April 22, 2020

Dear UAA Faculty:

As we approach the end of our spring semester and prepare for summer and fall, I am so proud of everything you and your students have done to move to alternate delivery and to balance your work, family, and university obligations through this unprecedented time. More than ever we recognize the kind of institution we are - caring, connected to our students and communities, and committed to providing the kinds of educational experiences that change lives. We will get through this together, and to this end, I need to ask your help. I am asking for your assistance to encourage students to register now for their fall classes.

Our goal is to ensure our students achieve their educational goals. The best thing they can do is to continue to take classes toward their degrees and certificates. At this time, fall is on schedule to return to our regular mix of in-person and remote classes. However, students might be putting off registration to see if fall will shift to alternate delivery. We know through a survey of our students that the greatest challenge they are facing is balancing school, work, and family responsibilities. Like you, their home environment contains many distractions; they are now homeschooling, as well as providing full time care for loved ones, without the support mechanisms they had in place that would allow them to attend our classes. They are also reporting significant anxiety surrounding COVID and its impact on their ability to be successful. The challenge of synchronous class times and examinations is difficult.

About 700 students have responded to the survey, and Vice Provost for Student Success Claudia Lampman will share the results next week. Early analysis of the data shows that flexibility (i.e., asynchronous) in course assignments and exams is very helpful, and that using Blackboard is also very helpful.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Please take a moment in your course communications with students to encourage each of them to register now for fall classes.

Please help us meet our students where they are by continuing to develop alternate approaches. I have asked our faculty development network to continue to offer you a range of best practices that will support you in your work. Should plans change and alternate delivery continue into the fall, academic rigor can be maintained through a variety of asynchronous methods.

In response to faculty requests, I have approved the use of the proctoring tool RPNow for alternate delivery summer courses. Please keep in mind that not all courses and not all
assessments require proctoring. However, if proctoring is necessary, please consider asynchronous methods of assessment, for the reasons outlined above. RPNow can be used for asynchronous assessment, and our faculty development centers are putting together further guidance for you.

SUMMER SEMESTER

Applications for the faculty development intensive #Pivot - May 2020 Faculty Intensive (May 11-15) are still being accepted. The session includes design strategies, best practices, and support for assignments, assessments, and course communication patterns, as well as ongoing support throughout the summer term. Open to all faculty and pre-professoriate post-docs, you may join the intensive as a participant or peer mentor. Mini-grants are available, see terms and deliverables with the application.

As always, thank you for all you are doing as we continue to face this complex situation together.

Sincerely,

John R. D. Stalvey, Ph.D.