Dear Faculty,

As we near the end of the fall 2020 semester, I want to congratulate and thank you for your incredible efforts toward ensuring students have a positive learning experience this fall. I also appreciate how you have accommodated students’ situations as you juggle the many responsibilities in the workplace and on the home front. I am grateful to you and our great staff colleagues who have made it possible for us to continue to operate so effectively.

Here are a few updates as you finish the fall and prepare for the spring semester:

- **Fall Finals.** As noted by President Armacost’s recent message, all fall finals must be offered in online format only. There are no exceptions. If faculty have received a previous exception, this is no longer an option as we want students to return home as soon as possible. Various exam security options are available (e.g., Blackboard, Yuja, Respondus, ProctorU), but, to provide you and your students with the least hassle and best experience, please visit the exam option webpage to familiarize yourself with the proper procedures for your exam security choice and share that information with your students.

- **The spring semester will start as planned, on Jan. 11, 2021.** While the prospects for a vaccine in the near future are promising, timing and accessibility of it is uncertain. As such, UND is planning to continue operating in the spring as we have this fall through providing both in person (hybrid/hyflex) and online classes, giving faculty the right to choose their course delivery format. The academic spring schedule is set. If you have any immediate plans to deliver your courses differently than what is currently posted, please work with your chair, dean, and regular course scheduler to make changes with the Registrar and in Campus Connection. Please send a copy of those changes to Associate Vice Provost Cindy Juntunen (cl.juntunen@und.edu) so she can share that information as needed and communicate appropriately to students. Throughout the spring 2021 semester we will continue to follow our current COVID protocols including reduced classroom seating, required face coverings, hand washing, and physical distancing.
  - The classroom safety protocols we have already implemented allow students and faculty who desire an in-person learning opportunity the chance to do so. If faculty decide at any point in the spring semester to change their course delivery method from in person to fully online, they should follow the same protocol we used this semester to request this change: a discussion with and approval from their department chair, approval from their dean, notification to the Associate Vice Provost, and notification to the Registrar. This process allows for coordination in the department and ensures appropriate communication to the students on the change in delivery method.
• **Preparedness for shifting to virtual instruction.** Given the unknown trajectory of COVID-19, faculty should be prepared to pivot to teach online if necessary at any point in the spring 2021 semester. Health and safety will be our top priority and we will closely monitor our capacities for testing, contact tracing, isolating and quarantining, and will inform campus if and when we determine all operations need to shift to virtual. TTaDA has a number of resource pages that can help you prepare your course to *flexibly pivot to different delivery methods* if circumstances require.

• **Spring Testing.** Students, staff, and faculty will be encouraged to participate in COVID-19 testing after the winter break. Testing dates and times will be posted [here](#) and students will receive communications to encourage them to get tested when they return to Grand Forks for the spring semester.

• **The Task Force for the Future of Education.** Task Force co-chairs, Jeff VanLooy and John Shabb, have invited 23 faculty, staff and students to participate in the task force. A website with the current members will be developed and linked to the University Senate webpage, and all outcomes and minutes from the task force meetings will be posted to keep the campus updated. There will be ample opportunity for campus engagement in various discussions and webinars throughout the spring semester. I encourage your engagement as our collective ideas and perspectives will be necessary to chart a strong future for UND.

• **Spring book orders.** As a reminder, it is important that all faculty submit course material adoptions in Follett Discover as soon as possible. Later adoptions make it difficult for the bookstore to ensure that the material is available to students in time for class. Later adoptions also impact the ability to provide required accommodations to students who need alternate format books. As of Wednesday, Dec. 2, the campus overall has a 75% completion rate for spring course orders. If no materials are required for a course, this should be noted in Follett Discover so we can be sure that students are informed and we have an accurate completion rate.

I recognize how challenging the fall semester has been for all of us. In addition to adjusting to students’ needs for flexibility, many have juggled work and family demands, felt isolated, and have experienced heightened anxiety and concern for family, friends, and neighbors who have been impacted by this pandemic either through employment challenges and/or illness. I encourage you to consider using the free and confidential counseling services provided to all UND employees through the [Employee Assistance Program (EAP)](#) if you or your family members need support. Once your final grades are in, I hope you will find some time to relax and recharge during the winter break.

Please let me know how I can be of any assistance.

With gratitude,

Debbie Storrs
Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs