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TO: Lehman College Faculty  
FROM: Peter O. Nwosu, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success  
SUBJECT: Teaching and Learning in Distance Modality  
DATE: March 12, 2020

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Yesterday, the University announced the implementation of a comprehensive transition to distance education for all CUNY schools for the remainder of the semester beginning March 19. This announcement was followed up with a [message](#) from President Lemons to the campus community. As part of this transition, no on-campus classes will be held from March 12-18. Most classes will move to distance learning on March 19 for the remainder of the spring semester. The College will remain open, and this includes the library, our dormitory, research facilities, daycare center, and labs.

We know this is a very stressful time for everyone; that includes your families, friends, and loved ones, as well as other faculty members, our students, staff, and administration. Please understand that COVID-19 is a crisis we would wish didn't come and that none of us is responsible for. In times like this, it is very important that we take care of ourselves and each other, and that we remain united and committed to our mission of educating our students and serving our community.

As you know, we have been in planning mode for the last two weeks. Since then, we have provided information to the college community, which include an extensive number of resources for transitioning to distance learning. See section 2 of this memo on resources.

Here are additional steps we recommend that you utilize in case you are not already using a distance learning delivery modality:

### 1. Incremental Approach

- It is not possible to recreate the remaining 8 weeks of an entire 15-week syllabus designed for in-person instruction into distance learning in less than a week. Thus, we strongly recommend that you take one step at a time, use an incremental approach.
- First, think in terms of intervals. What can I do in one week in terms of the course material beginning March 19, when instruction through distance learning mode commences? Then build on the course material each succeeding week. Don't plan to have everything that needs to be done during the next 8 weeks planned during this one week of instructional recess. Use the instructional recess period to plan for the first or second week of instruction; then make adjustments as you learn.
- Second, think of what you expect students to know for the rest of the semester, and focus on those key learning outcomes.
- Third, be sure you explain to your students during the first day of distance learning instruction why you have taken the approach you are taking. Address their concerns and reduce their fears. Remember, for some of your students, this may be the first time they too are learning through distance learning mode.
- Attached is a set of recommendations from Macaulay Honors College on what faculty can do as they prepare to transition online.

## 2. Resources

- In my previous memos to faculty, I outlined several resources that will be helpful in planning to transition to teaching remotely. Here are the links to those resources:
  - [Provost's Communications to Campus Community](#)
  - Digital tools: <http://lehman.edu/itr/digital-toolkit/>
  - [FAQs for Faculty Going Online in a Hurry](#)
  - [Blackboard Basics Training Course](#)
  - [Lehman's customized Blackboard Tutorial](#)
- Additionally, Academic Affairs is identifying one to two Faculty Mentors with experience in distance to be assigned to each of our four academic schools to assist faculty who may need further technical assistance with Blackboard and related resources. We will provide you with the names and contact information for these faculty mentors as soon as we finalize recruitment process with Human Resources. We are also working on procuring additional online proctor services to enhance the ability of faculty to assure course integrity and quality in a distance learning environment. We will provide this information when it becomes available.
- In instances where a course includes a lab, performance, internships, and clinicals, please be sure to discuss with your chair, who will reach out to the dean of your school about an appropriate approach. The deans and I have had discussions about how we move forward in addressing these instances in order to have a uniform approach that supports both the faculty and students' needs.

## 3. Privacy and Access

- As always, please be mindful of student privacy and issues of access. The following links will be helpful:
  - U.S. Department of Education website for FERPA:  
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>
  - U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Facts About the Americans with Disabilities Act:  
<https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/fs-ada.cfm>
- A FERPA workshop is being planned by Human Resources and the Office of General Counsel and will be announced as soon as possible.
- While faculty members may choose other distance learning alternative delivery modes, they should ensure that the delivery mode selected is compatible with CUNYfirst, which is the University's official mode of communication with students.

## 4. Monitoring, Tracking and Reporting COVID-19

- Because information is moving and changing rapidly, we are encouraging each faculty member to be vigilant and to report any suspected exposure with potential implications for the campus community immediately to the department chair, who will escalate the issue to the respective school dean, and then to the provost. We are coordinating our efforts with CUNY as well as Borough, City, and State officials to reduce exposure and minimize risk to campus personnel.

Finally, these are challenging times. As provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs and Student Success, our main concern remains to ensure the health and safety of our faculty, students, and staff, while safeguarding and maintaining the quality and integrity of our academic programs. On behalf of President Lemons and our college community, I want to thank you for your patience and understanding as we go through these challenging times. I also want to thank you for your dedication and diligence in making the crucial adjustments we are requesting in the service of our mission of transforming lives and igniting new possibilities.