

Remote Teaching and Learning Task Force Update #7

July 30, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As faculty and teaching staff continue to prepare for the unusual academic year ahead, the Remote Teaching and Learning Task Force has continued its work. We are now focusing our effort on following up on the group's recommendations around online learning during 2020-21.

Frequently Asked Questions

Responding to a request from the Task Force, Dr. Kevin Wamsley, AVP & Provost, recently shared answers to a list of Frequently Asked Questions with the campus community. The questions relate to both working in an online teaching environment as well as the practical concerns around teaching in-person classes in the Fall. Among the questions that were addressed in the AVP's message are the following:

- Work focus during the summer months
- Tenure and promotion during the time of COVID-19
- Protection for Faculty members in an online environment
- Contingency planning if Faculty members become ill
- Costs incurred through teaching from home
- Costs for specialized equipment
- Virtual office hours and meeting with students while maintaining physical distancing
- Cleaning protocols for classrooms
- Wearing of masks and/or face shields in face-to-face classes.

The full text of the AVP's responses can be accessed on our [website](#) on the Communications tab.

Professional development sessions

The StFX Library is preparing a PD session focusing on copyright and intellectual property in the online environment. The session will take place in mid- to late-August. Details will be shared once the date is set.

During the month of July, Faculty and teaching staff were able to attend and observe online courses being offered by the Faculty of Education. In total, 32 faculty members signed up for the opportunity to watch Collaborate classes in action and to see how the tools are used to teach courses and to build strong connections between students and faculty in online classes.

Remember that all past PD sessions, including the sessions on how to use Moodle and Collaborate, are recorded and available on the Online Task Force [website](#).

Syllabus language suggestions for online courses

A number of instructors have requested language that could be included in course syllabi to address some of the unique considerations for teaching and learning online. The Task Force is preparing a resource document with some possible syllabus language around issues such as etiquette for the online classroom, copyright, and academic integrity. The resource document

will be shared and posted to our website once it has been finalized. The document may serve as a starting point for faculty members who want to communicate something similar to students.

Preparing students for online learning

While Faculty members have been preparing to teach online, students have also been preparing to learn online. Multiple “Introduction to Collaborate” sessions have been offered to students so that they have the opportunity to be familiar with the platform prior to starting courses. In addition, incoming students who participate in the X-Starts Here online transition program are offered information related to teaching and learning both online and in an environment where physical distancing is necessary.

Closing Computer Labs

Just a reminder that computer labs will not be available for the coming year. All computers will be removed from the following spaces before the start of classes: Bloomfield 4th floor, BMH 4024, Coady 165, PSC 3035 & 1096, Gilmora 111, Library 008 & Main floor, Marg 217, Schwartz 252 & 256. Lab courses that traditionally took place in lab classrooms will now be assigned to regular classrooms. Students will need a laptop and will access the required software, either from on or off campus, through a virtual lab solution. Also note that computer labs will not be available for midterms or testing. Instructors who normally have students write an exam in the computer lab using Moodle and Respondus Lockdown browser will need to reconsider the assignments since labs will not be available for this purpose.

Preparing to switch from in-person to online

Instructors who will be teaching face-to-face can prepare their courses so that the transition to online might be smoother, in the event that such a switch might be needed. As a first step, all instructors are encouraged to use Moodle from the beginning of the term as the way to share documents with students and collect assignments. Instructors of in-person classes are also encouraged to test Collaborate, and potentially use it as a tool in face-to-face courses. IT Services is currently working on a process by which Collaborate classrooms will be attached to course Moodle pages. More information will be provided about how instructors can use Collaborate as an added feature in face-to-face classes.

Continuing and Distance Education has set up a Demonstration Moodle Page (bit.ly/demo-remote-moodle-page) with access to a demo Collaborate Online Classroom. Faculty and teaching staff are invited to log in and practice with the tools.

As we all continue to prepare for September we hope that everyone is able to take a bit of time for rest and rejuvenation ahead of what promises to be a busy and challenging semester.

Best wishes,

Janice Landry & Joanne Tompkins

Co-chairs, Remote Teaching and Learning Preparedness Task Force.