

**Draft v1 - Please send suggestions to pmcclell@unca.edu
or your Area Dean.**

Academic Planning for Pandemic or Emergency Situations

A. Rationale

This document discusses advance planning strategies that may provide avenues for the continuity of academic learning in the event that a pandemic or other emergency disrupts the ordinary delivery of the curriculum during a semester. Such a situation might involve the disruption of classes for a few days or even weeks. In considering such a possibility it is important to plan on how student learning might continue in order to achieve student learning outcomes. Loss of one or two weeks of instruction or learning activities during a semester could seriously affect a student's success in subsequent courses and possibly impede their progress toward their degree. Although UNC Asheville takes great pride in providing a learning environment that relies on close faculty-student interactions in small class settings, this document asks that faculty consider alternatives to this preferred learning environment in order to insure that student learning continues.

B. Possible Scenarios in which a plan is needed

Although this list is not exhaustive, it does attempt to address the most probable scenarios:

- Classes are cancelled due to widespread outbreak of a pandemic flu or other emergency.
- The instructor is ill and unable to teach, and/or
- Several students in a class are ill and unable to attend for one to two weeks.

C. Types of Delivery of Course Content

Although specific course delivery in the case of a campus closure is highly discipline- and instructor- dependent, the list below outlines some basic questions and options for instructors and departments to consider:.

Questions to consider:

- • How many of your students have internet access from off-campus locations? Do you have internet access from your home?
- • Does your course utilize course management software, such as Moodle? Does your software provide capabilities such as online discussion, lecture presentation outlines, assessment tools, etc.
- • What are the key learning objectives for your course and can they be achieved through a distance learning format, i.e. Moodle or other independent outside assignments?
- • Is it possible to revise your on-campus, face-to-face delivery and assessment plans to accommodate a distance environment that will allow students to demonstrate mastery of the primary learning outcomes for the course?
- • Are there learning outcomes that simply cannot be achieved in a distance environment? If so, is it possible to rearrange the schedule of the course syllabus for their coverage when classes resume? Are these outcomes central to the course, or can they be substituted for other, equally or more important outcomes that can be achieved in a distance format?

Communication Methods: How will you communicate with your students?

Prior to an emergency situation, it would be wise to consider adding an addendum to your syllabus that includes information regarding course continuity in the case of a campus closing, extensive instructor absence, and/or extensive student absences. Posting this information online would also be helpful. The most important piece of information is how you and your students will communicate about the class. Where should they look to find updates about assignments, lecture content, assessments? Providing this information now, and in writing to your students and to your department chair, will decrease student anxiety and confusion. Possible methods of communication to consider might include:

- • Email
- • Course management website
- • Web postings
- • Online Chats
- • Voicemail Message on your phone
- • U.S. Postal Service

Types of Content Delivery: Suggestions and Considerations

Face-to-Face	Distance Alternatives Online	Distance Alternative without Internet Access
Reading Assignments	Course Texts: Usual Library or Outside Assignments: Are they available online? Are they already available online or will they require assistance from Library staff? Library staff would not be available if campus is closed.	Course Texts: Usual Library or Outside Assignments: Are there substitute reading assignments that might be more readily available in paper format?
Class Discussions	Is there an online chat option?	Is there an alternate writing or journal option?
Class Lecture	Are there lecture notes that can be posted to online sources?	Are there lecture notes in paper form that students could access immediately prior to closing?
Group Assignments	Can groups use Moodle, Email, and/or online Chat to discuss and work on group projects or assignments?	Can students be placed into groups and communicate via telephone?
Labs	Are the laboratory experiences available online? Can partial laboratory experiences be achieved by providing students with experiment data sets? Is specialized software required?	Can partial laboratory experiences be achieved by providing students with experiment data sets? Is specialized software required?
Studio Courses	Will students have access to materials and equipment needed to work independently? Are there alternate assignments that would achieve or partially achieve the learning outcomes?	Will students have access to materials and equipment needed to work independently? Are there alternate assignments that would achieve or partially achieve the learning outcomes?
Internships, fieldwork, practicums	Can the experience be rescheduled in order to achieve the learning outcomes? What if the business/organization/school is not closed, but UNC Asheville is closed, or visa versa?	Can the experience be rescheduled in order to achieve the learning outcomes? What if the business/organization/school is not closed, but UNC Asheville is closed, or visa versa?

Tests, papers	Can in-class tests be replaced with take-home exams that can be turned in digitally? Can papers be turned in digitally?	Can in-class tests be replaced with take-home exams that can be mailed in to the instructor? Can papers be mailed in to the instructor?
In general	Are there alternate ways for students to learn and demonstrate their achievement of the course learning objectives via independent research projects or papers? Does the course text have additional resources (online, guided study, etc.) that might be useful?	Are there alternate ways for students to learn and demonstrate their achievement of the course learning objectives via independent research projects or papers? Does the course text have additional resources (online, guided study, etc.) that might be useful?

D. Recommendations

1. Department Chairs and Program Directors devote time for discussion among their faculty during a departmental/program meeting. Faculty of multi-course sections should be encouraged to collaborate and coordinate their plans.
2. Faculty should develop plans for their courses and begin the process of making content available online, testing online chat capabilities, etc. If a situation is serious enough to require cancelling classes and closing the campus, it is unlikely that there will be extensive advance notice. Additionally, faculty members need to consider the possibility that they, or members of their household, may be ill and be out of the classroom for a week or more.
3. Although most of the suggestions and considerations address a campus closure, faculty should consider how the alternative learning methods might be used classes are in session, but students and/or faculty are ill and unable to attend classes due to distancing recommendations.

E. Responsibilities

1. **Faculty Level:** Faculty are responsible for developing plans for their courses and sharing the plans with their department chair/program director. In the case of multiple sections, all faculty teaching one or more sections could collaborate on a course plan.
2. **Department/Program Level:** Each department should have plans for all courses on file, perhaps developing a link on their departmental website for basic instructions per course, i.e. How will faculty and students will communicate, revised syllabi, policies, etc.
3. **Dean Level:** Deans will discuss and review with Chairs/Directors the plans, challenges, and options for their department or program.
4. **Provost Level:** The Provost will monitor any developing situation, keeping faculty as informed as about current conditions and providing faculty and students with notice of any possible campus closing as soon as is feasible.

Please send comments to: pmccllell@unca.edu or your Area Dean.