Colleagues,

I’m writing with an update on our campus situation and plans to return to face-to-face instructional options. First, I want to reiterate my appreciation to all of you for your efforts to move classes fully online last week as we adjusted yet again to COVID-19 impacts on our campus. Please know that I do not take these added burdens on you for granted.

The good news is that after a dramatic spike in positive cases last week we have seen the numbers settle back down this week. I encourage you to stay up to date on our campus numbers by regularly checking our COVID-19 dashboard [https://www.uwrf.edu/Falcons-Forward/COVID-19-Dashboard.cfm](https://www.uwrf.edu/Falcons-Forward/COVID-19-Dashboard.cfm). The slowing of new cases has allowed us to begin planning for a return to face-to-face classes during the week of Oct. 5. However, in order for that to happen, it is necessary to implement a stringent COVID-19 testing plan for all students coming to campus as well as to provide sufficient time for this to happen. More details on the mandatory testing will be communicated to all of campus tomorrow. I wanted faculty and instructors, however, to start thinking in advance about how they might support our efforts, such as:

1. If you weren’t already teaching fully online or providing an online option, please inform your department chair if you have decided to move any of your classes permanently to online or to provide a full online option following the two-week break from face-to-face classes. It is important that we know how many classes are still planning to have some component of face-to-face when we return on Oct. 5 (hybrid or fully face-to-face). Please note that full authority remains for instructors to decide how to manage their classes. I just continue to ask that you regularly inform your students and your department chair of your plans.

2. In order for face-to-face classes to begin again, it is imperative that all students be tested prior to resuming in-person activities. Although we will be messaging this to students in numerous ways, it would be helpful for you as their instructors to reinforce this in your communications to them as well.

3. It may be helpful for some instructors to delay their return to face-to-face for up to a week. This will allow a slower return of our student population to the classroom and provide more time for testing and other student-related adjustments. Although instructors will have the freedom to return to face-to-face starting on Oct. 5 if they had been planning to, it is assumed that those classes that require hands-on learning will have the most urgent need to return right away. Please note that students who may have left campus during the shelter-in-place will need to be tested before they can return to campus. Depending on scheduling, some students may not be able to be tested prior to Oct. 12. If you are resuming face-to-face activities and a student cannot attend because they have not been able to get their test, please continue to show flexibility towards them in accommodating their needs.

4. Given the uncertainties of how COVID-19 will impact our campus the remainder of fall semester and into spring, it may be prudent, if you have not already done so, to consider developing online alternatives for your courses. Although I recognize this is time-consuming work, it will result in giving you more flexibility in managing your courses in the future while likely reducing your workload for the long term. As always, I would encourage you to reach out to colleagues in
I continue to ask you to be as accommodating as possible to students during this difficult time. Students may be choosing to no longer reside on campus, while others are being directly impacted by COVID-19 by testing positive and, thus, being isolated, with others being quarantined through secondary exposure. This combined with the uncertainties of the remainder of the semester will likely require an unprecedented level of accommodations for these wide-ranging needs.

Thank you again for all of your efforts to keep this semester moving forward. Please continue to take good care of yourselves and each other.

Regards,

David

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