Dear faculty,

This weekend, students will arrive on campus and in the community with excitement to start their Fall 2020 semester. While we have worked hard to prepare for the fall, we must remain flexible throughout the semester as we may need to shift and adjust our teaching, learning, and working conditions in response to the COVID-19 situation on campus and in our community. Below are the most recent updates as you finalize your fall teaching plans:

1. **Course Announcement and Syllabus Information for Students**: All Blackboard (BB) course sections were made accessible to students on Monday (8/10). Thanks to all for providing information in a BB announcement about how your course will be structured and function in light of COVID-19 preventive measures. If you have not done so, please add such an announcement to your BB course site. Please continue to use Blackboard announcements to inform your students about important course information and any changes you need to make as the term progresses. For more assistance, we have provided a checklist of things to consider before the first day of class. Please also consider adding the syllabus statement that details the type of behavior we expect from all students in and outside the classroom.

2. **Students on Waitlist**: Students have been asked to not attend class unless they are officially registered for the course. As you know, students on the waitlist have traditionally been instructed to attend class. We are asking them instead to email their instructors during the first week of class to get any course information (as they will not yet have access to Blackboard) in case other students drop and they get automatically added to a class from the waitlist. Similarly, we have asked students to email faculty regarding the possibility of an override rather than attend class. The communication to students can be found [here](#).

3. **Assessment, Evaluation & Proctoring**: Please consider alternatives to proctoring that could meet your student assessment and evaluation needs. Resources to help you adopt and implement such alternatives are available here from TTADA. If exam proctoring is necessary, options include using student-arranged and instructor-approved individual proctors, testing centers, and ProctorU for online proctoring. ProctorU Review+ (auto/review) will be the standard option this year and can be used without chair/dean approval regardless of the length of the exam. ProctorU Live+ will be an available option, but will require Chair and Dean approval. More information and the Live+ Proctor approval form are available on the Provost’s website.

4. **Laboratory Simulation Software**: The North Dakota University System (NDUS) is offering Labster at no cost to help faculty teach lab components in an online or hybrid environment. Over 130 simulated labs are available on a variety of subjects (biology, chemistry, engineering, food science and nutrition, ecology, physics, biotechnology, organic chemistry, cellular and molecular biology, etc.) which can be incorporated into Blackboard. NDUS will provide unlimited access to Labster at no charge for one year. Funding has not been identified beyond August 2021. If a particular college/department wants to continue with the product, the college/department will be responsible for the cost of the product and service. Please visit [https://www.labster.com/ndus/](https://www.labster.com/ndus/) to watch an introduction, review simulations, and learn
about live training session opportunities, and access the Faculty Resource Page to view
the catalog of simulations. If you have questions about Labster or similar laboratory
simulation software such as Hands-On Labs and SimTutor, please contact TTaDA at 777-
2129 or und.academic.technologies@UND.edu, or check out this TTaDA resource page.
5. **Classroom Technology Use Instructions:** A folder with one-page instructions on how to
use the electronic devices in the classroom will be available at teaching podiums in
classrooms. A short cut to the digital version of the instructions will also be available
from the Waycom tablet. The instruction sheets are also available at
https://campus.und.edu/campus-services/uit/classroom-guide
6. **Cleaning Classroom Technology:** Each classroom and lab will be provided with
disposable wipes, the plunger cleaning system, or a spray bottle to clean electronic
devices that will be touched frequently by faculty such as the keyboard, Waycom pen,
Waycom tablet, and the control device. While our facilities staff will replenish wipes and
cleaning solution as needed, faculty are encouraged to contact facilities (contact
information will be provided in the instruction folder available at each teaching podium)
if wipes are running low. The classroom technology instruction folder includes a page for
how to clean electronic devices. Cleaning material will be available in each classroom
and student labs by noon on Monday, August 24. Please reach out to Facilities (7-2591)
if materials are unavailable.
7. **Tech Support in Classrooms:** UIT will provide on-site classroom support Monday
through Friday during the first four weeks of classes to support faculty with technology
issues. Please review the Fall 2020 Tech Support Procedure for details.
8. **Technology Needs Faculty Survey:** UIT has placed orders for mobile devices and
peripherals submitted via the faculty survey and approved by the chair and dean. UIT
will reach out to the faculty when the mobile devices arrive. Peripherals will be
delivered directly to the college contact for distribution.
9. **Bookstore:** Please be aware that the UND Bookstore is experiencing staff challenges
due to COVID-19. At this time, voice mails and phone calls cannot be monitored due to
staffing issues. Please be considerate of the constraints they are facing and encourage
the same of your students. The majority of course materials are available in the UND
Bookstore. If you have already adopted your course materials, thank you! The bookstore
team is busy fulfilling 400 student online orders per day with the expectation this will
increase to 600 by Monday. Infrequently, an adoption submitted in a timely manner
may get misplaced. If this happened and your book is not available at the bookstore,
please consider the staffing constraints, be patient, and email 1120txt@follett.com to
let them know of the situation. If you have yet to adopt your materials or need to make
a change in the original course materials, please email 1120txt@follett.com and include
ISBN #, title of text, edition, name, and contact information in the email.
10. **Students’ Schedules and Study Space:** Please be aware that many students will have a
mix of online and on campus courses during the fall semester. The mixture may cause
some difficulty for students moving from one course to the next if their online courses
are synchronous and scheduled right before or after an on-campus course. Students are
able to utilize spaces on campus to decrease the impact of having to move between
courses (especially for students living off campus) but may need some flexibility in
arriving to class late or leaving early. Please continue to be flexible in your on-campus or synchronous online courses as students figure out how this semester will work for them. A list of study spaces available on campus can be found in the VPAA Fall 2020 – Spring 2021 website.

11. **Laptops for Learning**: UND has notified roughly 3,000 students (undergraduate, graduate, law, and medical) who are eligible for the Laptops for Learning program. All eligible students will receive a Dell touchscreen laptop, funded through CARES monies, to enhance their technology resources for navigating the fall and future semesters. There are 1,392 students who have already accepted their laptop as of August 18. The laptops will be shipped directly to the students’ preferred address submitted on the acceptance form. The following is a website that provides additional information on the program, [Laptops for Learning](#).

12. **Upgrades to Facilities**: UND Facilities continually monitors, accesses and adjusts building operations to optimize its mechanical systems. UND was recently awarded over $6M in CARES funding to invest in UND’s existing buildings’ mechanical systems over the next 4 months. Areas of investment being evaluated are: improved general air-handling, filtration, dehumidification and dual ionization.

13. **COVID-19 UND Dashboard**: A number of dashboards provide information on the pandemic at the state and county level. The Office of University Analytics and Planning will develop a UND specific dashboard to provide weekly updates on the number of staff, students, and faculty who the university has knowledge are positive for COVID-19, the number in isolation and quarantine, and other data. Once the dashboard is available, it will be posted on the [UND Covid-19 webpage](#).

14. **COVID-19 Testing**: In collaboration with the N.D. Department of Health, National Guard, UND, and Grand Forks Public Health, UND will provide ongoing testing for COVID-19 at no cost for UND students, faculty, and staff members. I encourage faculty to participate in testing opportunities and to encourage their students to do so as well. Testing and contact tracing are essential for our ability to maintain our academic mission and operations.

15. **Quarantine and Isolation Space**: UND is providing quarantine space off-campus to students who have been identified by the ND Department of Health as close contacts of positive cases, as well as isolation space off-campus to students who have tested positive for COVID-19. We currently have 167 off-campus spaces available with the ability to secure additional spaces as necessary. The costs of these spaces are being submitted for reimbursement to FEMA for non-congregate sheltering during this pandemic in an effort to keep our community safe.

16. **Enrollment**: As of August 17th, our Fall 2020 enrollment looks promising. While we are still down in our first-year freshman compared to last year (41 students), our graduate and transfer student registrations are higher than the previous year at this time. Almost 4% of returning undergraduates have not registered and our academic advisors continue to reach out to them to see if we can assist (though the return rate of these students is typical of previous semesters). Retaining our students is critical to ensure students’ meet their academic goals and for our institutional goals. To assist with
retention, please communicate any changes to your classes to students through Blackboard, and let us know if we can be of any assistance as the semester progresses.

This semester, the pandemic will require us to be nimble in the face of continual changes. While I have great confidence in our abilities to navigate the fall and pivot as necessary, I recognize the challenge this places on faculty and encourage everyone to be patient and supportive of students and our colleagues. Please be sure to reach out to your chair, dean, and/or me if you have any concerns or need assistance.

Be safe, wear your face covering, practice physical distancing, and be kind to yourself and others.

Debbie Storrs
Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs