

Dear faculty,

Many at the university continue to plan for the Fall 2020. Faculty representatives from University Senate engage in these discussions through their participation on the Pandemic Group and the Fall Planning Group. In addition, deans meet weekly to discuss how to support faculty and Associate Vice Provost Cindy Juntunen, Academic Affairs Officer Heather Wages, and HR Manager Rebecca Jacobson are hosting sessions with chairs of each college to answer questions and provide information on the various steps we are taking to increase safety of our faculty, staff, and students. As we meet to discuss and determine how to manage academic activities as safely as possible, I will continuously update you so you are informed. Here are the most recent updates:

1. Your chairs have been asked to meet with you individually to discuss your fall semester including how you will adjust your fall classes in light of COVID-19 precautions. We encourage you to work with your chairs to resolve any concerns you have through a variety of modifications. Any changes to how the courses will be offered will be made at one time (sometime in late July) in Campus Connection and communicated to students.
2. TTaDA will be holding virtual workshops the week of June 29 to assist and discuss plans for adjusting fall courses to ensure learning continuity in light of COVID-19 precautions. All faculty who are not currently working with instructional designers are encouraged to participate. Details are [posted here](#).
3. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides protection to employees who have a medical condition that is considered a disability, such as reasonable accommodations to allow them to perform the essential functions of their jobs. Faculty who feel they may qualify are encouraged to contact Rebecca Jacobson, the HR Manager for Academic Affairs. A COVID accommodations request form can be found at <https://campus.und.edu/equal-opportunity/files/docs/covid-accommodation-request-fillable.pdf>.
4. Your academic deans and I have discussed the need to ensure faculty annual evaluations are done with consideration of the COVID-19 challenges. I've posted a statement on the VPAA [website](#) regarding the need to consider the effects of pandemic conditions on research/creative productivity and teaching in annual evaluations. I also encourage faculty to talk with their college/school dean for the specific ways they are ensuring faculty are not unduly harmed due to COVID 19 related outcomes.
5. We have previously communicated that face coverings are required of all staff, faculty, and students during any in person interaction including in the classroom. To assist faculty on how they can promote students' compliance and how they might respond to non-compliance, the fall planning workgroup has developed a document of recommendations. That document is posted on the [VPAA website](#). In addition, there is a forthcoming communication to the broader campus regarding the face coverings requirement.
6. Many faculty lead and engage in campus wide activities/events. A small group composed of representatives from the Pandemic Group is developing protocol on such event planning. Once completed, it will be posted on the [VPAA website](#).
7. A student communication, "What to Expect in the Fall," was distributed to all students this week (as students continue to register, we will provide the same information to new students). The document addresses a number of things including the face covering requirement and when students can review their Blackboard course sites for updates from you about how their on

campus classes will be adjusted (August 10th). I have posted the communication to students on the [VPAA website](#) so you can see the same information students are receiving.

8. CIO Madhavi Marasinghe and her team are updating technology in classrooms/labs. A spreadsheet of available technology in each classroom/labs is posted and will be updated daily on the [VPAA website](#).
9. This week the U.S. President signed a [proclamation](#) that suspends the entry of foreign nationals with certain employment-based nonimmigrant visas into the United States. This proclamation may impact faculty or staff who are outside of the U.S. and are seeking to enter or return with an H-1B or J-1 visa. It will not impact H-1B petitions or green card cases if that person is already within the U.S. or those with already valid visas. The order is in effective June 24, 2020 and will expire December 31, 2020, unless extended. It is not yet clear how this proclamation will impact Canadian citizens who are outside of the U.S. and we are seeking more information about this. I encourage you to review the actual text of the proclamation. Our office is working to notify employees. Faculty and staff are encouraged to avoid travel if they need to apply for a new visa to return. Please contact Heather Wages if you have any questions regarding the proclamation.
10. Dr. Joshua Wynne has been appointed by Governor Burgum to serve as the state's chief health strategist. Part of his duties is to develop a robust testing and contact tracing plan for the state. The University of North Dakota is proposing a comprehensive strategic approach to mitigate the risk posed to the campus community by COVID-19 that involves testing, contact tracing, quarantine, isolation, physical distancing, and other health and safety precautions. The testing cannot be required but will be highly encouraged and we have identified priority groups to test (those where physical distancing can't be maintained such as students in flight training, clinicals, etc.) and all members of the campus will have an opportunity to test throughout the fall semester. Details of this plan are in development now including how often and when testing will occur. When finalized, the plan will be shared.
11. Deans have asked for clarity regarding the distribution of papers in the classroom. Faculty should plan on using Blackboard to distribute and collect information and not hand out or collect papers in class so the 6 ft. physical distancing is maintained.

If you haven't already done so I encourage you to subscribe to [Coronavirus blog](#). You'll receive notifications when new information is added to the blog. Thanks again for your work during the summer.

Be safe,



Debbie Storrs

Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs