Dear Faculty,

I want to thank all of you who participated in the recent Town Hall for Faculty on July 28 and extend my continued appreciation for all you are doing to help UND deliver the best educational experience possible to our students this fall. In the following, I extend some of the comments provided in the Town Hall, provide information requested, and explain further updates and information.

One of the questions raised in the Town Hall focused on enrollment. Currently, we are slightly down in freshman enrollment compared to this time last year while our transfer and graduate student enrollments are significantly higher. Our biggest concern is the large number of returning undergraduates who have not yet registered. Academic advisors are reaching out to these students to answer any questions they may have and to help them register. This is a common pattern across the nation as students and families are struggling with the financial impact of COVID-19. To assist students who have financial need, the UND Alumni Association & Foundation is fundraising to create a new Open Door Scholarship program designed to provide financial support to the growing number of UND students who need tuition assistance to finish their degrees. In addition, we have established a new program to provide free laptops to qualifying students who have financial need. These initiatives will support students completing their degrees at UND.

With only a couple of weeks left before the fall semester starts, here are some recent updates:

1. SYLLABUS CONTENT – At last week’s faculty town hall, a faculty member suggested that we provide COVID-19 behavioral expectations and processes for isolation and quarantining that faculty could integrate into their syllabi. This has been developed and posted on the VPAA website for your consideration and use.

2. FINALS – Faculty have asked for clarity about final exams and how they should be offered. For courses that include final exams, faculty teaching on-campus, hybrid, or synchronous online courses that have scheduled meeting times/days for finals are reminded that they must adhere to the published Final Exam schedule, even if the exam is offered online. Faculty are encouraged to continue to use the assessment strategies that are most appropriate for each course, and are not being asked to add final exams to any course that is assessed in other ways. Faculty members are not required to have an assessment occur during Finals Week.

3. BLACKBOARD UPDATES DUE AUGUST 10 – This is a reminder that faculty should provide a course welcome announcement in Blackboard that explains to students how the course is being adapted (see the Fall 2020 On-Campus
Planning Guide which provides options) to meet physical distancing requirements in the classroom or laboratory. This announcement should also communicate how the instructor intends to ensure academic continuity in case of health issues or changes in recommended or required accommodations for COVID-19. This material should also be included in your syllabus. Plan to have this announcement ready and posted by August 10th as Blackboard courses for fall will be made available to students that day. If you need assistance restricting student's access to sections you are still working on in your Blackboard course site once it becomes available on August 10, please follow these steps.

4. STUDENT ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE PROCESS – We have posted communications that will be distributed to students regarding isolation and quarantine. In addition, we have posted an overall description of how students are placed in quarantine or isolation, including dining/hotel information. Hotel and dining costs for students in quarantine and isolation will be covered by CARES Act and/or FEMA funds.

5. COURSE DELIVERY OPTIONS – While we received and processed the initial requests to move on-campus courses online, we realize that faculty may continue to make such requests throughout the semester as the local COVID-19 situation changes. Faculty who decide to shift their currently scheduled on-campus courses to an online format should discuss the transition with their department chair. The chair will submit a request for dean approval and VPAA review. Please do not send individual requests for course delivery changes to the registrar. The form for requesting a shift in course delivery can be found. This process is important to follow so we can track course delivery changes, communicate to students, and continue to provide quality online instruction. Once approved, faculty should notify students of the change in their course through Blackboard.

6. HOW TO GET FACE COVERINGS – Faculty and staff members should request their face coverings from their department and/or college office. All faculty and staff will be provided two cloth face coverings. Faculty should also request additional disposable face coverings to bring to class in case students forget to wear theirs. Students will receive their face coverings starting on Monday, August 24. There will be multiple on-campus sites for students to pick up the cloth face coverings throughout the first week of classes. Students will need their student ID number in order to receive their face coverings. Information regarding the distribution of face coverings will be shared with students in the coming days.

7. STUDENT VIDEO – Student Body President Matt Temus and Vice President Kaelan Reedy created a short video on why students should wear face coverings, practice physical distancing, and wash hands frequently. This video has been posted on the Blackboard student resource site, and faculty can use it in their Blackboard sites as well. We encourage faculty to show the video in class as a reminder of appropriate social norms in light of the pandemic and to periodically show it if student compliance lapses. The videos (Vimeo and YouTube) are also posted on the Provost's Fall 2020-Spring 2021 Resource site under Face Coverings.
8. COVID-19 TESTING OPPORTUNITIES – UND will offer regular COVID-19 testing events for students, faculty and staff over the next several weeks. Pre-registering for the events will ensure shorter wait times. Information on wait times, as well as other testing communications, is available at https://campus.und.edu/safety/emergencies/covid-testing.html.

The following are future testing event dates coordinated by the State Health Department (with UND engagement). Please watch for email updates on testing events as these dates are subject to change:

- Thursday, August 6
- Friday, August 7
- Thursday, August 13
- Friday, August 14
- Wednesday, August 19
- Thursday, August 20
- Friday, August 21
- Sunday, August 23

1. REGISTRATION ACTION CARD – Student are encouraged to use an online registration action form rather than the historical paper form to request overrides into courses for such things as closed classes, missing prerequisites, or time conflicts. This process will limit the number of close contacts with individuals and eliminate the number of people touching paper forms. When a student completes the online form, instructors will receive an email with an electronic link. To complete the form, click on the link provided, sign in using your NDUS identifier, check approve or deny, and press submit. The approval then will be forwarded to the registrar’s office for processing.

2. TTaDA SUPPORT - The Teaching Transformation and Development Academy offers a range of resources through the TTaDA Website including recordings of faculty discussions, upcoming workshops, and classroom technologies. If faculty members would like to learn more about academic technologies, work with an instructional designer, or needs additional information on moving courses online, they can call 701-777-2129.

3. CLASSROOM & OFFICE CLEANING PLANS – Classrooms, offices, and shared spaces (department reception areas, break rooms, conference rooms, etc.) will be cleaned nightly by our Building Services Technician staff. Wipes will be available in every classroom and lab for users to wipe all keyboards, mice, and microphones before using them.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Again, I extend my deep appreciation for your work and commitment to students and the university, and please be safe.

Debbie Storrs
Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs