Dear Colleagues,

We’re entering the final month of the spring semester – what an experience it has been! I want to express to all of you how impressed I’ve been with hearing about the stresses of the virus crisis, and how you are dealing with them – and how you are helping our students deal with their stresses as well.

One most serious aspect of this which I haven’t emphasized before is worth noting. As an employee of the University (faculty or staff), you are considered a Responsible Employee, which holds the obligation to report any information related to students experiencing sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and/or interpersonal violence. You can find additional information regarding your reporting obligations, resources available, and how to make a report to the Office of Title IX Programs at https://titleix.colostate.edu/title-ix/faculty-staff/). Please assist us to continue to protect and support our students; it’s an important companion to our academic mission.

Returning to the academic side, as instructors, we typically use these last several weeks of a course to ensure that students engage with the material holistically and integrate what they’ve learned across the semester. Often, we encourage this type of study and assess students’ achievement through a cumulative final exam administered synchronously across all sections of a course. Our recent move to remote learning makes this approach impracticable this semester. Many students will be unable to take a final at the appointed time, due to changes in life circumstances resulting from COVID-19. It’s likely to be difficult, or impossible, to prevent the questions used on a high-stakes final from circulating among students if the exam is administered to different students at different times.

To address this challenge, focus on your larger goals for students and investigate different approaches to achieving these goals while teaching remotely. For example, rather than lecturing and administering a cumulative final, consider posing holistic questions that ask students to make connections across material covered at different points in the course and administering short quizzes twice a week. Instead of using quizzes to prompt engagement with new or recently introduced material, you might use them to test students’ abilities to make connections across topic areas. You can get some ideas on how to accomplish these goals from colleagues across campus by attending one of the upcoming webinars (click on the link to the Teams meeting with the date):

- **April 14** at 10AM-11AM
  - Jennifer Neuwald, Ph.D. will share her experience moving a 250+ student in-class exam online (without proctoring).
  - Falene Young, CPA will share group work strategies used in ACT 205 and allows students to work together at a distance to complete a group assignment.
  - Shari Lanning will share her use of timed final exams with no proctors — she tells students they are on the honor system and may not use notes/books and asks them to agree to the Honor Pledge.

- **April 20** at 11AM-12PM
  - Jennifer Neuwald, Ph.D. will share her experience incorporating concept checks during on-line lectures using Canvas quizzes (in lieu of iclickers) in a 250+ student class.
  - JTC460, Linnea Ward (Linnea.Sudduth@colostate.edu) will share her expertise on a topic TBA.

These webinars will be recorded and linked on the Keep Teaching site.
I’ll write this coming weekend with some technical suggestions for using tools in Canvas in ways that make such quizzing effective and promote academic honesty.

Start thinking now about how you’ll revise your approach to the last weeks of the term to prompt students to integrate material from across the semester so that they leave your course having achieved its learning outcomes. Once you’ve determined how you’ll revise your typical end-of-semester approach to effectively engage students who are learning remotely, be sure to let them know how you’ll do so. For example, if students are used to quizzes focusing on recently learned material and you’ll move to quizzes that ask them to draw on material from across the semester, notify them in advance and encourage them to study accordingly. You might remind them to use resources for learning online and research-based study approaches and/or to access online campus tutoring services.

Look for ways to lift the students out of the details and technicalities, and give them a sense of the wonder of the subject, the reason they are taking your course in the first place, how the various topics you have introduced both fit together inside the course, and also connect to the wider discipline and their education. I'll paraphrase Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the French pilot and writer of The Little Prince, who pointed out that if you want your people to build a ship, do not organize them into work teams, buy the materials required, assign them all the necessary tasks, and measure their progress bit by bit. If you want them to build a ship, do not do all of these specific things – but rather teach them to love and to long for sailing on the vast and endless sea.

Your course is opening up a new intellectual ocean for your students. Don’t forget to teach your students to yearn for sailing on that vast and endless sea.

Stay healthy, and try to enjoy the waves...
- Rick

Rick Miranda
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