Transitioning to Remote Delivery

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Welcome, colleagues!

As you all know, in order to combat the spread of COVID-19 , Buena Vista University has moved Storm Lake campus classes to remote learning for the remainder of the Spring Semester. The message that follows is lengthy, and you are being inundated with information right now. However, please take the time to read through it all when you are ready as it provides important information as we begin this adventure in remote learning.

Above all, know that we are all in this together and will support each other and our students. That is what matters most.

Be Reassured

An unexpected and wholescale move to remote teaching and learning means that we must all be adaptable and forgiving. Give yourself some grace as you make this transition as an instructor. Remember, you have not been given the luxury of training to design an online course from scratch for students who are prepared to learn in that modality. Instead, you are in an emergency remote teaching situation where you are likely adapting a pre-existing, face-to-face course to an online format for learning continuance for students with varying access. There is a big difference. We will make mistakes, encounter glitches, and fumble our way through for a bit. That is okay. While it may be tempting to try to learn every bell and whistle of online teaching technology and attempt to deliver a pedagogically perfect course, please know that is not the expectation. Put student learning first, yes, but also know that doing what is realistic and feasible for you, as an instructor, and your students, as learners, in ways that keep them engaged and growing is our best practice right now.

Be Realistic

You and your students are in the middle of a stressful and ever-changing situation. We will all be doing the best we can. Remember, the development of online courses typically includes many hours of strategic planning and careful preparation. Emergency, remote teaching is, of course, more rapid and reactionary. Our students did not sign up for online courses when they began

the term and may or may not have the tools and skills for online learning at the ready. You did not sign up for online teaching either, and you may or may not be comfortable with particular tools or strategies. That is all okay. Flexibility and understanding will be essential on all sides of this equation. Our situation may not allow you to be as strategic as you typically are when you design a regular course. Instead, put the focus on keeping continuity for what you have already started in the face-to-face environment. In moving to remote teaching, it's important to root your decisions in learning objectives and to be flexible and generous with students.

With that in mind, here are some things about students to consider upfront:

- Faculty and students must be flexible and patient with one another. Things will not go perfectly. Problems may take longer to solve. That is all to be expected.
- Remove barriers to inclusion as much as possible and seek to lessen the impact of pre-existing inequalities.
  - Asynchronous is okay. It may even be best given the circumstances. You likely cannot expect all students to be on Zoom at what would have been their usual class time. For large classes, this will not be manageable as the maximum Zoom recommendation for learning is about 16 participants. Some students may be working. Some students may be taking care of kids. Some students won't have reliable internet. Asynchronous, while not ideal, may well be the fairest to all students.
  - Anything 'live' should be optional and not graded, or it should be recorded and provided asynchronously as well. Another approach is to provide options for students – to either participate in a live session or complete another assignment.
  - Consider that some students may be doing much of their online work via mobile phones as it may be their main source of internet. As much as you are able, make content mobile-friendly.
- Be mindful of the number and length of assignments. Students will be in many remote classes now. How many words do students really need to write? How many responses do they really need to post in order to show their learning?
- Students likely will not be able to focus as well. You will not have the same focus either. The world is a different and troubling place.
- Communication is essential (see more below). You will need to be available for students and you will need to be clear about what is graded and what is not. What the new expectations for the course are, etc.

Assessment

In the spirit of being realistic, if you are able to continue to instruct and assess around Signature Skills or program outcomes, please do so. If the changes you need to make to your courses make that too difficult or impossible, that is okay too. We will take what we can get in terms of assessment data this spring and be happy. We appreciate any effort to maintain embedded Signature Skills or program-level learning goals, but we also know that we must be generous and realistic.

Seek Support

We have developed and will continue to develop multiple layers of support for faculty. Here are the supports already developed (many will be updated regularly and more will likely be added):

The Dedicated SharePoint site you are on right now

This will serve as a one-stop repository for information, ideas, step-by-step guides, tutorials, etc. It will be updated continuously. Please follow or bookmark it and expect to return often.

Workshops for Canvas and Zoom

This site has videos and static guides for both Canvas and Zoom. In addition, workshops will be offered throughout next week via Zoom. We plan to offer development opportunities throughout the spring. Next week's workshops will each have limited seats so that they can be hands-on/minds-on, but many sessions will be offered. Enough to accommodate all faculty. If you plan to attend, you will need to sign up. You can do that by visiting the Training Schedule area of this site where you'll find links for Zoom and Canvas sessions. All workshops are optional.

If you sign up for a Zoom training session, please watch this video tutorial in advance of your workshop to learn some basics.

Zoom Accounts

ALL faculty, staff, and students have access to Zoom by logging into http://zoom.bvu.edu. Your personal meeting number is listed on the main page once you log in.

This will allow you, if you wish, to hold Zoom office hours just like you would in-person office hours and/or hold synchronous sessions should you chose to. We have also added a Zoom module to each of your courses in Canvas so that it is easy to share with your students. If the Modules area was hidden in your Canvas course, we have made it visible.

Special note for those co-teaching a course: If you co-teach, a separate meeting had to be created. You should log into Canvas and check the course for this special link. You'll need to use that link and not your personal Zoom meeting number.

A Teaching Network

We are building a robust network of point people who can serve as your remote teaching and learning support team both next week and throughout the remainder of the term. For now, please consider your dean or division chair as your first resource within your school. You can also reach out to these members of our centralized support team at any time. They are

available via email now, will provide open "office hours" next week for Zoom-based conversations, and can do one-on-one appointments:

Jay Benedict – tltc@bvu.edu

Stephanie Frank – tltc@bvu.edu

Jamii Claiborne – claiborne@bvu.edu

John Bedward – bedward@bvu.edu

A Dedicated Tech Support Line for Faculty

Call 712-749-2359 for any tech support needs.

Online Support Center

You can submit questions about any aspect of the transition to remote learning here and a dedicated team will track down responses.

Get Started

First and foremost, **there is no requirement that you use any particular technology or format for your courses** but there are some required [Minimum Expectations](#). Be sure to become familiar with those as you get started.

You may wish to think carefully about whether synchronous learning is necessary, or if asynchronous will be sufficient. You can also be fluid. You might start asynchronous and add optional synchronous elements later, once you are more comfortable and can be assured that students have the connectivity needed. Read about the differences between synchronous and asynchronous approaches in the [Pedagogical Resources](#) section.

Here are a few articles from higher education publications and organizations that you may find helpful (they are also found in the [Pedagogical Resources](#)):
- ["So You Want to Temporarily Teach Online" from Inside Higher Ed](#)
- ["Going Online in a Hurry: What to Do and Where to Start" from The Chronicle of Higher Education](#)
- ["3 Principles for Safeguarding Student Success in the Transition to Remote Instruction" from EAB Insights](#)

You may also find resources within your disciplinary professional organizations, social media conversations, etc. Nearly all institutions are in the same situation, and your colleagues at other universities may have discipline or course-specific ideas that will inspire you. If you find some

that are particularly valuable and should be shared with others, please send them to claiborne@bvu.edu and we will add them to this site.

Plan

Before you enter a Canvas or Zoom workshop next week to learn about technology and tools, it is important to take a step back and consider your course basics. What are your students' needs as learners and what are your needs as an instructor? To that end, we encourage you to:

Survey your students.

Please survey your students soon (via email, Canvas survey, etc.) to determine their access to learning materials including textbooks, a persistent connection, a device that has all the tools and functionality needed to be successful, etc. The sooner you do this, the sooner we can troubleshoot and provide assistance. If you discover that your students do not have learning materials and/or have internet challenges, please contact your school dean or division chair.

Review and adjust your learning goals for the course.

You'll need to be realistic about what can and cannot be achieved in this new learning environment and adjust accordingly.

Review and adjust your expectations for students.

It is important to consider how this disruption may affect students who may be facing new and different barriers to their academic success. You may need to consider flexibility in grading, deadlines, engagement, and you may wish to think through an equitable plan for handling requests for extensions or accommodations should they become necessary for students. You'll want to develop a policy for deadlines and grading to share with the students. This will help to ensure that students are aware of the expectations since they will have shifted slightly.

Review and adjust your syllabus.

Decide what course policies and expectations will need to be altered because of the modality change—attendance, participation, grading, etc. Will there need to be new or different expectations for students in terms of reading, assignments, projects, or assessments?

Draft an outline for the remainder of your course.

Given your learning goals and adjusted expectations, what content, learning activities, assessments, etc. will need to be in your class? What readings will your students have access too? What ways will they demonstrate their learning? It may be helpful to look at the big themes or concepts you have left this semester. What needs to be accomplished each week in

order to successfully meet the objectives of the course? Briefly outline the rest of the semester and then focus on developing specifics for the first week or module.

Support Students

Communication

Communication is paramount in remote learning environments. Students will need numerous updates, clear instructions, frequent feedback, specific avenues for interaction with you, prompt responses to questions or concerns, etc. Checking in now even briefly can help assure students that you'll all get through this together that you'll be in touch with new information about the course as soon as you can. You may also want to set a policy that you will respond to students within 24 hours and communicate that clearly to them.

Textbooks

The BVU Bookstore is has partnered with RedShelf and is offering students access to free e-books. For more information visit the bookstore's website. You can also explore the Free/Open Resources page on this site for more information about publishers providing free access as well as other educational organizations offering free materials for students and faculty.

Tutoring & Accommodations

Students will continue to have access to academic tutoring available through the Center for Academic Excellence. They can continue to sign up for online tutoring appointments through EAB. If they have any difficulties, they can email Donna Musel. Additionally, students will remind faculty if they have accommodations so that those can be translated into the remote environment.

Student Engagement & Early Alert

You should monitor student engagement just as you would in a face-to-face class so that we can best promote student success. You can continue to use Early Alert through EAB to report any concerns you have about student engagement or performance. Use your best judgment and err on the side of reporting students when you have concerns.

One way to monitor student engagement if you are using Canvas is through Student Activity reports. You can learn more about those on the Canvas Resources page in the Student Activity section.

P/F Grading Options - IMPORTANT UPDATE

To help support students in this transition, the deadline for changing to P/F grading has been moved back to May 1, 2020. The P/F limit has also been waived for students this term, which means they can opt to take as many courses P/F as they wish. All classes, even ones that previously could not be taken P/F, may be taken P/F this semester (only). As advisors, please work with students who may need letter grades for graduate or professional school, for the major, in order to return to good academic standing (on probation) or to reach a 2.0 CGPA for graduation.

BVU Library

The BVU Library is open virtually and the librarians are available online. Email, text and chat channels are open Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. until March 29. Beginning on March 30 they will offer those services until 9 p.m. Sunday – Thursday evening for student convenience. Librarians have access to Zoom accounts so that they can interact with individual students for research assistance by appointment. They are also comfortable working with your students within Canvas. Add them as instructors to your class in Canvas and they can meet students there. Access to the print collection is difficult when students are off-campus, but they have the ability to scan things or send them out through the mail if an electronic equivalent cannot be found.

If you are envisioning another way that it would be helpful for the library to interact with your students, let them know!

Here are the best ways to reach the library:

Email: library@bvu.edu

Text: 712.794.4288

Chat: https://www.bvu.edu/library/chat

General Information

The latest university information for **students** regarding coronavirus.

The latest university information for **faculty & staff.**

We CAN Do This

This was a lot. I know. I hope you can process it in chunks as you need it, that you'll reach out if you need more support, and that you'll give yourself some grace. We will get through this together. Your deep commitment to your students and our trust and dedication to one another will anchor us.

Take care.

Jamii

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