

Subject: CORRECTION: From Provost Boehm: Faculty communication with students

Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 at 9:34:55 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: UofL Update

To: UofL Update

*The note below contains a corrected web address for tips to help students succeed in online classes. --
OCM*

Faculty colleagues,

As we approach the start of the fall semester, I wanted to send several recommendations from the Academic Scenario Planning Committee for communicating with your students about the first week of classes and some reminders as you finalize your course plans for fall.

REQUIRED FACULTY COMMUNICATIONS TO STUDENTS:

- By Wednesday, August 12, please send an email to your students explaining where they are expected to be each day of the first week of classes. Please include information on how to log in if the first day is remote or DE, when to show up to class if the course is hybrid and your students are divided into groups, or where to show up if the entire class will be expected to attend that first day (if you are in a classroom that allows for physical distancing, of course). I have already heard from students asking how they will know where to go the first day, and I have indicated that they will hear from their faculty.
- Post this same information on the announcements page of your Blackboard shell.
- This year we need 100% of you to post your syllabi to Blackboard because students will be dependent on the syllabus and announcements on Blackboard to keep them in the right place at the right time.
- The provost will send an email to students soon telling them that they need to check their university emails regularly and to consult Blackboard, and if they don't hear from their faculty by August 12, they should email each instructor who hasn't communicated these details to ask where they should go on the first day. Even students who are returning and experienced Blackboard users have some questions about how their hybrid courses will be delivered, and of course, most of our new students have no experience with Blackboard, so the email you send will be very important for all students.

REMINDERS AS YOU FINALIZE COURSE PLANS:

Please know that we are continually monitoring conditions in the community. This past week has been a difficult one, with the number of COVID-19 cases rising in Kentucky and JCPS delaying the start of classes. Like other universities in the state and across the nation, however, we are still expecting to welcome students to campus for classes on August 17, with required masking, physical distancing, hand-sanitizing, and other measures. It will not be business as usual. As you finalize your own class plans for the fall, let me remind you of these things:

- Almost 50% of our course portfolio is already fully online or remote; there will be fewer people on campus this fall than in the past.
- Those of you teaching hybrid courses have wide latitude regarding how often and when you

meet in-person with your students, so long as all students have opportunities for in-person learning at least 25% of the time. Classrooms will be less dense, allowing for physical distancing, and students will be required to wear masks.

- In-person instruction ends for most undergraduates at Thanksgiving (some professional and clinical experiences could continue, as could research for graduate students).
- Students will likely need some in-person instruction early in the semester to “learn” how to learn online, since many expressed concern this spring that they didn’t know how to work online when we transitioned to remote learning. Here’s a link to some tips for students to be successful in the online environment, but you’ll probably also want to orient them to the particular platforms, tools, and plug-ins you will use in your class:
https://dcidt.louisville.edu/resources/Tipsforsuccess/#/lessons/FNpciRoMVKvzvZ_L-mfJpbppI_oT-Un9.
- Planning so that any given class period could be delivered remotely if needed will provide the ultimate in flexibility for you and your students.
- All faculty teaching this fall have been added to a Blackboard Organization named “Pivot to Fall 2020,” which houses self-paced resources regarding the design and delivery of hybrid and online courses. To find your organization, log into Blackboard, click on Organizations from the side menu and search for Pivot to Fall. If you need to be added to the organization, contact Robin Zahrndt, robin.zahrndt@louisville.edu. The Delphi Center has been a tremendous help to me, and I encourage you to use this resource.

THIS IS HARD WORK:

I understand that we are asking a great deal of you. I am teaching a first-year writing course this fall and have been doing the self-paced Delphi trainings and planning my course over the last several weekends (full disclosure: I have taught the course before, so this is planning to make it hybrid, not planning a new course from scratch). My current intention is to meet with students in person 60-75% of the time, but to use some early remote sessions so that students can learn the technology (which I am just learning myself this summer—but don’t tell them!). I have been digitizing and loading all my course materials into Blackboard, and have plans for teaching any given day remotely if I must do so, using a mix of technologies so my students will learn to collaborate and conference on line (Teams and Blackboard Collaborate Ultra), to digitally brainstorm and map their reading and writing (Bubbl.us), to complete group work on line (Wikis), and I have learned to record class sessions using Panopto. If conditions are such that we must go fully remote before Thanksgiving, I think I am prepared, and I hope I will have used the face-to-face portion of my course both to establish a strong learning community and to prepare my students for success in an online environment. I also am fully aware that this is easier planned than executed, and that it takes hard work.

Finally, I also hear your anxieties and understand the stress of trying to balance family responsibilities, teaching, research and other job obligations. I take comfort in the low positivity rate among our doctors, nurses and other frontline responders who are actually working with COVID patients, but want you to know that we are closely monitoring what’s going on in the state, and we are in regular contact with other universities in the commonwealth, the ACC and the APLU. Whether you came to the university with a strong desire to teach, a strong desire to serve students or a passion for research and scholarship, if you are serving students this semester, you are an essential worker to all of them, but particularly to our most vulnerable students. I am looking forward to joining each of you in our physical and virtual classrooms this fall as we deliver our very best to our students, however challenging the pandemic has made our work.

Best,

Beth

Beth A. Boehm
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