CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION

Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) is committed to the continuity of instruction in the event of an emergency disruption that may result in the suspension of activities, including face-to-face classes on the SMSU campus.

An emergency closing of the University, campus closure and/or suspension of classroom meetings is not a suspension of instruction. Faculty duty days remain in effect and scheduled instructional duty days remain intact, though the means of delivery may change. Please read the information contained here to prepare yourselves and your students to ensure continuity of instruction. Also, see the Reference Guide for Continuity of Instruction for suggestions and resources. Find educational technologies to support faculty, students and staff to keep teaching when separated by distance Minnesota State Education Technologies.

You will hear more updates about the COVID-19 virus in official university email communication. We will keep you updated on the university’s plans during this period.

Related board policies -

- Board Policy 1A.10 Long-Term Emergency Management
- Board Policy 4.4 Weather / Short Term Emergency Closings

D2L BRIGHTSPACE

All SMSU courses have a course shell within D2L Brightspace. It is strongly recommended to use this platform in the event that face-to-face classes are temporarily suspended. If you are the Instructor of Record on the course schedule you can find your course shell in D2L Brightspace. If you are not the Instructor of Record, please see your Chair, Dean, or department administrative assistant for details. See the Reference Guide in the link above for additional resources which includes D2L Brightspace - Faculty/Staff Information.

SYLLABUS and ADDENDUM

Please see SMSU Syllabus Policy to ensure you are meeting this long-standing expectation. Remember that faculty maintain the right to make changes to the syllabus and must communicate the changes to students. This syllabus should be included with the course in D2L Brightspace along with contact information for the faculty member assigned to the course.

With this in mind, all faculty with instructional assignments are asked to provide a syllabus addendum to their students as soon as possible detailing how you will communicate with your students and maintain instruction for a short-term period during a campus emergency. You may wish to file your addendum with your department and upload it to D2L Brightspace.
This addendum should address the following considerations:

Indicate your method of communication with students (e.g., email, D2L Brightspace) and encourage students to test these methods now. You can use D2L Brightspace to directly email your class. This email list is automatically updated daily.

- Remind students they can access information about D2L Brightspace at D2L Brightspace (Student Information)

- Tell your students how they will receive future assignments if they are unable to come to campus and how they will submit those assignments to you. (This may be relevant to students who cannot come to class even though classes would continue to be held.)

- Indicate that students need to complete any alternative assignments by the deadlines that are established. (Faculty should be flexible with respect to individual student circumstances. However, the norm should be regular completion of assignments.)

- For your students who may not have internet access, it is important for these students to have an explanation of your expectations and their responsibilities. It is important to share a course outline/syllabus, and provide a timeline that students can either download or print and take with them. A plan should be established with the students.

- When considering labs, internships, field experiences, etc., it is important faculty have a grading system in place that tracks students’ progress to date. If the “2/3 requirement,” is met (Boarc Policy 1A.10, Part 5), you can plan for the option of grading the student on the work completed even if some sessions are missed.

- During a closure, instructors should not simply postpone instruction to a later date. Doing so will make it difficult for students to complete assignments and will cause them prolonged stress from the emergency situation. Doing so may also conflict with Federal Government regulations concerning course credit assignment and continuing qualification for financial aid.

Maintaining instruction implies that students are engaged with the course material and instructor. Consider having at least three meaningful interactions per week. This could include online discussions, student submission of graded or ungraded assignments, class meetings, webinars, phone conferences, posted lectures, etc.

NOTE: Adapted from Minnesota State University, Moorhead

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