

August 23, 2021

Dear Academic Affairs Colleagues,

With the beginning of fall semester, I am writing with the annual reminder to have a plan for maintaining [continuity of instruction \(COI\)](#) in your courses and services in the event of a significant disruption. The experiences of COVID-19 have made us all experts at maintaining instructional continuity but the circumstances under which you may need to use these plans is broader than the pandemic. Disruptions may include weather-related closings, family emergency, illness, campus evacuation, campus closure, or facility issues such as loss of power. This message provides guidance and best practices for preparing a plan for continuity of instruction.

1. [Instructional continuity](#) is a critical issue for all faculty and staff because we must be able to continue to support our students' academic progress, even during a significant emergency or an extended campus closure. Advance planning is key to maintaining continuity in the face of disruptions.
2. Please be as flexible as possible in maintaining instructional continuity for students who may need to be absent from class or request to participate remotely for a period of time due to events such as university sanctioned events, illness, or quarantine/isolation (Q/I). Students should notify you that they will need to be absent and when they anticipate being able to rejoin the class. Per [Policy Do4.0 – Attendance](#), students are still responsible for fulfilling normal course requirements during their absence. Students are not required to provide details about or documentation related to health-related absences; however, you may request confirmation of a student's Q/I status. Students receive messages through the myLife portal advising them of their need to isolate or quarantine or when they are released from quarantine or isolation and you may ask to see these messages.
3. It is equally important that you make plans for instructional continuity in the event you need to be absent for a period of time. Your school, department, or program chair can assist with these arrangements. Be sure your chair has up to date contact information for you.
4. Students look to their instructors for guidance and definitive action during an emergency. I encourage faculty to take a few minutes at the start of each term to familiarize themselves and their students with basic evacuation and emergency

procedures to protect themselves and their students in the event of an emergency. For more information about classroom emergency preparedness, please visit [emergency preparedness](#).

5. In addition to posting your syllabus on [myCourses](#), I recommend that you add a statement on the site informing students that under emergency circumstances, you may have to alter course requirements, assignment deadlines, attendance expectations, and grading procedures and that the university may have to alter the academic calendar.
6. In the event of either personal or institutional disruption, you need to have identified an alternative means to deliver course content, communicate with students, and manage student assignments. The Innovative Learning Institute (ILI) has staff and resources for developing a continuity of instruction plan. Please contact ILI's [Teaching and Learning Services Support](#) online or by phone (585) 475-2551 for assistance with myCourses or other tools. Use this [online form](#) to schedule an individual consultation with an ILI instructional designer or technologist, [College CATS](#) may also assist in developing a continuity of instruction plan.
7. In addition to a continuity of instruction plan, be sure you have a plan for communicating with other individuals who support student learning such as your department chair, graduate assistants, laboratory technicians, advisors, your advisees, etc.

Instructional continuity is a critical responsibility for all of us. Thank you for taking the time now to be prepared in the event of a disruption.

Sincerely,

Ellen Granberg, Ph.D.
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs