Emergency Preparedness for Academic Continuity

Guiding Principles for Instructional Faculty

Faculty involved in instruction should consider how instructional delivery to students can be continued in the event of a full or partial campus closure for an extended period of time under condition where the infrastructure is intact (e.g. pandemic closure).

It is clear that a single solution will not fit all courses and disciplines and that the quality of instruction may be affected. However, during the development of course material and the considerations of delivery methods, the possibility of an extended closure should be explored. Faculty should consider contingency plans to respond to varying severities and lengths of closures so that courses can continue to be taught. Scenarios that may be considered include the following:

Scenario #1: USF shut down for 1-2 weeks, USF infrastructure is functional.
Scenario #2: USF shut down for 3-4 weeks, USF infrastructure is functional
Scenario #3: USF shut down for up to 6 weeks, USF infrastructure is functional

Key Questions to Consider During Course Development

The following questions may help faculty work through the process of addressing "alternative" course delivery methods, and to assess the potential of "alternative" course delivery in current courses.

- Is the course content amenable to "online delivery"? If yes, are there any barriers that need to be removed? If not, what are the main obstacles?
- What method of online delivery (Blackboard, Elluminate, e-mail, others) appears to be appropriate/feasible?
- What training do I and my TA('s) need to successfully switch to some form of "online delivery" mode?
- What hardware and technology support do I need?
- Can my course contents be made readily available to the students through Blackboard? If not, what can I do now to prepare?
- What support will my students need to participate in "online mode?"
- Can the student easily navigate through course content during an extended closure?
- How can assessments be carried out electronically? Are online assessments part of the normal course operation?
- Will my grading process need to change and if so how will it be modified? How will students know?
- What level of interaction with the students, during and outside of class hours, will be required for my TA('s) and I, and what are the possible ways to accomplish that?
- What will I do if a significant proportion (20-40%) of the class is out sick for an extended period of time (i.e. 5-7 days)? Do I have backup plans for makeup exams, course assignments and other content that will accommodate a large number of students?
- What options are available should I become ill –are there other faculty/adjuncts/TAs in the program that can assist with the course while I recover?

Recommendations for Developing Course Content
Below are some ideas that allow for flexibility in course delivery and would support continued students opportunities to learn during a university closure.

- Post PPT or convert to lecture outlines in Blackboard to allow students to follow content
- Post PPTs with audio commentary
- Develop course using Elluminate to become familiar with this delivery method
- Develop a comprehensive "time line" for working through entire course material
- Schedule a "Whiteboard" or chat session to determine the utility of this mechanism
- Develop and post comprehensive reading guide for the entire semester and post on BB
- Develop comprehensive worksheets for important content and post on BB
- Develop and post problem sets or reference on BB to problems in the textbook with suggested time frames of when they should be taken
- Develop weekly online quizzes or PPT exercises to guide students through concepts while also monitoring student engagement and understanding
- Print entire course notes/outlines and make available through ProCopy or other source
- Provide list of web links to other online content that supplements material
- Post or link to videos or tutorials that describe key content ideas
- Develop and post podcasts of lectures
- Develop contingency plans to deal with make-up assignments for large numbers of students in the event that a high proportion will be absent due to illness (Students will be advised to remain at home should they become ill)