

# PREPARING YOUR COURSE FOR SOCIAL DISTANCE TEACHING

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*This document is a modification of one created by the University of Wisconsin – Madison and based on one created by East Carolina University, whose work we gratefully acknowledge.*

## INTRODUCTION

Continuity of instruction is important to both the university and its constituents because it assures a means by which the university can continue to meet its primary obligation of providing a rich and engaging education to UW-Eau Claire students. Plans allowing for the continuation of instruction under pandemic or catastrophic events serve two primary purposes. First, such plans assist students in continuing to seek timely matriculation and graduation that minimizes financial and family burdens throughout the event. Secondly, pandemic or catastrophic event planning helps to stabilize the university community and its surrounding neighbors during a crisis by removing or minimizing confusion for a portion of the campus and community's daily activities.

It is important to note that some faculty<sup>1</sup> and students will be able to participate and others may be affected by circumstances that prohibit their participation. All courses are unique and some may require specific set up or challenges for implementation during a pandemic or catastrophic event, such as labs or clinical components.

In the event that the campus must deal with the consequences of a flu pandemic, remember that we will be teaching under exceptional conditions, and our goal becomes providing instruction that allows students to continue to make progress towards their degree. This is a short term response to a crisis; it is "good enough" instruction, which we recognize is a significant departure from the exemplary instruction we are used to providing.

A critical component of controlling the spread of pandemic influenza will be community mitigation strategies such as social distancing designed to slow the spread of influenza. When we refer to "social distance teaching mode," we mean moving to a mode of teaching that is not face-to-face for a period of time. This does not mean converting all classes to online instruction. The goal of social distance instruction during a pandemic emergency should be to deliver essential courses and essential course content in a way that leads to continuity of instruction and progress towards degree completion. We acknowledge that this method of instruction cannot replace face-to-face instruction.

This document is a "walk through" to help faculty and instructors develop their social distance plans for their courses. It will not provide answers to all questions. Please talk with your colleagues, with your departmental administrators, with your school/college associate deans, and consult the pandemic flu web resources that the university has generated.

## PANDEMIC/CATASTROPHIC READINESS

We suggest that faculty develop and add a pandemic/catastrophic-readiness statement within each syllabus. This statement should instruct students to be proactive by determining if they would have computer and Internet access if relocation is imminent during or after event conditions. In addition,

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<sup>1</sup> "Faculty" is used throughout this document to refer to all instructional staff.

students with Internet access should be instructed to monitor the UW-Eau Claire homepage ([www.uwec.edu](http://www.uwec.edu)) for emergency information and updates.

#### *EXAMPLE: PANDEMIC/CATASTROPHIC READINESS STATEMENT*

*"In the event that this course is no longer able to meet face-to-face, students should (first go to section XX in this syllabus and complete the alternative assignment) and/or (immediately check the course site and read the announcement.) and/or (etc.). . . ."*

The remainder of this document can be used as a template or guide for discussion in developing a continuity of instruction plan.

#### *QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE CREATING A PLAN FOR YOUR COURSE*

- Determine if your students will have Internet access in the event of a pandemic or catastrophic event.
- What will your teaching objectives be for this time period (material covered, explore new topics)?
- How will you communicate with students (snail mail, email, telephone, Facebook, etc.)?
- What will you communicate to students (course work, updates, questions)?
- How will you develop and/or make your content available (unit assignments, homework)?
- How will you assess your students during this time period?
- Do your texts or other reading materials have online resources that might be utilized during this time?
- Will social distancing affect access to software, for example, lab-based software that is only available on campus?
- How will you distribute your Plan?

## PANDEMIC/CATASTROPHIC PLAN IN ACTION

*Note: In the event of a pandemic or other catastrophic event, we cannot make the assumption that all students or faculty will have Internet or computer access.*

Begin planning by reviewing the learning outcomes you wish to achieve in the event of pandemic or catastrophic conditions. Please review the checklist provided in Appendix II and have open discussions with colleagues utilizing the discussion points in Appendix I. These two items should foster and encourage open collaboration among faculty members before and during the declared event.

The plan should address two distinctly different scenarios: the scenario in which Internet and computer access will be available to most students (instruction in this case will be referred to as "Just-in-Time" instruction), and the scenario in which students that will not have Internet access and/or access to a computer (instruction in this case will be referred to as "Just-in-Case" instruction). Be sure to include any communication updates and any announcements that are important to your students. For example, let them know how often they can expect to hear from you and how often you expect to hear from them.

## FACULTY AND STUDENTS WITH INTERNET AND COMPUTER ACCESS

During a pandemic or catastrophic event, and after all face-to-face instruction has been suspended (i.e., social distancing), communication will be expected to take place through a variety of tools including email, Desire to Learn (D2L), Live Meeting, telephone, text messaging, instant messaging, etc. We recommend that faculty become familiar with D2L prior to a pandemic or catastrophic event in order to reduce frustrations and confusion. D2L is the UW – Eau Claire central course management system and is available to all faculty members, instructional staff, and all students. Live Meeting is a web conferencing program that provides a virtual classroom for live sessions.

### *COMMUNICATION OPTIONS FOR THOSE WITH INTERNET AND/OR COMPUTER ACCESS*

Email is a great way to provide general communications during a pandemic. Faculty can email their students individually by using the Webmail tool. Faculty can send email to their entire class roster by using the Webmail tool as well. See the following link for more information:

- <http://www.uwec.edu/help/Outlook07/MAIL-stulist.htm>

In addition to email, keep in mind the following communication options: phone, postal mail, and D2L's News, Chat, and Discussion tools. See the following link for more information:

- <http://www.uwec.edu/help/d2l-fac.htm>

### *CONTENT-DELIVERY OPTIONS FOR THOSE WITH INTERNET AND/OR COMPUTER ACCESS*

Possible alternatives to face-to-face in order to continue instructional activities for those with Internet and/or computer access are summarized in the following table.

<b>Face-to-Face Delivery of...</b>	<b>Alternatives/Ideas for Social Distancing (<i>with internet and/or computer access</i>)</b>
<b>General Course Content</b> (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint and Word files, paper course handouts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add Content to D2L</li><li>• Remember to put lectures in short modules for minimum file size and maximum delivery.</li><li>• Deliver lectures using Live Meeting</li><li>• Distribute material using the W: drive.</li></ul>
<b>Text Book Reading/Assignments</b> (e.g. Text material covered)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Before the semester begins, check to see if your current textbook offers online resources.</li><li>• Make sure the syllabus is specific about which readings should be done at which times and how this material relates to assessments.</li><li>• Contact McIntyre Library staff to discuss reserve materials.</li></ul>
<b>Group Assignments</b> (e.g. Group projects and small group assignments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize the D2L Groups tool that offers group discussion boards and file storage.</li><li>• Utilize Live Meeting for group meetings.</li></ul>
<b>Individual Assignments</b> (e.g. In class assignments or projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Store assignment information in the D2L Content area or on the W: drive. Students can submit assignments via email, D2L, or the W: drive.</li></ul>

<b>Exams or Quizzes</b> (e.g. In class evaluation and assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider alternative assignments for assessment.</li> <li>• Deliver exams/quizzes online through D2L Quiz Tool.</li> <li>• Consider giving mastery tests that can be retaken until a specific score is reached.</li> </ul>
<b>Course Announcements</b> (e.g. Timely verbal announcements or course updates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urgent communications should be delivered via email.</li> <li>• Post course updates in the News area in D2L.</li> <li>• Post course updates on the course web page.</li> <li>• Maintain a README file on W: drive.</li> </ul>
<b>Course Lectures*</b> (e.g. Face-to-face lectures and PowerPoint presentations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider sending lectures or lecture notes in text format to students via email.</li> <li>• Consider delivering lectures using Live Meeting.</li> <li>• Store PowerPoint slides on the W: drive.</li> <li>• Consider discussions using the D2L Discussion Tool.</li> <li>• Add audio to PowerPoint (put lectures in short modules for minimum file size).</li> </ul>
<b>Syllabus</b> (e.g. Hard copy distributed in class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload a copy of your syllabus to your D2L course.</li> <li>• Place a copy of your syllabus on the W: drive.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Questions</b> (ex. Verbal responses to questions asked during class or office hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Email.</li> <li>• Use D2L Discussion Tool (post frequently asked questions).</li> <li>• Maintain a FAQ file on the W: drive.</li> <li>• Use D2L Chat Tool.</li> <li>• Use Instant Messenger (hold office hours via IM).</li> </ul>

*Note: When creating or converting course materials to online formats, it is crucial to consider file size. The addition of particular graphics may cause PowerPoint Presentations to exceed online limitations and slow down the student access.*

### **SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH INTERNET AND COMPUTER ACCESS**

Consider creating additional assignments that could be added to a course syllabus or as stand-alone assignment(s) available during a pandemic or other catastrophic event that temporarily suspends face-to-face classes.

Prepare an Individual and/or Group Assignment that might work for a short period such as:

- Post a subject content URL (in syllabus, D2L, text message, etc.). Have students prepare a paper assignment tying information to course content and personal experience. (Students could submit assignments via W: drive, D2L, Email, or when they return to campus.)
- Post an extension of the subject content URL and prepare (or have students prepare) a 10-question (online or paper) quiz or have buddy discussions through text messaging, discussion groups, or IM.
- Post discussion questions in the D2L Discussion Board to facilitate online discussion. Groups might note time of discussion and 1-2 line overview of discussion for assessment of assignment.
- Assign end-of-chapter materials for group project, individual question and answer session, or buddy discussion. Students can then post in PowerPoint format with notes for peers to assess, or write up overview of discussions. Use end-of-chapter assignments for chapters not covered in regular class period.

- Provide an "Alternative" assignment in your syllabus to be used only in the event that face-to-face classes are suspended, including rubric for assessment. Example for this assignment: Assign Buddies at the beginning of the semester. Then have buddies post one content driven discussion question and be the moderator of the discussion.

## Faculty and Students without Internet or Computer Access

In the event that a pandemic or catastrophic event is declared, students may be required to leave the campus and temporarily relocate to an area that will not afford access to a computer or the Internet. Under these circumstances a great deal of pre-planning must go into syllabi and materials development. This event could cause a communication gap between instructors and students while face-to-face classes are suspended. These students will still need an explanation of your expectations and their responsibilities. It is important that a "just-in-case" course content outline/syllabus, and a timeline be available that students can either download or print, and take with them. Assignments from the current textbook which students can complete and submit when face-to-face classes resume are also an option.

### *COMMUNICATION OPTIONS FOR THOSE WITHOUT INTERNET AND/OR COMPUTER ACCESS*

Possible Types of Communication Available:

- Phone
- Postal mail
- Text Messaging

### *OPTIONS FOR CONTENT DELIVERY FOR THOSE WITHOUT INTERNET AND/OR COMPUTER ACCESS*

Possible alternatives to face-to-face in order to continue instructional activities for those without Internet and/or computer access:

<b>Face-to-Face Delivery of...</b>	<b>Alternatives/Ideas for Social Distancing (<u>without Internet and/or computer access</u>).</b>
<b>General Course Content</b> (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint and Word files, paper course handouts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students could download or print content available in advance.</li> <li>• Paper through postal mail.</li> </ul>
<b>Textbook Reading/Assignments</b> (e.g. Text material covered)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and place in syllabus for later use.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Assignments</b> (e.g. Group projects and small group assignments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and place in syllabus for later use.</li> <li>• Textbook readings.</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Assignments</b> (e.g. In-class assignments, projects).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and place in syllabus for later use.</li> <li>• Textbook readings.</li> </ul>
<b>Exams or Quizzes</b> (e.g. In-class evaluation and assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider alternative assignment for assessment.</li> <li>• Mastery test taken when students return</li> </ul>

<b>Course Announcements</b> (e.g. Timely verbal announcements or course updates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Call Tree (see Appendix III)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Course Lectures</b> (e.g. Face-to-face lectures and PowerPoint presentations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper copies provided ahead of time or substitute a particular chapter in the textbook.</li> <li>• Electronic copies of course lectures and/or notes available for print or download ahead of time.</li> <li>• CDs with all course materials including lectures available for purchase.</li> </ul>
<b>Syllabus</b> (e.g. Hard copy distributed in class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative hard copy distributed in class.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Questions</b> (e.g. Verbal responses to questions asked during class or office hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Phone Tree of Phone Buddies</li> <li>• Faculty phone (assign groups and one student as communicator to ask questions)</li> </ul>

*SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT INTERNET OR COMPUTER ACCESS*

Consider creating additional assignments that could be added to course materials and made available during any pandemic or other catastrophic event that temporarily suspends face-to-face classes.

Prepare an individual and/or group assignment that might work for a short period:

- Provide subject content (in syllabus, course packet, text message, etc.) for students to review and self reflect upon in a paper students could mail in.
- Post subject content link and prepare a 10-question quiz or have buddies discuss using text messaging or phone.
- Post discussion questions in syllabus to facilitate discussion. Have students discuss through phone or text messaging. Groups might note time of discussion and 1-2 line overview of discussion for assessment of assignment.
- Assign end-of-chapter materials for group project, individual question and answer session, or buddy discussion. Students can then report for peers to assess, or discuss and write up overview of discussions. Use end-of-chapter assignments for chapters not covered in regular class period.
- Provide an "alternative" assignment in your syllabus to be used only in the event that face-to-face classes are suspended, including rubric for assessment. Example for this assignment - Assign buddies at the beginning of the semester. Provide a current article for students to read and discuss with their buddy.

## REFERENCES

Wake Forest Professor Rick Matthews has posted a "just-in-case" syllabus prepared in the event of a pandemic and the need for social distancing. His example is posted here:

- <http://www.wfu.edu/~matthews/courses/p230/hw/pandemic.html>

The U.S. Government has developed a checklist for colleges and universities to use in Pandemic Influenza Planning:

- <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/professional/school/collegeschecklist.html>

East Carolina University has developed a distance education contingency plan that may be useful:

- <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/learningplatforms/contingency.cfm>

# APPENDIX I

## DISCUSSION POINTS

The following can be used to promote dialogue concerning the learning process and pandemic or catastrophic event situations. Faculty should be encouraged to discuss the following points with peers in a small group setting in addition to any other ideas which may arise as an extension of the discussion.

- What would you do if you were unable to have your class meet face-to-face for an extended period of time beginning tomorrow?
- How would your face-to-face syllabus change if you had to suddenly begin teaching at a distance?
- If servers and communication went down for a long period of time, how would you communicate with students?
- How could the content materials of your current course be changed to reflect the conditions of Just-in-Time and Just-in-Case instruction?
- Is your course currently being taught online by anyone?
- What are your department and program standards for consistent, high quality course instruction?
- How could a course provide value and meet program standards during a pandemic or catastrophic event?
- How would it be possible for students who anticipate graduating at the end of the semester to meet program standards during a pandemic or catastrophic event?
- What would an outline for Just-in-Time or Just-in-Case course materials look like? What would be included? What would be excluded?
- What materials are essential for optimal Just-in-Time and Just-in-Case learning?
- Reinventing the wheel is time-consuming and difficult. How can you provide the minimum requirements without reinventing the wheel?
- When should you share your Just-in-Time and Just-in-Case materials with students?

## APPENDIX II

### FACULTY PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

The following is provided in order to facilitate and focus attention on preparation for a catastrophic event.

Check	Item Description
	Answer the Questions to Consider
	Attend departmental discussion sessions
	Attend D2L training sessions
	Test communication tools
	Select communication tools to implement
	Revise syllabus – continuity syllabus
	Continuity syllabus readily available to students
	Ensure Just-in-Time and Just-in-Case content readily available
	Ensure Just-in-Time and Just-in-Case assignments readily available

## APPENDIX III

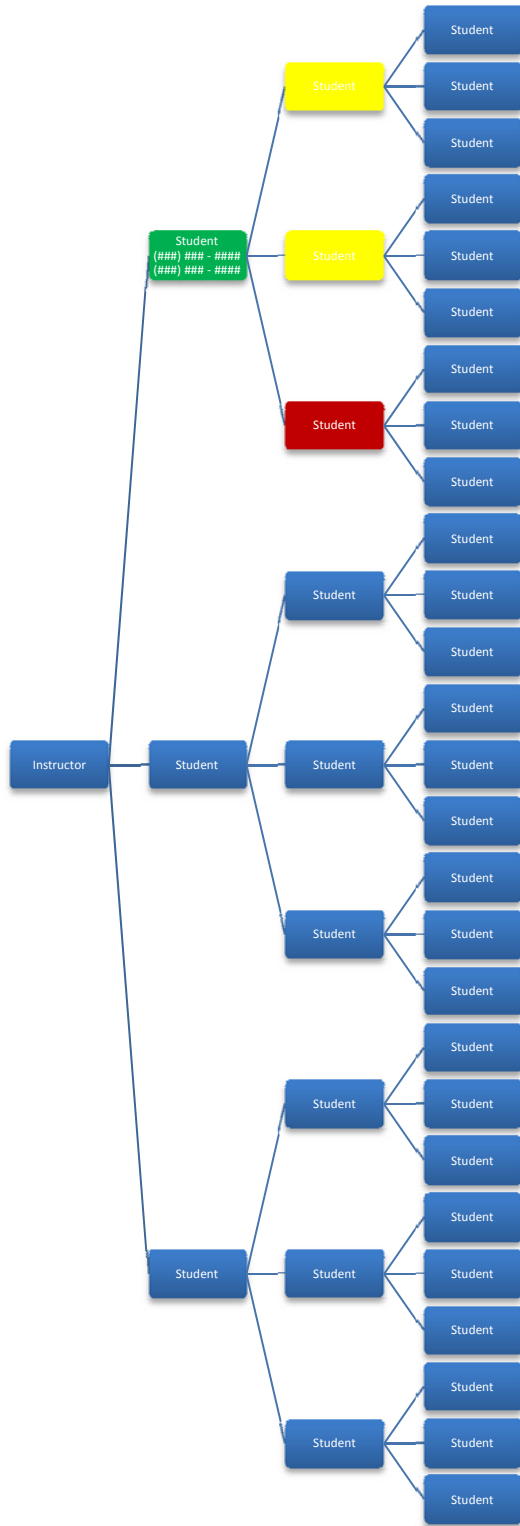
### HOW TO BUILD A CALL TREE

A Call Tree is an organization instrument used to spread information to a large number of people in a short amount of time. The following steps can be used to create a Call Tree.

1. Pick the number of people,  $n$ , you want each to be responsible for contacting. For example, if you pick  $n = 5$ , then each student will be responsible for calling five other students.
2. Write down the class list of students you wish to be contacted.
3. Identify  $n$  students you will call with any desired information to disseminate.
4. For each of these students, identify  $n$  students s/he should call. Next, for each of these students, identify  $n$  students to be called by that student and so on until all the students in the class list are included in the Call Tree.

Be sure that each contact understands what to do if s/he is unable to reach one of the assigned students. For example, you may wish to have them call you with the names of students they could not reach.

You may also wish to designate an alternative student to serve as a contact in case the first choice is not reachable. For example, in the sample Call Tree shown on the next page, the student in green is the first-choice contact. However, if that student cannot be reached, the student in red could be listed as the second-choice contact. In that case, the student in red would be responsible for contacting the two students in yellow and also continuing to try to contact the student in green (the first-choice contact).



**Sample Call Tree (phone numbers omitted to aid readability)**