

Subject: Academic Senate update re: COVID-19
Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 8:47:40 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Wallace, Jeremy
To: All Faculty
CC: Claire, Michael E., Moore, Jamillah, Lopez, Kim, Jackson, Jannett, Taylor-Mendoza, Jennifer, Holtzclaw, Mike, Robinson, Tammy, Mitchell, Karrie, McVean, Aaron, Reed, David, Lacefield, Hyla, Carranza, James, Pouncil, Matais, Hartman, C. Max, Chapple, Tarana, Ridgway, Kristi, Diamond, Heidi, Demsetz, Laura, Wolf, Andreas, Frontiera, Charlene, Duncan, Krystal, Moe, Rolin, Kane, Michael, Morello, Jr., Joseph, Gibson, Chris, Hernandez, Raymond, Redding Lapuz, Danni, Escobar, Luis, Schwarz, Karen
Attachments: image001.png

Colleagues,

I want to provide a quick update about the district's response to the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in light of yesterday's District Academic Senate meeting and updates from the district administration. It is the position of the District Academic Senate that in the event of a district-wide closure that instruction would be continued via virtual modes (e.g. Canvas, Zoom, etc.). I know this decision would be inconvenient for most members of the faculty, but it is important to remember two things: first, closing the campuses to students would only happen if it was in the interests of our students', faculty's, staff's, and administration's health and well-being; second, if a district-wide closure does happen, it would likely be for at least two weeks, which means it is also in the best interest of our students to continue instruction virtually. These two things can be true simultaneously. Furthermore, the district is working closely with the San Mateo County Health department and the CDC, and in our county, anyways, decisions to close will be made in collaboration with county partners and other school districts. In other words, the San Mateo County Health department will advise us on when a closure is appropriate.

Furthermore, I'd like to provide some updates on measures the faculty should take immediately (I apologize for the long list):

1. **All members of the faculty should start taking attendance, preferably in an electronic format** (Canvas, Excel, etc.). This is important for two reasons. If a student or professor is diagnosed with COVID-19, public health officials would need a record of whom that person had direct contact with. Roll call would allow them to identify and contact individuals who were potentially exposed to the novel coronavirus. Second, the electronic format allows individual faculty members to forward their attendance to administration and public health officials quickly, not to mention it alleviates any obstacles to obtaining that attendance sheet if the instructor is ill or in self-quarantine. There is no need to report absences to administration, and we have been advised that large numbers of absences are not indicative of outbreaks (since students may be missing class for a variety of reasons including fear of this virus).
2. As I mentioned in my previous email, **all members of the faculty should start migrating course materials and handouts to Canvas** in the event that the district closes the campuses to students. I suggest that members of the faculty also familiarize themselves with the Zoom function in Canvas, which allows instructors to virtually hold lectures, tutoring, and office hours. We need to be flexible here. These are unique circumstances and we need to respond as best as we can to continue instruction. The district administration is coordinating with the colleges' distance education experts to compile resources for this potential transition, and if you have any questions about Canvas, Zoom, or other technologies, please reach out to your deans. To help provide a snapshot of our capacity to offer virtual instruction, please fill out this survey:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/840e5dfe1ed945d393a2954a9bf21c33>

3. Continue to work with students who are either ill or afraid of coming to campus. These are extraordinary circumstances and **we need to be flexible with our attendance policies**. In fact, I would like to call a moratorium on faculty-initiated student drops until this public health emergency subsides. Please help ill students or students who are taking precautions stay current in the course by making course materials available via Canvas or email.
4. If a student shows up to class with cold or flu symptoms, **please request that they go home and take care of themselves**. Make it clear that any student who misses or leaves class with an illness will not be penalized and that you will help students stay on track via Canvas or email.
5. Finally, **no instructor should pre-emptively cancel face-to-face classes and transition to an online interface**. This is not permissible under California Ed Code and doing so may jeopardize your students' credits. The state Chancellor's Office will grant an Emergency Blanket DE Addendum for any courses not already approved for online delivery, which we are requesting as a district pre-emptively in the event that it becomes necessary to cancel face-to-face instruction. At this time, the district has **not** activated this emergency addendum, which means face-to-face and hybrid classes should continue as scheduled.

Furthermore, the senate is working with district and local administration to identify loaner technology for students who don't have access to computers and/or the internet (e.g. laptops, modems, tablets, etc.). We recognize that campus closures can create obstacles for many of our students, and it is not acceptable that students are "left behind" because of this public health emergency. As a result, we will continue to advocate for these resources.

Finally, in the event that the district closes the campuses, the District Academic Senate will continue to meet to ensure that the faculty voice is included in the district's emergency planning and to ensure that our district continues to provide high-quality instruction for our students. In other words, faculty governance will continue despite any closures.

I know there is a lot of uncertainty and alarm around this public health emergency. Please continue to reassure your students that the district and colleges are taking steps to ensure the health of the campus communities and the continuation of instruction. For many students, school is a consistent, firm foundation in their lives (sometimes it is the only one). Let's continue to be strong for our students, for each other, and for our loved ones. Like all emergencies, this one will pass, but in the meantime, we have an obligation to provide our students with the best college education possible under the circumstances.

I appreciate your time and I'll email you with further updates,

Jeremy

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