

Friday Features: Juneteenth, 2020

Hello All,

This week has been another roller-coaster. On Tuesday, June 16, we lost a recent graduate and rising graduate student; one of our star adult students, **May 2020 Political Science graduate Shannon Barber passed away unexpectedly**. She was set to begin work on our Master of Liberal Arts program in the Fall. Her presence is and will continue to be deeply missed.

We continue to be tested socially and emotionally as we follow the most recent data on our continuing cases and loss of life resulting from the virus. We continue to watch protests around the nation and more loss of life, as yet another story of needless death unfolded before our eyes in Atlanta, GA. In a Wendy's drive-through, Rashard Brooks was left with a mortal gunshot wound; loss of life continues as the protests continue as well.

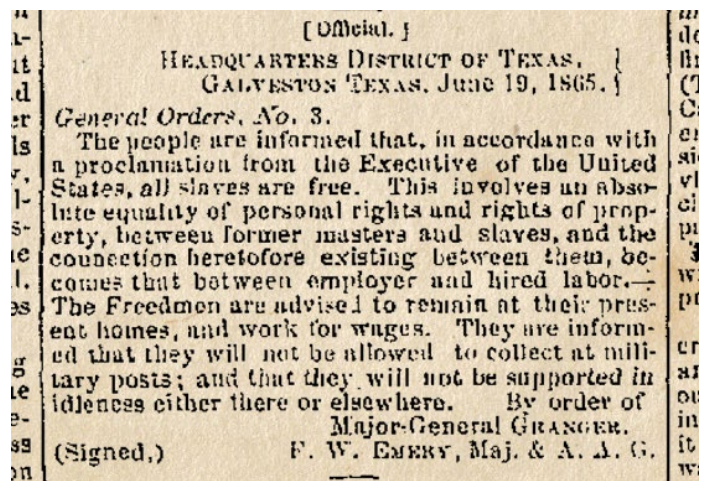
Given these challenges, I took deep comfort from the virtual conversation we had on June 17 with the inaugural **Diversity Dialogue: A Conversation on Racism**. The Diversity Council did a terrific job organizing the event and seeking input from the campus community to help us frame the conversation. We had many great take-aways as we consider how to move forward with specific action items as a campus to shed light on systemic racism and ways to promote anti-racist work. Thank you to the more than 360 students, staff, faculty, administrators, and board members who participated.

Members of Academic Leadership are working on an **Anti-Racist and Social Justice** Reading List via SharePoint. Let any academic leader know if you have a title to recommend. In future, perhaps we can schedule discussion groups around particular titles.

We have had **comforting news from the Supreme Court** this week as well, with findings that provide ongoing protections to undocumented immigrants in the DACA program as well as to LGBTQ communities, who were granted protections against discrimination in the workplace, health care system, and more generally in their rights under Title VII.

Today is Juneteenth! June 19 is a day of historic importance in our nation. On June 19, 1865, two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation freed all people held as slaves, the news finally reached Texas and made people there aware of their freedom as [Federal soldiers reached Galveston, Texas to spread the word](#). Over time, this day became known in Texas, and eventually across the nation, as a day for African Americans to celebrate the liberation of those held as slaves and freedom, finally, for all. So please join me in celebrating this day as an important historical marker, even as our conversations continue to unfold on how the work to achieve racial equality still goes on.

Summer Session D and Research Programs:



On July 6, we will commence a stream-lined set of Summer Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE) and our Eagle STEM Scholar summer bridge program, as well as a small number of related courses. One or two additional in-person courses will be staffed as well, giving us the opportunity to test out our return plans on a small scale. We are partnering with Student Affairs on communication planning for these students and faculty members, in order to ensure they are all informed about our safety expectations for all on-campus research, instructional, and office-based activities.

Updates on Fall 2020 Return Planning:

Final Calendar updates will be shared next week, as we make final adjustments in Senior Leadership resulting from the Board of Trustees resolutions today.

Fall Schedule Changes:

TJ Hyatt and Tim Drueke continue to work to work on adjustments to the Fall 2020 schedule. About 20% of courses were moved online. This may disproportionately impact some students. These courses are a new mix of fully online and asynchronous and online synchronous offerings. Thank you for the additional work it will require to support students who reach out with questions on how to adapt to the changes as they impact their particular schedules.

For in-person and hybrid classes, labs, and studios, Deans are putting together occupancy recommendations for college-specific spaces, and TJ and Tim continue to work with Steve Moseley in Environmental Health and Safety (who was new to campus in March! What a welcome for Steve!) and Kelly Huber on adjusting room maxes for safety purposes. That work continues as we push to make all necessary changes to ensure safe scheduling.

Common Time:

One of the ways we are adapting the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 schedules to allow for greater flexibility in moving courses and to reduce congestion in dining halls and other gathering spaces is to remove Common Time from the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 schedules. This was not an easy decision to make, but the Academic Leadership team consulted with Student Affairs leadership in weighing the pros and cons. Tim Drueke and I also used data we gathered from students conversations in Fall 2019 as we explored student perceptions of the importance of Common Time. While recognizing that students hold that time dear, we decided that it was in the best interests of our campus return plan to make this decision for next academic year. We know it will also impact departments and events planning, so we will gather data on the impacts as we decide how to move forward with Common Time after Spring 2021.

Fall office-space adjustments:

Chris Johnson asked that I clarify for all units the difference between storing and surplussing furniture. If your unit needs to remove furniture as a COVID-19 measure for distancing and reducing exposure, this furniture should not be processed as surplus because once deemed surplus, we do not keep any of those items. The state surplus office either sells it or disposes of it in the dumpster. If folks are wanting to temporarily remove furniture from use, they can turn chairs around or place signs on items asking people not to sit or use those items. Another option is to store furniture items removed for physical distancing somewhere in their individual buildings so that it can be returned once we return to normal.

Training opportunities:

I heard good things from participants about the usefulness of the free Fluid Instruction webinar that we offered through the Center for Professional Excellence. I wanted to draw your attention to this free webinar being offered by Arizona State University: [Remote: the connected faculty summit](#), July 13-14, 2020. The summit will focus on “the best in higher education online and blended learning.” I encourage all faculty to take a look at their offerings and see what might be of most benefit to you as you consider areas where you would like to gain or strengthen existing skillsets.

For staff and faculty who have job functions focused on presenting student success (arguably, that is all of us!), please consider registering for this [A Playbook for Preserving Student Success During and After COVID-19](#), on Thursday, June 25, 2020, and [Guiding Students and Improving Advisor Visibiity with Academic Planning](#), which is being offered June 30, 2020. Both webinars are being offered by EAB, in partnership respectively with the American Association for State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), a historically black university in North Carolina. EAB will certainly plug products in these webinars, but both will also provide nuts and bolts guidance helpful for all participants, whether we purchase an additional product or not.

Finally, in partnership with the Diversity Council, we have started working on a series of workshops that will focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) content for faculty and staff across campus. We are in the development stage and reaching out to campus constituents with the knowledge and skills to develop ten workshops, which we will launch next academic year through the Center for Professional Excellence. Topics will include “How to be an Ally” and will interface closely with our growing conversations about strengthening DEI work on campus in meaningful ways.

Provost Virtual Office Hours:

In order to answer additional questions as they arise, and hear from you about areas where you think we may improve upon our Fall 2020 response planning, I have scheduled daily virtual office hours next week, June 22 through June 26, from 3-4 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Friday. I will also have weekly virtual office hours in ensuing weeks. I will host these via Teams. They are informal, so feel free to drop in or leave at any point during the hour. I will answer questions as they arise, and if I don't have answers, I will let you know when they will become available. We will use the discussions to craft future communications to ensure we are being as transparent as we can be, as plans continue to develop and decisions are made in Academic Leadership Council, our ongoing Critical Incident Management Team meetings, and in Senior Leadership.

Here is the link for next week's Teams Virtual Office Hours: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

And here is the weekly link: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Virtual Town Halls:

Senior Leadership is also starting to plan Virtual Town Halls that will be held prior to our planned Phase II and Phase III returns to campus, to answer questions, hear concerns, and share developing announcements. We will also likely schedule informational town halls in August, as we get closer to our Fall return. More information on those in the near future.

And as always, happy Friday and many thanks for your ongoing efforts at supporting our students and contributing to the vital public good that our beloved Winthrop provides.

Winthrop Ever Stand!

Adrienne