Academic Continuity Guidance II

Our first academic continuity document focused on reducing opportunities for transmission of COVID-19 within the Emory community and thereby minimizing associated academic disruption. In this document, we pull together efforts designed to provide guidance on additional concerns related to academic continuity linked to disruptions caused by the pandemic. Most information included is intended as recommended practices to be shared within your academic unit. Policies that require specific actions are underlined.

In some of the items we ask schools and colleges to develop plans. These do not need to be shared with the Office of the Provost. They should be available for review, however, if needed.

I   General Health and Classroom Safety

The university provided general guidance on campus health and safety on the Emory Forward website: http://www.emory.edu/forward/on-campus/index.html. In addition, the university has outlined five general guidelines to promote safety on campus and in the classroom.

Action: Ensure that all faculty and students are aware of these campus and classroom safety guidelines. Review and modify school conduct codes to address serious, pervasive, and/or repeated PPE-related conduct problems. Publicize changes to the code.

Guidelines

- *Everyone* must practice the 3 Ws: *Wear* a facial covering on campus; *Watch* distance-- be 6 feet apart; *Wash* hands or use hand sanitizer often.

- Everyone must wear a facial covering *anywhere on campus, even outdoors*. Exceptions are when eating, and when faculty or instructors are alone in their personal office. Eating should be done in an approved indoor Dining Services location, outside and with ten feet of distance, or alone in a personal office.

- Everyone must maintain six feet of distance *anywhere on campus, even outdoors*. Eating outside should be with ten feet of distance.

- Eating and drinking are not permitted in the classroom or in laboratories used for instructional space.

- When teaching, instructors must follow the two-factor PPE protocol. Consensus guidance from CDC and Emory Environmental Health and Safety Office is to have two elements of protection.

    o   face mask/covering + 6' of distance

    o   face shield + an acrylic barrier

    o   face shield + at least 8' of distance

    o   Face covering + face shield (can be used to approach students for short one-on-one conversations)

- The Faculty Toolkit has additional guidance on classroom logistics and the two-factor PPE protocol: http://cfde.emory.edu/resources/teaching/faculty-toolkit.html#safetypolicies.
- Videos are available that are available for students, faculty, and instructors that review classroom health and safety protocols:
    - Students: https://vimeo.com/446858006
    - Faculty and instructors: https://vimeo.com/443344766/b49fc205ef

Instructor Authority and Conduct Code

- Faculty have the authority to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is not practicing physical distancing or wearing a facial covering. See Community Compact.
    - The Emory Compact Response Team (ECRT) is responsible for reviewing reports of compact violations submitted by the community. The ECRT will provide support to enable community members to better follow compact expectations and will administer appropriate sanctions for violations of compact expectations. Reports to the ECRT are made using a link on the Emory Forward Our Responsibility page.
- Serious, pervasive, and/or repeated violations of the compact are grounds for a disciplinary review and action by the school or college Student Conduct authority. The ECRT will refer these types of problems to the appropriate student conduct office. Schools and colleges should review and modify conduct codes to include these types of PPE-related conduct problems.
    - Definitions, potential violations, procedures, and actions should be clear.
    - PPE-related conduct problems should be addressed as part of the code, made public along with the compact, and communicated to faculty, students, and staff.
- Violations of health and safety guidelines by faculty, instructors, or staff are addressed by Human Resources.

II Class Schedules and Classroom Standards

The university adopted a set of space standards to help promote health and safety in the classroom. These standards are outlined below with more detailed information available at: [need link to where document will be posted]. Some programs have learning activities that require specialized space. Work with the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHSO) to develop a space plan for these activities.

Action: Ensure that all faculty and staff are aware of space and scheduling requirements for classes and other learning activities. Collaborate with EHSO to develop space plans for specialized needs. Ensure that school facilities staff work closely with Campus Services on physical space setup.

Class length and scheduling

- Make every effort to schedule classes at the preferred maximum of 75-90 minutes.

- If a program curriculum requires classes or other learning activities that are longer than 90 minutes, schedule breaks of at least 15 minutes at regular intervals to allow students to leave the space.

- When possible, change rooms after 90 minutes or longer intervals.

- Schedule 25-minute intervals between classes to clear the classroom and prevent entering and exiting students from crossing paths inside of buildings.

Class size limits

- In-person class size is limited to no more than 35 students, with most classes expected to be under 30.

- Schools may request rare exception to that limit by providing a pedagogical justification and a specific and detailed contingency plan to move to a smaller class size if public safety considerations demand. In instances where exceptions have been approved, classes must not exceed 50 individuals.

- Send requests for class size exceptions to Mike Andrechak (michael.j.andrechak@emory.edu) for review.

Classroom space configuration

- For traditional classrooms and lecture halls, 50 square feet/person is used to determine maximum occupancy and seating layout. Campus Services and school facilities staff measured and verified all classrooms to confirm maximum occupancies.

- Define an "instruction/teaching zone" by floor tape in front of the classroom or lecture hall demarking 6ft from the first row and when applicable a second demarcation 8-10ft from the first row.

- In rooms with fixed furniture, show approved seating with visual cues/markings.

- In rooms with moveable furniture, clearly mark where chairs should be located. Chairs are not to be moved from these locations.

- When students are wearing face coverings and the instructor is wearing a face shield (without a cloth face mask), an acrylic barrier is needed if the distance between the instructor and nearest student(s) is less than 8-10ft.

- To allow for one-on-one instructor/student conversations before or after class (when both faculty or instructor and student wear a face covering) an acrylic barrier should be placed around the lectern since physical distancing cannot be achieved in close conversation. Tents provided outside of classroom buildings will be available for such uses. Guidelines will be provided.

Athletics, Physical Education, Exercise, and Recreational Facilities

- All athletic, physical educations, exercise, and recreational facilities will be closed at the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester. Should changing circumstances allow these facilities to open, the following space guidelines should be followed.

- A 150 square feet/person metric is used to determine maximum occupancy in athletic, physical education, and recreational facilities.

- Physical distancing requirements are doubled (12ft between individuals) due to higher droplet/aerosol generation. In some cases, duration of activity, acrylic barriers, and/or training outdoors may be used to reduce physical distancing requirements. Consult the Environmental Health and Safety Office for specific case scenarios.

- Maintain physical distancing in locker rooms and equipment rooms at 12ft apart. If it is impossible to ensure equipment is 12ft apart, use of acrylic barriers may be appropriate.

- Olympic pool occupancy must be limited to 3 swimmers per lane (swimming in a circle). Swimmers should be prohibited from passing within the same lane when swimming in the same direction.

III Faculty Absence

Faculty members may be absent throughout the course of the semester as a result of illness or quarantine. Exposure to COVID may result in multiple instances of quarantine or lengthy absence.

Action: Ensure that all faculty and staff are aware of procedures for reporting illness. Establish a process for responding to reports of faculty quarantine or isolation. Develop a school-wide plan for managing faculty absence.

Illness

- Faculty, instructors, and staff who are symptomatic should call the COVID-19 hotline (404-712-6843) for evaluation and instructions about testing.

- Faculty, instructors, and staff who test positive for COVID-19 from another testing facility (i.e. public health facility, doctor's office, etc.), must report the positive test result by calling the Office of Injury Management (OIM) at 404-686-8587. OIM will provide instructions about next steps.

- The Office of Injury Management supports the return to work process after faculty illness.

- The university has developed communication protocols for informing others of faculty or instructor illness. The protocols will be distributed when finalized as part of a broad communications effort. Identify the school leaders and administrative staff who will implement the communication protocol.

Absence

- All academic programs and departments must identify, for every course, a faculty member or instructor who can serve as instructor in case of an illness that prevents the faculty member or instructor from teaching in person or if teaching remotely is not an option.

- o The backup faculty member or instructor must have the proper qualifications and experience to teach the course.

- o Graduate teaching assistants or associates *cannot* provide backup instruction in addition to their other teaching assistant duties.

- Schools and programs must develop a set of criteria for determining when a 'backup' faculty member will assume responsibility for instruction and communicate these criteria to faculty.

  - o Any class sessions cancelled because of faculty illness, quarantine, and/or isolation must be made up prior to the end of the semester. For those schools who allow a set number of cancellations per semester, any cancellations above that number must be made up prior to the end of the semester.

- Departments/schools must keep records of any backup faculty or instructor assuming instruction for a course and provide this information to the Office of the Provost at the end of the semester.

IV   Student Absence

The university has established a detailed action plan for student quarantine and isolation that addresses needs for undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students. At the core of the plan is a wrap-around service model where students will receive academic, mental health, and spiritual support during quarantine and/or isolation. Critical to the success of the wrap-around model is that faculty and staff are aware of its elements and are prepared to address students' academic needs. Key elements are presented below.

Action: Ensure that faculty, instructors, and staff are aware of the CARE plan and prepared to assist students who are in quarantine or isolation. Communicate both general and school-specific procedures for addressing student illness and absence.

Illness

- Students may inform faculty, instructors, or staff that they are feeling ill, have been diagnosed with Covid19, or have been asked to go into quarantine. Faculty, instructors, and staff should take the following actions:

  - o Inform students that they must notify Emory Student Health through the Student Health Portal: https://login.emory.edu/idp/profile/SAML2/Redirect/SSO?execution=e1s1

  - o Complete the Student of Concern Form and flag COVID. This will send information directly to the relevant academic support office.

- Establish a response model that gives priority to students who are ill and in isolation as their circumstances may be challenging and options more limited.

  - o Implement college- and school-based elements of the communication plan to ensure that faculty, instructors, and staff know where to find the Student of Concern Form and how to complete it appropriately.

- Establish guidelines for faculty and instructors should the extent of student illness and quarantine impede class progress for the remaining students in the class.

  o Communicate guidelines to faculty and instructors.

- Review school policies for medical withdrawal grades and make any modifications needed to respond to the COVID context.

  o Communicate any modifications to faculty, instructors, students, and staff.

- Identify and publicize any required actions for resuming academic activity when students return from illness.

Maintaining academic progress

- In the context of COVID, faculty and instructors need to take attendance so that we can have a record of whether a student is attending class. This will help us support students across the different systems of the university and help with contact tracing.

  o When students engage in classes asynchronously, Canvas or other learning management systems can be used to evaluate student engagement.
- It is also important that we provide flexible attendance policies so that students who become ill or are asked to quarantine, do not become even more stressed about having to miss class. Faculty and instructors who include attendance as part of the grade must put an explicit statement on their syllabus about how they will relax this policy for students who are required to isolate or to quarantine.

- All class sessions must be recorded. Recording via Zoom saved to the cloud is recommended, as this automatically generates a transcript; Echo 360 and Panopto are also options. Recordings should be made available to the class via Canvas and must not be publicly available due to legal issues related to student privacy. Requests for exemptions to this policy should be discussed with the Dean (for example, if class discussions cover particularly sensitive topics).

- Review school policies for incomplete grades and make any modifications needed to respond to the COVID context.

  o Communicate any modifications to faculty, instructors, students, and staff.

- Provide guidance to faculty and instructors on flexible exam practices. Best practices include avoiding synchronous online examinations and including a syllabus statement if webcam monitoring is needed for proctored exams.

- Review recommended syllabus statements (http://cfde.emory.edu/resources/teaching/faculty-toolkit.html#syllabuslanguage) and modify as needed to reflect specific school requirements.

  o Communicate any modifications to faculty and staff.

V   Academic Advising

We expect an increased need for academic advising for students enrolled in both in-person and on-line classes. Students will experience many challenges and all schools and programs must be prepared to address a wide range of student concerns.

Action: Ensure that you have adequate resources to provide prompt and accurate information to students seeking academic advising. Collaborate with Campus Life and Student Health Services as they organize and execute the wrap-around student service model for students who are ill or in isolation.

- Review service protocols and make modifications to allow support to be provided in a remote environment.

  o Provide any necessary training to help staff and peer advisors work remotely.

- Given the high levels of stress and the multiple challenges reported by students in the Spring 2020 move to remote learning, advising and other academic support units should aim to acknowledge requests within 24 hours during the weekdays and ideally provide a response within two to three business days.

- Follow the Academic Support protocol developed to support students in isolation or quarantine as their circumstances may be challenging and options more limited.

  o Do the weekly academic welfare check with students in isolation or quarantine.
  o Be sure that the academic support programs follow the wrap-around service guidelines established in collaboration with schools and colleges. The guidelines document will be shared separately when finalized.

- Some students are dealing with mental health issues, and these issues may be worsened by the pandemic situation. Develop a communication plan that informs faculty and staff of recommended responses to student stress:

  o Referral to [Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

  o Complete the [Student of Concern Form](#) which will alert relevant offices to concerns

  o Reminder that mental health issues are considered private medical information and we cannot ask directly about these conditions.

    ▪ We can ask explicitly if students would like assistance in seeing a counselor or talking with a professional about their stress.

VI   Access to Online Learning from Campus

Students who do not live on or near campus may not have enough time between in-person classes and online classes to return home and access the internet. Tents, library spaces, and the student center will have dedicated spaces for online learning. Added spaces may be needed.

Action: Identify spaces, if needed, that meet all health and safety guidelines that will allow students to engage in remote learning while on campus. Post signage and communicate the locations of learning spaces to students and academic advisors.

- Use 50 square feet/person to identify maximum occupancy and seating layout for space to be used for online learning. Due to variances in room configuration and furniture placement limitations, Campus Services and school facilities staff should measure and verify all spaces to confirm maximum occupancies.

- Arrange and mark chairs and furniture to make sure that students are at least 6 feet apart.

- Consult with the Environmental Health and Safety Office on location and space configuration.

- Provide sufficient access to electrical outlets and other technical requirements to support online learning.

VII   Suspension of In-Person Learning

Given the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recurring strain on Emory Healthcare and other local medical resources, the university may face a need to suspend in-person learning at some point during the semester. The university has provided in-depth guidance to support the design of flexible courses: http://cfde.emory.edu/toolkit/index.html .

Action: Develop a response plan that draws upon lessons learned in the Spring 2020 implementation of remote learning. Provide guidance to faculty, instructors, and staff that will allow a prompt and effective response to a need to suspend in-person learning.

- If pandemic virus transmission increases mid-semester, it is critical that faculty and instructors remain accessible and responsive throughout any suspension of in-person learning. Students reported challenges in Spring 2020 as a result of lack of response from faculty and instructors. Faculty and instructors should aim to acknowledge communications from students within 24 hours on weekdays and respond to concerns within two business days.

- Faculty and instructors of in-person and blended courses should design their course to be flexible should students be required to leave campus mid-semester.

  o Specific expectations for course design should be communicated to all faculty and instructors.

- If severely changing circumstances require modification to courses, faculty and instructors should aim to make those modifications quickly, maintain approximately the same amount of work, prepare and post a modified syllabus, and then keep the syllabus stable for the rest of the semester.

- Suspension of clinical rotations or community-based instruction is a serious barrier to academic progress for professional school students. Academic programs that require in-person clinical or community-based training should:

  o Develop contingency plans that will support continued learning through alternative formats within any constraints imposed by professional accreditation and licensing bodies.

  o Outline modified timelines to graduation and professional licensure.

- Suspension of research will be guided by a separate process and follow principles and actions applied during the Spring 2020 semester.