Dear faculty,

I hope your summer is going well. We continue to plan and adjust for the fall 2020 semester. Here are the latest updates and opportunities:

1. **Plexiglas in classrooms:** Facilities is working diligently to prepare classrooms for fall 2020 on-campus teaching. This includes signage, placement of chairs, and Plexiglas in each classroom. Faculty senate leaders Liz Legerski and Jeff VanLooy, CIO Madhavi Marasinghe, and Interim Provost Debbie Storrs visited several classrooms in O’Kelly to provide feedback on the Plexiglas options. Photos of the selected Plexiglas option in classrooms (which are fabricated by our facilities team) are posted on the VPAA website.

2. **Face coverings:** As you know, face coverings are required in the classroom and across campus when there is any social interaction with others. Some faculty have requested the use of face shields rather than masks. This has been approved (see statement on the efficacy of face shields on the VPAA website), and faculty are asked to work with their department chair to request and order face shields (as well as face coverings).

3. **Classroom prototypes:** To assist faculty, UIT is working with facilities and TTaDA to create prototypes of classrooms with the appropriate technology, Plexiglas, and sanitation materials. Faculty will be able to sign up to participate in an on-site classroom visit (or via distance) to get a better sense of what the classrooms will look like. An email will be sent next week to register for demo sessions to be held during the week of July 20th. On-site participation will be limited due to COVID-19 capacity.

4. **Lab Re-Opening Plans:** Associate Dean Mark Hoffmann has led a group of faculty to develop lab reopening plans which is posted on the VPAA website. Please work with your department chair and dean if you have any questions regarding the plan or how to modify your labs for fall 2020.

5. **Classroom technology:**
   a. Each classroom will be equipped with a stationary instructor mic and a camera at the podium to accommodate students who may join online. For safety reasons, body pack mics will be removed from classrooms except in large lecture bowls. Faculty teaching in large lecture bowls (see list of lecture bowls on VPAA website) will be given a headset with a mic for their use. Faculty members are asked to clean the body pack and electronic devices after each use.
   b. Faculty members are asked to use the classroom computer to ensure mic and camera are enabled for recordings and online students. As it may take a few minutes to create the profile the first time the user logs into the computer, faculty members are encouraged to allow additional time or do a test-run before classes begin.
   c. Some classrooms will have digital whiteboards such as a Wacom tablet or a doc cam. A list of available technology in classrooms along with short video clips of demos with UIT staff wearing different types of face coverings are posted on the VPAA website. The technology list is updated regularly. If a specific technology is not available in a classroom, please contact UIT at 7-2222 or submit a ticket.
d. UIT has several 2 in 1 touchscreen laptops for checkout. The touchscreen can be used to easily write formulas and other special notations without using a mouse. These checkout laptops are available for faculty to test functionality. Please contact UIT if interested.

6. Fall on-campus class planning: Faculty should be meeting with their department chairperson to discuss their plans for fall on campus courses. Requests for any accommodations should be submitted by July 15th through the department chairperson. Classes approved to move from face-to-face to online will be changed accordingly in Campus Connection by August 1, and changes will be communicated to students.

7. First day of class: In response to questions from chairs on how faculty might manage their first day of classes, we have prepared a document “First Day Back to Class Faculty Checklist” which is posted on the VPAA website. A similar document will be prepared and communicated to students in early August (we have already posted this on the VPAA website for faculty information).

8. CARES funding: CARES funding has been allocated to fund technology needs so faculty can provide high-quality, flexible, hybrid, hyflex and online classes in light of the uncertainty caused by COVID-19. We have requested department chairpersons to gather technology needs of faculty for submission by the end of this week. A different process is underway to gather technology needs for staff and to distribute funds to support technology needs for students with financial need.

9. OER opportunities: NDUS invites faculty and others to apply for two exciting opportunities to explore, adopt, or promote OERs. UND’s OER Working Group is happy to offer assistance with applications or questions; contact Dean Stephanie Walker at stephanie.walker@und.edu or x2619. There are two types of applications (faculty can apply to both):
   a. OER Fellowship is designed to stimulate and facilitate projects by faculty members to improve their teaching, to advance their scholarly and creative work, to enhance the institution’s academic programs, and to realize institutional goals. Fellowships are anticipated to be approximately $3,500 per semester.
   b. OER Stipend is to encourage the development of alternatives to high-cost textbooks and course materials at an institution. The program aims to support the adoption, adaptation, creation, or reuse of OER or other low-cost alternatives to commercial textbooks and course materials. The program supports faculty who want to make the transition to low cost alternatives by providing grants and assistance for reworking course syllabi or creating new free materials. Stipends may not exceed $3,000.

10. Event/Activity Plans: Many faculty organize academic and research related events. For on-campus events/activities, please review the updated on-campus events guidelines. UND-sponsored events held at off-campus locations must be approved by the respective dean, director or vice president and they must follow the respective Safety Level Guidelines.
11. Testing: The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) plans to conduct widespread surveillance testing of students (along with faculty and staff) just prior to the return to campus in August. Ten testing sites around the state have been identified, to be supplemented by other testing routines. Plans for repeat testing and the testing of high-risk groups (student athletes, students in flight training, students in music, etc.) are also being developed. We will share more details as specifics become available from NDDoH.

12. Please review the Healthy Hawks Restart Plan on the UND blog. The safety levels have been updated, and the Pandemic team and the President’s Executive Council will monitor various factors which will determine when to move from one safety level to another.

Thank you again for your work in preparing your classes for the fall. We continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and the Pandemic Team meets daily to discuss questions and plan for the fall. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Best,

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