FACULTY MEETING MINUTES
Early Faculty Meeting
August 17, 2020
3:35 PM
Virtual
Join Zoom Meeting: https://plymouthstate.zoom.us/j/97338205620

Meeting called to order 3:37 pm

I. New Faculty Welcome

II. Question and Answer Session (45 minutes): President Donald Birx and Provost Ann McClellan

- Will we be able to provide a list of faculty who have not been tested?
  - Ann is looking into it.

- Tracking attendance?
  - Record attendance just as you would in your class. Keep track of those who are physically present for contract tracing. For asynchronous, that depends on the engagement level of the student but needs to be reported. Faculty will need to establish a reasonable equivalent between asynchronous online engagement and the daily reporting structure in Banner. They might consider each day of the week as 20% of the class participation, for example. If a student is engaged 100% of the time (responsive via email and communication, completing all assignments, actively engaged, etc.), faculty might choose to check off the MTWRF boxes for 100%. If they are 80% engaged, they might check off four of the five days; 60% would be three out of five, etc. You could also measure engagement based on a hypothetical MWF or TR class and check off those days. The goal of the census is to report whether students are actively engaged in their PSU courses, whether in person, hybrid, or online, so PLEASE report.

- If a person takes a test now, how do we know that they won’t contract by the 24th?
  - We don’t but we will do scheduled testing to hopefully catch any cases (3 sets of testing and randomized).

- Will there be additional dates for testing for faculty?
  - Yes, the first week of classes, and then tentatively 9/8 and 9/9. Testing all day this week. 3-5pm Wednesday-Saturday.

- Why did the head of student affairs censor a letter from the student?
  - We did not. The student senate speaker posted a letter to a PSU-run Facebook page which PSU uses for marketing purposes. The student in questions was informed the post would be removed, but they could post it on their own page.

- Are layoffs inevitable at the end of the semester?
There are no plans for layoffs at this time.

- **Can we change the modality of our classes without the approval to HR?**
  - Please see the email from Academic Affairs on 7/17. Faculty can talk to the Program Coordinators about changing their modalities which then should be submitted to PSU Course Scheduling for changes in Banner. Academic Affairs also emailed saying all course modality changes needed to be submitted to the Registrar no later than August 2. At this date, we discourage any changes in modalities as they are unfair to our students.

- **Were the errors in the trigger document updated?**
  - Yes

- **Do we have to be tested in Plymouth?**
  - No. You may send your results on your own as long as it’s within the time period.

- **How many students have arrived on campus without testing?**
  - Some have arrived but have not been allowed into residence halls. As of 3pm today, 70% of our incoming students have been or are in the process of being tested.

- **Relative to the trigger chart. When do we return to real normal operations?**
  - There is no section for this on this chart. The green level will go up and down as we adapt to positive cases. We will operate under this until we have a wide spread vaccine.

- **Will PSU work with students to register to vote to insure they have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote?**
  - Tentative solution to setup tables in parking spaces next to the HUB and we have asked them to be tested.

- **How will we be informed of the current Covid status on campus?**
  - There will be a dashboard on the website.

- **With the Quest account, are there any privacy issues? Can PSU now access faculty’s personal health results?**
  - No, it would be a one-way import. We send the COVID tests to the Quest app; we don’t have access to other data.

- **Will students who have not been tested prior to class be flagged to us?**
  - Yes, but we’re not sure how yet.

- **Is contract tracing being done on campus?**
  - Yes, jointly with DHHS.

- **How do we manage those who do not wear masks?**
  - Staff including Cabinet will be monitoring and there will be door greeters. If you see someone not wearing a mask, please gently remind them that masks are required in all indoor shared public spaced within campus buildings.

- **If the Covid rate is 4-18% we should move to online teaching?**
  - No, not alone. It’s the result of going into the yellow zone. Much of the decision to move into the yellow zone depends on the context and location of discrete outbreaks and how well we are able to control them.

- **When will facilities be done setting up the classroom?**
  - They are done. They left some desks due to storage issues, so you may see desks with no chairs.

- **Will we get a list of who is not coming to classes for face-to-face?**
  - We will try, however, we still have some gaps in our data (ex: off-campus)
III. Reports:
   a. Curriculum Committee (Appendix III)
   b. Board of Trustees Report (BOT) – Separate Attachment

IV. Old Business
   None

V. New Business

A. Resolutions of Standing Committees
   None

B. MOTION A: To pause the requirement that students provide official documentation for illness to obtain an excused absence from class during the Fall 2020 semester. Submitted by Chris Benedetti, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee (The proposed language is attached as Appendix I.)
   • Seconded. Motion passes with Yeas.

C. MOTION B: To temporarily reduce the six-week grading deadline by one week to coincide with the compressed Fall 2020 semester. The deadline would be five weeks. Submitted by Chris Benedetti, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee (The proposed language is attached as Appendix II.)
   • Passes with Yeas.

VI. Speaker Announcements
   a. Committee Vacancies – Appendix IV
   b. Next Faculty Meeting: Wednesday, September 2nd

VII. Adjournment 4:55 p.m.

Announcements: Note - For this meeting only, any announcements will be sent as a separate attachment.

APPENDIX I
Motion A

Academic Affairs Committee

Submitted by Chris Benedetti, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee

Motion: To pause the requirement that students provide official documentation for illness to obtain an excused absence from class during the Fall 2020 semester.

Rationale: Due to the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is extremely difficult for students (and the general public) to obtain documentation of an illness, either for themselves or a family member. Also, campus-related medical services have historically declined to provide documentation for illnesses. Medical offices routinely encourage patients who contact them about potential COVID-19 (and other) symptoms to remain at home until they are well. This pause in the policy requiring official documentation of an illness supports our students in making the best decisions regarding their health without putting the health of others at risk. The pause in providing documentation for illnesses does not exempt students from course requirements as also outlined in the excused absence policy.

(From the 2019-2020 PSU Academic Catalog https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/university-policies-procedures/)

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences
Student absences are defined as excused or unexcused. Unexcused absences are those that occur without adequate reason. Unexcused absences may be used in the computation of grades. Excused absences are defined as absences stemming from
1. participation in University-sponsored activities and
2. compelling and extenuating circumstances beyond a student’s control.

Documented excused absences may not be used in the computation of grades. Instructors must allow students to make up missed examinations, quizzes, writing assignments, and other coursework for documented excused absences. Any make-up work must be offered to students in as timely a manner as possible during the regular semester. Faculty should not delay make-up work to final exam week if it is feasible to schedule it earlier and if delaying it to final exam week is detrimental to a student’s academic progress. Make-up work may be scheduled during final exam week if no earlier arrangement is possible in light of extenuating circumstances for a faculty member or a student.

Examples of excused absences include, but are not limited to, the following:
- documented student’s participation in University-sponsored events,
- student’s documented illness, (paused Fall Semester 2020)
- student’s documented injury,
- documented death in a student’s immediate family,
- documented illness or injury in a student’s immediate family,
- documented student’s required military duty, or
- documented student’s required jury duty.
Instructors are not obligated to excuse an absence if a student fails to provide requested documentation. Instructors also reserve the right to determine when the number of excused absences exceeds a reasonable limit to the extent that it significantly interferes with a student’s satisfactory mastery of course content/skills. Excused absences do not exempt a student from course requirements, and therefore in circumstances that entail excessive excused absences the instructor may reasonably recommend that a student consider withdrawal from a course.
APPENDIX II

Motion B

 Academic Affairs Committee

Submitted by Chris Benedetti, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee

Motion: To temporarily reduce the six-week grading deadline by one week to coincide with the compressed Fall 2020 semester. The deadline would be five weeks for Fall Semester 2020 only.

Rationale: Reducing the six-week grading deadline by one week during the Fall Semester 2020 allows students to receive feedback at an equivalent point in the semester as would be experienced in a typical semester. Maintaining an equivalent point for this feedback allows students to make timely decisions about course performance and continuation and provides advisers with information to support students’ academic success.
Appendix III
Curriculum Committee Report

Submitted by Hilary Swank, 2020-2021, Curriculum Committee Chair

On Tuesday, August 11th the Committee held an early meeting in order to review recommendations from the Fall Re-Opening Task Force Academics Working Group and prepare for the busy fall ahead. The Academics Working Group approached the committee with some suggestions for the Syllabus Checklist (https://curriculumcommittee.press.plymouth.edu/chapter/syllabus-checklist/).

After discussion, Committee members were in agreement that the syllabus checklist was not the appropriate vehicle for the information. Instead, the Committee developed a document designed to support faculty as they plan and begin their courses in these unprecedented times. The document recommends one addition to the usual syllabus requirements (course modality) and then recommends faculty utilize the guidance document (attached to Early Faculty Meeting materials distributed by the Faculty Speaker). The primary focus is on helping students succeed by making sure they know about available resources and understand how faculty will be managing their classes. **There are no new requirements for faculty.**

The Committee would also like to remind faculty of a few important items:

- Please notify the Curriculum Committee Chair (via the dedicated email address psu-curriculum-chair@plymouth.edu) if your programs or academic units are planning significant curriculum changes such as program overhaul, new programs, change to four credits, etc. The Committee can help to support your work and make sure you are working toward the right deadlines.
- Please refer to the General Education/Curriculum Committee joint calendar for the semester to be sure you know when proposals are due. That calendar will be distributed or posted by the General Education Committee.
- Finally, please recall that all proposals must be submitted through the CourseLeaf/CIM System. The old paper forms can be useful to help you remember and plan for everything you need to do to get a proposal passed but you must submit through the online system which you can access via the myPlymouth Services tab and Faculty Self-Service.

**Fall 2020 Guidance for Course Syllabi & Information Design**

**Offered by the PSU Curriculum Committee and the Fall 2020 Re-Opening Task Force (Academics Working Group)**

In addition to the standard syllabus items, Curriculum Committee and the Academics Working Group are requesting faculty consider publishing or sharing the below information via course management systems, other course pages or sites, or documents shared with students. Faculty are asked to review the standard Syllabus Checklist to make sure they have the basic elements that should be included in any semester’s syllabi and to consider adding information about course modality.
Much of this document contains guidance meant to support faculty in creating clear and helpful course materials during this pandemic, for courses in new or altered formats, in new and possibly shifting modalities. These materials should be clear and communicate to students, who are likely feeling stressed and uncertain, the information and resources they need to be well, to advocate for their own learning, and to succeed in your class. Sharing this information and communicating clearly may be especially vital this fall, with respect to compassionate accessibility/equity, flexibility, academic and basic support.

**Suggested Addition to the Syllabus (not on the current checklist):**

- **Course modality** (face-to-face, online synchronous, online asynchronous, hybrid)
  - Please don’t assume that your students know what the latter three modalities mean – and please be sure to let them know your general/particular implementation of whatever modality you choose.

**From Office of Academic Affairs:** Include such information as “if they all can’t be present physically at the same time, how will you be dividing them into groups to attend on different days? How will they know what days to attend and what days to zoom in? Will they be able to attend your class completely online, or is some attendance in person required?”

**Resources and Information to Share with Students**

- **Accommodations, Communication and Flexibility in Uncertain Times:** We encourage faculty to communicate to students your flexibility around making your course accessible and accommodating to all students. **We are advocating for compassion and responsiveness, consistently implemented, in order to help all students succeed.** Access struggles will likely be the norm this semester.

- **Academic Support Services** – Please note that these services will have been altered to address Fall 2020/pandemic conditions. The Help and Resources Box on each Moodle page provides links to many valuable campus resources. We encourage faculty to show students how to access that resource, which may be collapsed along the left side or expanded to show a list, which includes the following among others:
  - Writing Center
  - Math Activities Center
  - PASS Office
  - Technology Help Desk

- **Basic Needs Resources** – This category of supports concerns “basic” needs – adequate food, adequate housing, and mental/physical health – which, if not met, can keep students from participating, learning and succeeding in your class, no matter what academic supports are provided. Please note that these services will have been altered to address Fall 2020/pandemic conditions:
  - Student Health Services ([https://campus.plymouth.edu/health/](https://campus.plymouth.edu/health/))
  - Counseling Center (already linked on Moodle sidebar)
  - Student Support Foundation provides short-term emergency financial assistance and food resources for PSU students. Please visit SSF website, [https://campus.plymouth.edu/student-support-foundation/](https://campus.plymouth.edu/student-support-foundation/) to learn more, or to make a private appointment contact the SSF advisor at psu-ssf@plymouth.edu
• Student Food Pantry (Accessed through Student Support Foundation)
• Frost House Student Services [https://campus.plymouth.edu/frost-house/]

The PSU CoLab has two resources pages [HERE] and [HERE] that you can have a look at for information and supportive language around basic needs as well.

• **Safety Protocols** which include rules for many practices including wearing of face masks and social distancing for different classroom types and environments. Share this information with your students, including the links as guidance may change over the course of the semester.
  - Find the protocols for the type of class you are teaching on your Faculty SharePoint at Fall 2020 Reopening Academic Subcommittee SharePoint site: [https://plymouthstate.sharepoint.com/sites/Fall2020ReopeningAcademicSubcommittee](https://plymouthstate.sharepoint.com/sites/Fall2020ReopeningAcademicSubcommittee)

**Recommended Communication Practices**

**Announcements**

- Explain how often and by what means you will send students reminders of deadlines, expectations, assignments, course plans, other items you would normally say at the start of class.

  “I plan to send a (weekly, daily, bi-weekly, etc.) email reminder every _____ about the work to be done for the class. These reminders will also be posted on ______.”

**Availability**

- Explain clearly when/where/how you will hold office hours.
- Explain when, where, and under what other conditions you will be available (and unavailable) to students

  “I plan to be available to respond to email on the following days each week: _____. I also plan to be available at the following times each day: _____. Please be patient in awaiting a response if you send an email outside of these days and times.”

*Faculty should strive to be available on multiple days and at various times, to accommodate their students’ availability most broadly*

**Use of Synchronous Tools** (Chat room, virtual classroom, Skype, Google Hangouts, Phone, etc.)

- Explain how students can schedule a synchronous meeting with you
  - Visit the Help Desk for information and assistance for using available tools for remote engagement: [https://td.unh.edu/TDClient/63/plymouth/Home/](https://td.unh.edu/TDClient/63/plymouth/Home/).

  “I will use the following tool(s) for my office hours: ___________. I will be available for you to drop in at these times: ___________. If these times don’t work for your schedule, please schedule an appointment with me by (emailing, visiting my calendar, using this app, etc.)”
Communication Preferences & Expectations

- Explain your preferences for communicating with students; consider consulting students about their preferences as well to have the best chance at successful communication in your course

  “I prefer all electronic communication in the form of _____.”

*Preferences should not invalidate other forms of communication.

- Explain how quickly students can expect a response from you

  “I will make every effort to respond to emails within _____ hours of receipt when I am available. Please see my availability schedule for more information.”

Assignment Feedback and Grades

- Explain how soon learners can expect to receive feedback/response after submitting assignments (e.g., three days, one week, two weeks, or it may vary depending on the type of assignment)

  “I will make every effort to return assignment feedback within _____ days of submission.”

Delays in Communication/Feedback

- Explain what you will do in the event that you are not able to meet a timeline (for any reason) that you specified

  “In the event I am unable to respond to email or return feedback as intended, I will post an announcement in _______ to notify you of the delay as soon as possible.”

Appendix IV

Committee Vacancies as of August 17, 2020