

CTE Campus-Wide Message
May 15, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

The CTE, along with Drake Online & Continuing Education, Academic and Emerging Technologies, and the Baum Coalition, has been involved in coordinating and planning summer faculty development, training, and support programs.

“Planning,” in this case, means trying to achieve—and provide—**clarity** amid uncertainty. It does *not* mean “providing certainty.” I say this by way of emphasizing that, like every other thing in the world right now, plans will necessarily evolve to adapt to changing circumstances: Those circumstances are to some degree institutional (budgeting, technology availability, enrollment, scheduling, classroom capacity), but are to a large degree dependent on unknowable supra-institutional factors: namely, the personal, economic, and public health effects of the current pandemic.

So, all of us involved in supporting your planning for teaching and learning next fall and beyond ask your understanding and patience as we work toward increasing—but never complete—certainty about what lies ahead.

In service of **clarity** (again, not certainty), I can provide the following information about the planning CTE and its partners are engaged in, along with a preliminary timeline.

Summer Faculty Development and Support

- The CTE and its partners will be prepared, over the summer and through fall, to advise programs and faculty about effective practices for offering distance and blended learning opportunities to students. These practices—both pedagogical and technological—will emphasize effectiveness, efficiency, and agility.
- These practices will also conform to institution-wide requirements, including the use of Blackboard as the approved learning management interface; the use of Drake licensed and supported tools; and federally mandated protections of student data privacy.
- We will also be prepared to provide support and training for faculty in the pedagogies and technical tools necessary to implement the recommended practices. Training and development opportunities will include a blend of self-service resources, virtual webinars and seminars, and real-time consultations.
 - Please do not expect that “just-in-time,” or “on demand” support will be available at the exact moment you need it.
 - Please also be aware that we will be unable to fully support or resource practices that do not conform to the recommendations we provide.

You will receive more information in a more detailed email next week, after final grades are due. Please stay tuned.

Blended? Online? Synchronous? Online? ~~Hybrid?~~

Because there has been some confusion around the issue of distance, synchronous, hybrid, blended, and in-person teaching in the fall, I'll take a moment now to try to clarify, based on guidance from the Curriculum Pandemic-Proofing group:

- Our message to students and internal messages have emphasized our commitment to synchronous engagement between students and their classmates and professors. That means that all students need to have regular opportunities to take part in collaborative learning in real time.
- We must also prepare to engage with students who, because of health or family issues, will be unable to attend class in person and so will enroll in an entirely distance mode. Even our distance learners must have regular opportunities for synchronous engagement.
- Further, we must also plan for the likelihood that physical distancing and other health-and-safety protocols will prevent us from meeting in person with all our students all of the time. To the extent our ability to be on campus and in classes hasn't been affected by Covid-19 developments, we should plan to offer regular in-person engagement for all of our students *some* of the time.
- We have to plan for the possibility that even courses initially designed to include in-person and distance components (i.e. *blended* courses) will switch to a fully distance modality and/or that some of our students who begin the course in person may need to move to a distance modality because of health and wellness concerns that arise later.
- Because of our emphasis on engaged, responsive, and synchronous learning opportunities, only courses in the programs already designated as fully online programs will be truly "online" courses. The rest of our courses will either be *blended* or *distance* learning.

To clarify, however, these parameters do *not* mean we should attempt to teach in-person students *and* our synchronous distance learners *simultaneously* (i.e., ~~*hybrid*~~ teaching); that's why the word ~~*hybrid*~~ is struck through in the header to this section. Only a few labs, and no classrooms, will have the technological and personnel capability to support that hybrid mode, and only faculty teaching those labs will be expected to teach in a hybrid mode.

The guidance the CTE and its partners will provide in the coming weeks and months will support real-time engagement with students in a blended format that includes some in-person engagement and some virtual engagement, *but not at the same time*. We will advise against attempting a hybrid mode, except in the labs mentioned above.

Preliminary Timeline

The following timeline is the basis for current planning under current circumstances based on current expectations about what might happen. I'm sending it out to give you a sense of the way summer faculty development and support is likely to unfold. Please, however, do not be surprised when the CTE and its partners issue the inevitable modifications and revisions to this timeline.

One thing to pay particular attention to: It won't be until sometime in August that we have a clear sense of which of our enrolled students will be taking our classes as distance learners and which of them plan to be present on campus in the fall. So, as you plan your courses, please begin with high-level, weekly or modular planning; it is too early to begin planning day-to-day assignments and course activities. As you've heard before: *modularity* and *agility* are the watchwords for the work ahead.

- **Next week:**
 - From the CTE—detailed guidance on planning effective pandemic-resistant courses. (Likely Thursday)
- **Through the end of May:**
 - CTE and its partners will continue to work with divisional faculty and program chairs and directors to assess division-level and program-level needs.
 - CTE and its partners will continue publicize the availability of self-service and self-directed course-design and pedagogy resources.
- **May through July:** Baum + CTE blog series will invite faculty to offer first-person accounts of their transition to remote learning and pandemic-resistant design.
- **June:**
 - Comprehensive “handbook” of guidance on logistics, pedagogy, and technical aspects to consider in fall course design.
 - Recruitment of department-level liaisons as embedded teaching and learning support.
 - Registrar’s office will complete the classroom Covid capacity audit and reassignment of classroom spaces. Faculty will be provided preliminary notification when that audit is complete. (Please be aware that *capacity* and *modality* will be the overriding factors in assigning of classroom spaces).
- **July:**
 - The launch of funded, structured faculty development opportunities and resources. Watch this space.
 - Drop-in and appointment-based office hours for CTE and its partners. (Vert limited “just-in-time” or “on-demand” support.)
 - Baum coalition prepares and publicizes sessions for Learning Symposium that respond to faculty needs as articulated in May meetings.
- **Early August:**
 - Registrar will receive students’ notifications of their plans for attending in person or remotely.
- **Mid-August:**

- Final deadline for students to decide to attend in person if they've already said they're attending remotely. (At this point, faculty will be able to estimate how many in-person students they need to accommodate).
- Any changes to classroom assignments because of unforeseen enrollment anomalies to be finalized.
- **August 17th**: Learning Symposium
- **August 24th**: Beginning of the first week of classes. All classes university-wide will be taught remotely in week one to allow for orientation of all students to distance and hygiene protocols.
- **August 31st**: Blended courses begin alternating in-person and synchronous distance learning.

Please also see today's email—"Greetings on this Fine Spring Day"—from Erin Lain, Art Sanders, and Melissa Sturm-Smith regarding community engagement, equity, and inclusion training and development opportunities this summer and fall.

Champing at the Bit?

It may be that some of us (not me) are ready to dive into active, concentrated fall course development *right now*. If that's you—terrific! You can start by browsing the resources linked on the [CTE](#) and [Drake Online](#) webpages, skim through what you find, and dive more deeply into what proves useful.

As a piece of starting-point advice: Begin with your course outcomes in mind and think about the pedagogies you want to employ, with special attention to “three pillars” of interaction you want to foster: Instructor-to-Student; Student-to-Student; and Student-to-Material. In other words, maybe don't start by trying to learn the technical skills; let goals and pedagogy lead the way.

This Final Note

The CTE and its partners continue to seek financial support for faculty taking on this development and course-design work over the summer. We will continue to do so, and university leadership continues to agree on the importance of financial support. But we all must answer to institutional financial realities, which remain uncertain and are likely to for some time to come. I cannot begin to predict when we may have actionable certainty about the availability of summer development funding.

Thanks again, and in advance, for your patience, expertise, dedication, and service to our students and to one another. As always, please let me know if you have questions.

In solidarity,

Craig