March 17, 2020

Dear UAA Faculty,

The last few days have seen unanticipated and substantial changes in our public systems, our institutional practices, and our own lives. Even as I write this, our world is changing. It is and will be important to stay abreast of emerging news. UA Statewide, Chancellor Sandeen, and I are committed to sharing the latest with you. Please note the latest Statewide and Chancellor Communications yesterday.

On March 12 the UA System posted guidance that most courses will shift to alternate delivery for the remainder of the spring semester. Courses will be taught using alternate delivery starting March 23, providing you this week to prepare for that shift.

This week, faculty who teach face-to-face courses will undertake the challenging work to convert those courses to alternate delivery, focusing on ways other than seat time to allow students to meet the Student Learning Outcomes for each of their courses. Moving a course to a more mediated format of delivery is not the same as creating a fully online course and we understand that. At the same time, it is important that we continue to connect with our students and let them know that we are working to support them in meeting their academic goals. Ideally, if we work toward our goal of instructional continuity, as many students as possible will successfully complete courses in the normal semester timeframe.

Need help?

Take full advantage of the resources that will be available from our outstanding network of faculty support entities, including the Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence (CAFE), Academic Innovations and eLearning (AI&e), and the Center for Community Engagement and Learning (CCEL). Each of these centers has professionals who are committed to helping you make this transition.

Second, a support survey seeking insight from all faculty will help us make the best possible use of our resources. If you’re one of the over 300 faculty who have completed it, thank you. If you have not, please do so even if you feel you are in good shape with regard to online contexts and eLearning. One of the things that is being developed via the survey is a network of colleague-to-colleague support options, so even if you don’t need assistance, it would be good to know that you’re someone who could help others.

It is okay if you have questions or feel unsure about this whole state of affairs. This is an unusual situation, so questions and feelings of uncertainty are to be expected for faculty, staff and students alike. It is for that reason that we encourage you to communicate with your students early and often; reaching out to them will provide a sense of stability and will help reduce any anxiety they may be experiencing. You have my word that we will be doing the same, communicating with you and providing information as it becomes available.
I have never worked in such a caring community as UAA, so I have confidence in our university’s ability to respond to this crisis in ways that demonstrate both our professional competence and personal compassion. We can and will respond to the academic issues and professional challenges before us while treating others with kindness and patience. Thank you for all that you are doing as we face this complex situation together.

Sincerely,

John R. D. Stalvey, Ph.D.