

CONTINUITY PLANNING

In 2006, we began working on the development of a plan that would allow us to continue to provide instruction in the case of a campus-wide shutdown or interruption. This was done as part of our continuous process for updating our campus-wide emergency management plan. Although it is unlikely that we will need to use it, we need to have a plan in place should a natural disaster or other event force the closing of the campus for more than a few days.

A basic component of our academic continuity plan is to request that all faculty members include the following statement in their syllabi or other materials provided to the students at the beginning of each semester:

Course Continuity Plan

Should the normal instructional activity on the campus be shortened or interrupted by a campus-wide closing, students will receive information from the instructor or other representative of the college about when and if the course might be continued or completed via Internet, telephone, or United States mail.

Last year I asked department chairs to meet with members of their department to identify the courses that can likely be continued in the event of a campus-wide closing. Some lab and performances courses may have to be cancelled altogether. Other courses might be continued by reconfiguring the reading, assignments, tests, etc. What exactly can be done to continue the course will depend on what type of emergency, how long the campus might be closed, and what communication tools are available.

If the courses you are teaching this year have been identified by the department as courses that might be continued during a campus-wide closing, please give some thought to how this might be done. Would it be possible for your students to continue with the course by U.S. mail? Could you use the Internet for assignments and to communicate with your students? How might you rearrange the course content and assignments, if you were unable to meet with students for a two or three week period of time? By thinking about these issues as you plan your courses, you will be more ready to make changes should something occur that forces us to close the campus. I have enclosed a worksheet that you might use in thinking about your courses.

Please know that I understand that a course that has been suddenly interrupted by an emergency that prevents students and faculty from meeting in-class can never be the same as a course that keeps the regular schedule. The question I ask you to consider is whether in an emergency you can use your professional expertise and creativity to reshape the course in such a way that the course would retain its academic integrity.

Keeping students actively enrolled and engaged in course work during a campus closing is not only important to keep students on track towards completing their degrees, it also has tremendous financial implications for the college.

As always, it is also important for you to provide a copy of your syllabi to your department chair and send a copy of each to my office every semester.

If you have questions, please contact your department chair, or me.

Thank you for your participation in this important matter.