

## **Winthrop University COVID-19 Academic Response Update—March 12, 2020**

Winthrop's Critical Incident Management Team continues to monitor DHEC and CDC information on the development of COVID-19. Communications will continue to come from CIMT via our University Communications team and be updated on the campus website. Notifications from Academic Affairs will be added to the site as well. Please continue to check the website and your email for ongoing notifications.

**As President Hynd noted earlier today, Winthrop University will move all instruction and academic advising activities to remote formats for the two weeks following Spring Break.** We are not expecting faculty to transform face-to-face classes into fully online classes, but to use digital tools (Blackboard, email, social media, etc.) to maintain continuity of instruction for this two-week time period. We will follow this schedule:

- 1) March 16 – 20 (Spring Break): no instruction; faculty preparation for delivery of remote instruction
- 2) March 23 – 27: advising begins March 25; week one of remote instruction
- 3) March 30 – April 3: advising continues; remote instruction continues
- 4) At this time, classes will resume on Monday, April 6, 2020.

In order to ensure that we continue to meet the learning needs of our students and provide high quality instruction, all faculty shall take the following steps:

- 1) Establish a digital mode of communication.**
  - Ensure students all have access to and are aware of this communication method (LMS, email, app, listserv, phone).
  - Use your Winthrop email when communicating with students whenever possible.
- 2) Create a plan for communicating how your students will continue to learn using digital resources or assignments based upon your current instructional materials for March 23 through April 3.**
  - WOOL has created a [Continuity of Instruction \(COI\)](#) page with instructional resources to support faculty. Faculty can schedule an appointment to meet with WOOL staff from the site.
  - Upload documents to Blackboard, whenever possible, and limit attachments and links sent through email, since bad actors will be taking advantage of this opportunity and may target students more with phishing schemes as email traffic increases. Remember your security training and reach out to IT with any concerns/questions.
- 3) Make your syllabus available within Blackboard so that students can locate all materials in one location. If the course has a separate site, provide a link to it from Blackboard.**
- 4) Ensure that you have regular access to grading records for all classes. For ease of access, uploading these to the gradebook feature in**

**Blackboard is strongly advised. Please also consider delegating access to the backup faculty or your department chair.**

- 5) Faculty members should consider a back-up plan for instructional coverage should they become sick and unable to continue teaching. Keep department chairs informed of this back-up plan.**
- 6) At this time, Academic Affairs staff will continue to work normal hours on campus and should follow usual guidelines for any leave requests.**

Additional guidance:

- 1) Technology concerns:
  - A limited number of laptops will be made available to degree-seeking students who do not have devices available to them, based upon availability, priority need, and for this period of time only. Faculty should notify their Chairs of students in this situation, and Chairs should notify Deans. The Provost will tally need and assign from available laptops. Faculty should continue to use their existing university-assigned computers.
  - Library access will be available for local and commuter students without access to computing or WIFI at their homes.
  - Asynchronous assignments are encouraged to avoid overloading campus and area bandwidth.
- 2) Advising will need to happen virtually.
  - Please consider using a GoogleDoc or similar product to schedule advising sessions electronically.
  - Please check DegreeWorks for student progress.
  - Schedule meetings using phones, Collaborate, Skype, etc.
- 3) For faculty who have not worked with Blackboard before and want to utilize it more as part of their plan, training will be provided. See [WOOL's COI site](#).
- 4) Until further notice, Deans and unit heads will provide guidance to departments on access to studios and labs.
- 5) Until further notice, Deans and unit heads will make decisions on essential experiential activities, such as internships in school districts, which may follow school rules.
- 6) All university-sponsored events from March 15 through April 3 are cancelled, and alternative options for satisfying requirements in these areas will be considered.
- 7) Faculty may choose to work from their offices or work from home to minimize their time on campus, as long as plans for meeting workload expectations are approved by their supervisors.

- 8) These circumstances dictate that faculty be flexible in how they measure student attendance, both while using remote instruction methods and as a result of potential student exposure and subsequent self-quarantine requirements.
- 9) Decisions about study abroad student experiences, faculty-led study abroad offerings, and international student travel and enrollments are being made through the International Center and sent directly to involved students, faculty, and staff.
- 10) For any questions, please reach out first to your department Chair.
- 11) Finally, thank you for your resilience and your ongoing support of our students as we move through this exercise, which will benefit all of us in the end as we develop the infrastructure needed to respond to this and future potential disruptions.