From: Szczerbacki, David  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 5:41 PM  
To: Faculty List  
Cc: Nancarrow, William; Crabb, Amanda; Sacco, Christine; Quigley, Ken; McConville, Tricia; Belaief, Steve; Beriault, Anne; Cokely, Carrie; Thibeault, Dennis; Koukol, June; Conway, Suzy  
Subject: Semester Continuity: responding to snow and other disruptions

Colleagues:

As I noted at today’s faculty meeting today, the choppy start to the semester due to weather disruptions is challenging us to redesign syllabi, schedules, assignments and the rest. I know many of you share my concern that disruptions negatively impact the “rhythm and flow” of the semester plan for a given course. Let me offer a few comments, requests and suggestions on this topic

Let me say first that I appreciate your patience and creativity in working through this. I have heard from several of you these past several days about creative efforts to make adjustments consistent with learning outcomes and course integrity. My sense is that this commitment is widespread consistent with our Mission.

Second, I do ask that you be clear in communicating changes and adjustments to your students. Depending on the nature of any adjustments you make, it may be prudent to update and distribute (and re-post) your course syllabi. Such clarity of message will reduce the potential for misunderstanding and confusion later on.

Third, thanks to the very quick work of the Faculty Center—Amanda Crabb, Christine Sacco and Bill Nancarrow – a set of useful course re-design tips has been created for your consideration. Please see the attached. (Thank you Amanda, Christine and Bill!). Blackboard and Panopto are two very good platforms available to all. These can be aligned and adopted given your individual needs and interests - and the Faculty Center is there to support you in using these tools.

Note also that these course redesign tips can be used to help “make-up” or “catch-up” work in a particular course—always at your discretion. In addition, as you think about designing syllabi in the future, I recommend that you consider including very explicit reference to how these tools (or other approaches – both tech driven and not) would be used in the case of a course disruption – weather related, short term illness, or perhaps the opportunity to travel to a professional conference. Having contingency plans on the shelf (and in the syllabus) might well assist in making real-time adjustments without overly compromising “rhythm and flow.” Taking a lesson from the recent weather disruptions, I encourage us to be less reactive and more proactive.

Finally, if you have any other ideas or questions about how the College can help minimize the impact of semester disruptions, please send these to me. I will include this item on next week’s Chairs, Directors, Coordinators meeting as a way of continuing this discussion. I will make sure your input is represented in this discussion. I am very mindful, for example, that the redesign tips – reliant on technology platforms as they are – may not be appropriate for specific courses or perhaps whole disciplines. Thus, other ideas and perspectives are both welcome and needed.

Thank you for your consideration and dedication.

David Szczerbacki