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Subject: Updates for Faculty on Fall Reopening

Sent to faculty and AA staff on behalf of incoming Provost Winebrake

Dear Colleagues,

Hello! I hope you and your loved ones are healthy and well. I am reaching out to provide you with some updates regarding the implementation phase of reopening campus for fall 2020. Over the past few weeks, we have received a lot of questions from faculty regarding everything from required face coverings to syllabus content. This email will hopefully provide some clarity on some key topics – although as you can imagine, this is a dynamic landscape and things are apt to change depending on the behavior of the virus within our community and throughout the state.

The information below is divided into two main areas: (1) Issues of Health and Safety; and, (2) Course Considerations. The content is based on feedback from the committees on *Health & Safety* and *Teaching and Instructional Design* of the Fall 2020 Implementation Planning Team. The information was also reviewed by the Faculty Senate Leadership. While we realize this information may raise additional questions, we hope it will also provide some needed guidance for fall preparation.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

UNCW will follow CDC guidelines, UNC System Office directives, and our own Seahawk Respect Compact to ensure the health and safety of our campus community. We have implemented physical distancing measures, and we are limiting seating capacity in classrooms and meeting rooms. We will also conduct additional facility cleanings and make accessible disinfectant wipes in all classrooms. Per below, we are requiring face coverings for all face-to-face interactions. Detailed information regarding specific measures is forthcoming and will be provided by the *Health and Safety Committee for Fall Reopening*; but we provide current guidance on face coverings and courses requiring off-campus activities below.

- ***Face Coverings***

All faculty, staff, and students are expected to wear face coverings while inside buildings. We firmly believe that faculty, staff, and administrators will serve as positive role models in establishing this culture on campus. It is important that students receive clear and consistent messaging that the health and safety of our campus community is our first priority. Students who are unprepared or unwilling to wear protective face coverings will not be permitted to participate in face-to-face interactions. In the unlikely event a student refuses to comply, faculty can follow existing procedures for disruptive students. Also, any student who has a medical concern with wearing a face covering should contact the Disability Resource Center at (910) 962-7555.

To help make these guidelines clear to your students, we are providing suggested language for your course syllabus (for courses requiring face-to-face sessions), as follows:

Following CDC Guidelines, UNC System directives, and out of mutual respect as outlined in the UNCW Seahawk Respect Compact, all faculty, staff, and students will wear face coverings while inside buildings. Students who are unprepared or unwilling to wear protective face coverings will not be permitted to participate in face-to-face sessions and will need to leave the building. Noncompliant students will be referred to the Dean of Students for an Honor Code Violation. Any student who has a medical concern with wearing a face covering should contact the Disability Resource Center at (910) 962-7555.

Please note that faculty may wear **clear face shields for instruction only**. Cloth face coverings will be required at all other times. Any faculty or staff member who has a medical concern with wearing a face covering should contact Human Resources at (910) 962-3160.

- ***Courses Requiring Off-Campus Interactions***

Courses that require off-campus interactions (e.g., internships, clinical sites, field work, community engaged research, service learning) are subject to additional health and safety guidelines. These guidelines, including the use of waiver forms and other risk management protocols, will be communicated by appropriate campus units at a later date.

COURSE PREPARATION CONSIDERATIONS

Below is information regarding online delivery, faculty illness, instructional minutes, syllabi expectations, attendance policies, and course evaluations. We will continue to provide updates on these topics as they evolve, but we wanted to share with you current thinking on these matters.

- ***Online Delivery***

Faculty need to be prepared to deliver course content online if needed. Such online delivery may be employed for at least two reasons:

- 1) Individual student quarantine. If students need to self-quarantine, we should ensure that those students can access course materials (e.g., slides, lecture notes, visuals) in an online format. To facilitate this, synchronous online meetings (and face-to-face meetings when possible) should be recorded for viewing at a later time.
- 2) Online class pivot. If we need to pivot entirely to an online modality, we should ensure that all students will have access to course materials to meet the learning objectives of the course.

Trainings for Canvas and other online tools are ongoing and can found on the UNCW Keep Teaching website (<https://uncw.edu/keep Teaching/>). In addition, please look for information from the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Office of Distance Education and eLearning regarding **ADAPT 2020**, a four-day program (July 6-9) that will feature dozens of sessions to help faculty maximize teaching in an online environment. Also, we understand that the preparation of courses for dual modality requires an investment of faculty time this summer. We will communicate additional information regarding eligibility for faculty stipends for course conversions soon.

- ***Faculty Illness***

In instances where face-to-face instruction is essential and the faculty member is unable to teach due to illness, a substitute instructor should be identified to cover the course in either a face-to-face or online modality, depending on the nature of the course. Deans will discuss with department chairs the best way to address these situations given the nature of the course and discipline.

- ***Instructional Minutes***

We will need to adhere to the minimum number of instructional minutes per term as defined by UNCW policy and as required by SACSCOC, using either face-to-face, hybrid, or online delivery. For example, a 3-credit hour course requires 2250 instructional minutes, which may include the final exam period. Faculty who decide that a given course will finish prior to Thanksgiving Break should ensure these instructional minute requirements are met. We will communicate further guidance and documentation regarding this issue at a later date.

- ***Syllabi***

Syllabi should be released to students at least one week in advance of the fall semester. Syllabi need not contain all curricular details, but enough for students to determine if they are capable of taking the course, given their individual circumstances. Syllabi should minimally include:

- course delivery modes and expectations for face-to-face meetings;
- technical requirements for successful online engagement;
- specification of virtual and/or face-to-face office hours;
- attendance policy and notification of illness (see details below); and,
- requirement of face coverings in face-to-face meetings (see details below).

Syllabi should be posted in Canvas and retained at the unit level. Throughout the semester, any changes to the syllabus should be clearly communicated and disseminated to students. The Center for Teaching Excellence and the Office of Distance Education and e-Learning provide myriad resources for best teaching practices.

- ***Attendance Policies***

Faculty will continue to exert individual attendance policies and publish these expectations in the course syllabus. However, just as was the case in spring 2020, we encourage a high level of flexibility with students, particularly those who may fall into high-risk groups, serve as caretakers, or who contract the virus and require alternative course delivery. Be aware that students may not always disclose individual circumstances, and thus flexibility should be widely applied. In order to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on campus, students need to report illness. Please include this statement in your syllabus:

Students who experience COVID-19 symptoms should immediately contact the Abrons Student Health Center at (910) 962-3280.

- ***Course Evaluations***

At this time, no changes to course evaluations are expected, and course evaluations will be deployed in typical fashion per the UNCW Faculty Manual. This issue may be revisited if there are significant changes during the semester.

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Finally, we recognize the extra efforts you are making to ensure a healthy environment and rigorous academic experience for students. Thank you for your continued dedication and flexibility in serving our students during these atypical circumstances. If you have any questions about the information above, please inform your chair, dean, or me. We will work to keep you informed regarding the ongoing activities of Academic Affairs as we get closer to the start of fall term.

Sincerely yours,

Jamie

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