

Message regarding the University and Departmental response to COVID-19

Category: General Information - #1

Date: March 10, 2020

Introduction: The Executive Dean met with Chairs of ASC departments this morning to share information about the university's response to COVID-19. She is urging all of us to be flexible about how we go about our business and be cognizant of the fact guidance will continue to emerge in the coming days. This is a shifting landscape and we need to adapt as circumstances change.

For this message and future messages, I have decided to document them as PDF files so they can be easily saved separately for quick reference and ensure uniform formatting. I will place each message into one of several categories: General Information, Teaching, Research, Students, and Administrative. The administrative category will include issues such as travel, HR related issues, and staffing. The "Students" category will involve issue surrounding our students that don't involve direct classroom teaching. This current message contains topics from all these categories.

Please continue to read all message from the university and college sources. While I may summarize key points from the messages, I do not plan to fully reiterate those points. **I expect you to read them.**

General:

- The Executive Dean is seeking advice from the University regarding limiting the size of face-to-face meetings. For example, avoiding in-person meetings with >N people. No decision has been made yet, but it is possible some guidance will come.
- Keep our community members in mind, especially students who are young adults away from home, sometimes far from home. Recognize this is an added stress and be responsive and understanding.

Teaching:

We must work to put our course content online through Monday March 30th. This could mean different things for different courses and this is our biggest challenge for the next several days. Much more information will follow. I am assigning the following people to act as points of contact for different courses:

- 1000-level Courses: Tom Gramila (Note: Tom is currently traveling, please cc winer.12 and course managers on correspondences until Tom's return, currently 3/18)
- 2000-5000-level Courses: Robert Perry (Note: Robert is also traveling, so please cc winer.12 on correspondences until Robert's return, currently 3/16)
- 6000 and above: Jon Pelz

The University is requiring us to take the following steps to moving to online delivery:

1. Utilize CarmenCanvas for all standard courses. (Note: For research and independent study courses this is not required.) The Carmen course page should include:
 - a. Syllabus
 - b. Assignment information
 - c. Course Materials
 - d. Means to collect papers, etc.
 - e. A complete and regularly updated gradebook
 - f. For those not using CarmenCanvas this may be challenging and support will be provided. I will communicate that through another message.
2. Prepare alternate means of teaching.
 - a. The “go to” approach will be using Zoom
 - b. As a place to start, please see keepteaching.osu.edu
 - c. There will be further support for those that need help, which will be communicated in a separate message

Note about Lab Courses/Sections: The university has not made a recommendation regarding laboratory components of instruction. The College has requested a list of courses that are problematic for us to deliver online and what we see as possible paths forward. Further guidance on this will be coming.

Comments: The ASC leadership stressed the importance of being flexible with regard to course delivery. We will certainly need to alter our approaches and will likely need to adapt our expectations. Delivering high quality online courses is very challenging. At some point we can discuss best practices, but our focus currently is to get our course delivery online for the health and safety of our community. It will be an imperfect implementation and will do the best we can to adapt as we go. Office of the CIO believes that campus network infrastructure is sufficient to handle the bandwidth needed for online classes. However, there is the recognition that students off campus may experience difficulties depending on the quality of their internet service. The University is considering options to addressing this. Please keep this in mind moving into next week.

Research:

- There are currently no restrictions on continuing research activities other than common-sense approach – practice good hygiene, stay home if you are sick, self-quarantine guidelines already issued.
- Pls should use their best judgement regarding approaches to reduce transmission of illness, especially in labs involving large numbers of people.
- The Office of Research has setup a web page that they will be actively updating with addition guidance. Please see: <https://research.osu.edu/news-events/coronavirus-and-your-research-program/>

- Please note restrictions on travel below.

Students:

- The issue of Graduate Thesis Defenses and Candidacy Exams was raised during the meeting. The current rules do allow for some remote participation. The topic of whether to loosen these requirements is being discussed at the university level. More information to follow.
- It was mentioned in the meeting today that the dorms are not closing but students were being given the option of remaining at their permanent residence while courses are online. [Note: This has an impact on how we handle our labs.]

Administrative:

- Issues surrounding HR are being handled by the central HR office on campus. Meetings are occurring and guidelines around these issues will be coming out later.

Travel: Please note that substantial restrictions have been placed on university travel. These include visitors coming to campus. These have been highlighted in the emails from the President and Provost, but I reiterating them here.

- **All international business travel is suspended through April 20th. This includes trips already booked.**
- **All domestic travel by airplane will be limited to business essential travel only and require approval.** This includes all travel through April 20th and includes trips already booked. The issue of who approves essential travel is being determined. It may be as high as the Executive Dean.
- Previous restrictions on travel are still in place. In particular, travelers who have recently visited countries with a Level 3 warning must self-quarantine for 14 days prior to coming back to campus.

Events:

- No new (in-person) events should be scheduled between now and April 20th.
- Organizers of currently scheduled events between now and April 20th should reevaluate whether the events are essential. **As Department Chair, I ask to be consulted if there is a sense that the event should continue.**
- The University will continue to evaluate whether this restriction can be loosened or extended.
- Impact on Department Colloquia and Seminars: **Based on the travel restrictions listed above and the guidance regarding events, I am canceling all in-person departmental colloquia and seminars through April 20th.**
 - Organizers of seminars could consider whether they would like to go to an online format.
- Note: The College is anticipating having many of its meetings going to online only. We will consider that as an option in the department as we move forward.