ready for remote teaching.
7. **Enrollment for Summer and Fall 2020 terms begins on March 23.** Please make plans for your faculty and staff with advising responsibilities to be available for virtual meetings with students.

Please continue to share your feedback, suggestions, and questions with Karen Pedersen, [karenpedersen@k-state.edu](mailto:karenpedersen@k-state.edu) and Emily Lehning, [lehning@k-state.edu](mailto:lehning@k-state.edu). Your input helps guide the work of the academic continuity working group. We anticipate frequent updates over the next several days as the situation evolves.

Thank you for everything you are doing during this challenging time. While we have a lot of uncertainty and we know that many are feeling anxious about the days ahead, we have tremendous faculty, staff, and students who will continue to do incredible work in responding to this challenge.