Academic Contingency Planning

7/29/2020

Dr. Aulgur thanked everyone for their time this morning. We have a heavy agenda and multiple items to discuss.

We moved onto the second agenda item, first, about course migration and textbooks.

Tammy greeted everyone and let us know the first course migration has been completed. Alexis and OIS were very successful in moving the courses. They even took some MT and moved them online. During that process, textbook adoption was not thought about. B&N does book adoption by course section. We were able to provide B&N and Textbook Brokers with an excel spreadsheet and a cross list. Textbook Brokers has already updated their links. B&N is working on this (corporate office must make this fix). Should be finished by next Monday or Tuesday. The minute a section number is changed in book adoption software, it automatically changes in Banner and other locations (but not with the bookstores).

Dr. Schoephoerster let us know this week the EAM dept developed a decision matrix to help us document and justify decisions on moving through the phases. Discussions on how to release this (hopefully soon when approved by EC). Everyone will be able to see it. Good news: all AA recovery plans have been approved with one still being finalized. All AA areas can plan to move ahead. The only caveat is there will be a high emphasis on wearing masks. There were some plans, and discussions at one time, for just face shields. This is no longer the case. You must have a mask on unless you are in your office by yourself. Look at plans and make sure this is clear. Do not have to resubmit plans, just make sure this is the case and understood. Still working on plans to work with quarantined students. Masks are being distributed to offices. 20,000 being delivered. The masks are mainly for visitors, or if someone on campus arrives without a mask. Additionally, FAMA put on their website a request form for PPE materials. You can use the form, now. Also, good news about contact tracing: a process is set up through the Department of Health and we are partnering with UAMS. They will be working with our contact tracing team, here. This is very critical. For testing – we now have a contract with Abbott Labs for the ten-minute test. We will be able to get some fast results, as well as results through Quest Labs (and also a contract with Saint Mary’s and a private lab for results in 24-48 hours). All encouraging.

For the next discussion, Dr. Aulgur let us know Dr. Cezeaux and her communication sub-group have been working on a student communication plan. Several different initiatives in the works.

Dr. Cezeaux thanked Dr. Aulgur. As mentioned before (in previous meetings), we are beginning to add information to the CETL website. This includes the language for the syllabi/handouts. The language is meant to describe in-class behaviors. So, people with online courses, only, have nothing mandatory to post. Next task is getting information out to the students. Dr. Myers, in her interim role with AA and looking at student success, has put together a document related to hybrid and online courses, and how to be successful there. The committee is looking at frequently asked questions. Our Advising Center is getting inundated with questions, and asked for this information. Draft was finished yesterday. The sub-group is taking in ideas so they can get the information out there, and the Mongoose texting will go out on Monday. This new document can be a back-up as an FAQ. In process of finalization. If you have any input, just let Dr. Cezeaux know. The document is being looked at by more eyes than just the sub-group. It has a large distribution for comments. Deadline is Friday (target date). If the whole committee would like the second draft, she can send it out. The sub-group would still like to use WebEx teams. If you are on the sub-group, please continue to use that medium. Everybody else, feel free to email and give input. Anything else?

* Dr. Aulgur said no, and thanked her. He will distribute the second draft this afternoon. Direct any questions to Dr. Cezeaux, please.
* Dr. Myers noted we are running into what the definition of hybrid means for students. Students do not understand. If students want to take hybrid classes (when a fully online option is not available), they are running into this issue. She has been getting this question as a DH.

Dr. Aulgur may bring it up this afternoon for conversation. Not sure we can address it here.

* Dr. Cezeaux spoke, related to the above, students need to understand that even if all their courses are online, they still must pay fees (three fees mentioned in the document). This is important because students need to know there is nothing defined on campus as a 100% online student. A student enrolled in a 100% online program does not have those fees, but any students taking courses (not enrolled in a fully online program) will have to pay these fees. Be aware of the reason why if you receive these questions.
* Marika thanked her for working on this. Also, would Dr. Cezeaux care if the document is shared with the Advisors for input?
* Dr. Cezeaux replied, “The more, the merrier” right now. If you see a question that is not there, we want to make sure we answer that. Any input is welcome. Right now, there are 14 FAQs. Some may be redundant with Registrar website material. It is meant to be a document that gets students started in the right direction. The student will then have direction to other areas. For example, Brent Etzel gave more information about databases and the Library. We do not expect the document to explain everything. We give website links for them to go to for more information. Dr. Cezeaux will add a “do not distribute” watermark on the draft this afternoon.
* Marika let us know, pertaining to fees, from her understanding if a student changes from F2F to all online (and they have a housing contract in place with Res Life) the student will be charged a $250 fee. This fee will go up to $500 on Aug 1. This is due to the student changing their contract. Now, what Res Life is going to do from there (like offer the fee as a credit in the spring semester), she is not sure. But, be prepared to start hearing complaints if this is the case.
* Dr. Aulgur thanked Marika and wants to verify this information. May be an important piece for the FAQ. This is part of the challenge: that we are in an environment that changes day by day. To be fair to students, we have a group starting their 8-week courses soon, and they will need this information as well.
* Marika will speak with Delton and get back with Dr. Aulgur.
* Dr. Cezeaux hesitates to put information about student housing in the FAQ.
* Dr. Aulgur agrees. In reflection, housing should release this information themselves.
* Dr. Cezeaux suggested we create suggested wording like, “We are putting together an Academic FAQ. Why don’t you put together one for Res Life?” One question from parent forum, even, was chosen not to be included in the document because we do not need to start answering questions about specific programs either. We can include, “If you have a question about a specific program, please contact the DH.” We will then include a DH contact list. Our document needs to be less specific and more general.
* Dr. Cass suggested directing to the Dean as well.
* Dr. Cezeaux noted there was a comment about people still not understanding what a Dean is. This is more a reference to first year students. But, they do semi-understand that a DH is responsible for their program. Can add Deans if all think it is relevant.
* Dr. Cass doesn’t necessarily need the extra work, but sometimes if he receives something, he directs it to the DH so it does not get lost. It is just an additional avenue.
* Dr. Cezeaux thanked Dr. Cass and asked if there were any other questions?

There were no other questions and Dr. Aulgur asked the committee if they think of other information or recommendation for the document, to please send them do Dr. Cezeaux. He thanked Dr. Cezeaux, Dr. Myers, and Marika.

We migrated to the next agenda item and that is what we are trying to develop for Faculty PD resources to provide trainings, guidance, and resources to assist our colleagues who may be going into an unfamiliar environment.

Dr. Lasey thanked Dr. Aulgur for the invite to join today’s meeting. She shared a screen of the CETL webpage. On the home page, there is a link for the AA pandemic information. Also, she pointed out the summer PD series (videos and information) has been released throughout the summer. Faculty can go and see that some are resources from outside, but quite a few are internal. There is more coming. This information is also present in the Bb CETL org. CETL also has a speaker coming on August 12 - Thomas Tobin (he has a book called “Universal Design for Learning”). This is involved with getting our student engagement piece. Thomas will focus his talk on F2F but also remote student engagement as well. “What are quick things to increase student engagement in your courses?” President Bowen will give her talk on Thursday, August 13. So, these are scheduled items coming up. In addition to PD day, CETL is also planning some webinars and help sessions for faculty regarding WebEx teams, Kaltura, Bb, and Ally (a new tool within Bb to help ensure materials are accessible for everyone). Trying to set up multiple times and dates, and they will also be recorded. One other thing to mention is CETL is building up the schedule for fall, in terms of webinars and other items that may exist (for example: a MAGNA webinar that is for moving courses online). CETL will get a recording of this and post it on the Bb site under Resources. Want to also point out the Teaching Resources page. A lot has been added about online instruction including articles and videos, and an open access book about high flex courses. If there is more information you want to see, let Dr. Lasey know and she can add anything that is helpful.

* Dr. Aulgur thanked Dr. Lasey and emphasized what Dr. Lasey shared. As we move into the fall term, there is limited capacity in CETL, OIS, and eTech to fully assist faculty. We are also in a constrained environment as we cannot assist face-to-face. The eTech design team will begin scheduling virtual one-on-ones if faculty need specified help. This is all an intentional effort to give faculty as much synchronous information as we can including best practices, technology assistance and more. There is no expectation for faculty to go above and beyond. Just meet the basic framework for a successful online environment. Colleagues can build on top of that, and within their respective department. Every department has individuals who are well versed in the online space. Rely on colleagues, too, for assistance. This is truly a team effort if this is going to be delivered to expectations. If there is anything we are missing or can provide, please let us know.
* Dr. Lasey also mentioned the consideration of having a list of available faculty mentors. If Deans or DHs will give her names of faculty who teach online that can serve as mentors, Dr. Lasey can put together this list as a resource to be shared.
* Dr. Aulgur thanked her again.

As mentioned earlier, there is a pandemic information update page. The eTech instructional design team is also working on a two-page faculty quick-start guide with no more than ten best practices, and links to resources. Target date is a draft by this Friday and released by Monday. Will release it to the pandemic information page and send it to DHs to help with cascaded distribution. Dr. Cass has started working on an expanded guide should the institution have to pivot in 48 hours.

Dr. Cass let us know he and his committee met today to talk about how to create a step-by-step guide to pivot. Thinks five pages may be just a bit much. Thinking more along two pages. We are creating a plethora of documents and we think faculty may be feeling a little overwhelmed. Also, we feel there should be a student side to this. If we mirrored the document (ex: for faculty, “within 24 hours of moving online, contact the student” then the student side would be, “Check Blackboard for a message from faculty if we pivot to online”). Sub-group feels this is a good idea because if you look back to spring surveys, there seems to be a lack of understanding of what is happening. So, a two-page document that mirrors on the side for students. Also, they looked at quick additions from QM, who has a quick start guide. Their format is a little much, but it is a good model. And, because the other guide mentioned above is being created, the sub-group will not include all that information. If anyone has suggestions or wants to join the group, please let Dr. Cass know.

* Dr. Aulgur thanked Dr. Cass. Parallel information is a point that needs to be addressed.
* Dr. Cass agrees and wants to create this parallelism. He believes both sides should see the other to reinforce one and other, as it were, so faculty and students are on the same page. This is what the committee feels is necessary.

Dr. Aulgur thanked all sub-groups for their work. This undertaking, on top of everything to prepare for a term, is important.

Next topic - Dr. Robertson spoke on: up to the point of late registration, departments and faculty can change student’s schedules. After that point, it must be handled by the Registrar’s office. It is a requirement to prevent fraud. So, students will have to go to the Registrar. They can change sections, but it they are changing a course or program, we are requiring they see their Advisor. It is very critical, that those with override authority (even in this COVID era) be available to students. Make sure you are reachable. DHs may want to put out a slot of appointments and as students come, put them in the slots. Not sure how to work this, but Dr. Robertson made sure the override sheet was coming today. Another item that is normally there is an interplay between “put them in the course” and “every student counts.” But, now we have an interesting room limit. We cannot overbook. Not all furniture is in each room as it was removed. We cannot hit our limits. Marika needs true guidance on where to add students. May include courses that have COVID limits, but the course has a MWF 1/3 scenario. There needs to be communication about the types of sections and where capacity is not met. DHs are aware of these items. They are going to reach out to Marika, and Alexis sent out the override list this morning.

* Dr. Cezeaux understands the problem with having people on campus to do the advising.
* Dr. Robertson replied they do not necessarily have to be on campus. Just available.
* Dr. Cezeaux knows it may be more work, but can we encourage DHs to encourage WebEx personal rooms as their office? Pretty straight forward. Also, should we also potentially publish, in addition to their phone number, their WebEx room in case students want to meet with their Advisors?
* Dr. Robertson is not dictating to DHs. Leaving it up to them to figure out. Just make sure it is covered. They need to work this out on an individual basis based on their department needs.
* Tammy voiced that we all do not know what to fully expect. Just want Deans and DHs to understand that in the five days of late registration, for the last five years, we have had 1000 to 1200 physical students come into the Registrar’s office. We don’t know what to prepare for. If people are not answering their emails, or telephones, as Advisors, we could consider adding personal email addresses also. Knows we do not want to post cell phone numbers either. The Registrar’s office has been highly successful in working with online students. A student emailing a DH and that DH passing it along is fine. Does not have to be a F2F interaction. Students want satisfaction with what they are asking for. Keep in mind it can be during any time of the day. People are going to have to read their email and check their messages, and stay on top of it.
* Dr. Robertson noted it also just occurred to hm that most of student’s fears and questions can be answered when they read their syllabi. Maybe we ought to publish the section numbers like we did with faculty, and what the different modes of operation mean. “If you see this section number, it means this…”
* Tammy replied this is part of what Dr. Cezeaux’s committee is working on and developing. Another big impact will be made with the Registrar’s page. Needs to be very visible (online services and where students need to go). Tammy’s “ask” is that when individual faculty members make a decision, they then communicate that to the student(s). She believes faculty need to go to their class roster(s) and click “email my whole class” and communicate information to their students.
* Dr. Robertson is confident this will happen, and usually does happen, when faculty go on contract. If the university holds the contract date to faculty, faculty will follow that specific timeline.
* Dr. Cezeaux brought up one of the FAQ’s, which came up in the parent’s session. “When can my son or daughter expect to hear from a faculty member?” We replied, “A week before classes.” We need to provide feedback to explain more what that means. Some people looking at the FAQ document are from Faculty Senate. They need to ensure that their colleagues realize these communications are important. If we include, “Faculty will write students via their ATU email address” then it needs to happen. This may be a DH oversight, but we must make sure faculty are, in fact, corresponding with students. Parents and students want to know. So, can we specify a date that faculty must contact students, within their contract period, but before classes begin? Can we say “By Friday, August 14, you should have heard from your faculty member?” Can we specify a date for student responses?
* Dr. Myers stated that as a DH, her area has already discussed this. Her faculty will email out a week before. This is up to the DH to inform their instructors. Also, along with this issue, as far as overrides, the office phone can be forwarded to cell phones. As a DH, can we do overrides electronically? Can they just be emailed and not have to print, sign, scan, and send back?
* Tammy replied that email will work, but please include all the details (like what is found on the form) including CRN, section number, etc. Do not mind functioning on email. Can also fill in the document, scan it and email it. The Registrar will take it how they can get it in written format. Tammy is accountable when it comes to overrides. If it is not too much to ask, please email your class lists a week before start. Students are added to classes every day. Is it too much to let the student into the course to see the syllabus (that are added late)? If the syllabi can be added to the Bb shell, it would be very beneficial.
* Dr. Aulgur thinks this is a great point and has had several conversations about this. Outside of this meeting with the Faculty Senate reps, Deans and DHs, we have had conversations about minimum expectations of what should be included in a Bb shell. Would welcome recommendations and comments from faculty representatives about what would be appropriate to be loaded in their Bb shell (to help address issues that Tammy has identified).
* Dr. Carole-Smith asked if it were possible to include the language as part of the announcements in Bb? Can it just be an announcement so faculty will not have to try and attach it to syllabi at this point? Hearing a lot of stuff coming at her with classes coming up. Can it just be one paragraph explaining the course and modality? This would keep students from having to go into a link as well.
* Dr. Aulgur believes there are multiple ways to approach this. Entire syllabi could be copied and pasted as well. One paragraph could be added as an announcement. Any number of ways. Could put out a guide to assist with this.
* Dr. Carole-Smith stated, in the College of Education, their syllabi are long. Do not want to lose this information in the syllabus, which is why she made the announcement suggestion. Would be the quickest way students could see it.
* Dr. Aulgur agreed and suggested the announcement could be worded “First five things you need to know right now…” In Banner, with the syllabi, this is an initiative that is underway to load syllabi into Banner. We do not have a way to do this now. Is in the works.

Moving forward, Dr. Aulgur mentioned the technical side of ATU has been running in overdrive. Ken gave an update.

Ken did send Dr. Aulgur and Jennifer a written copy of the updates in case weather impedes him continuing in the meeting. Couple of things: Still working on getting those 50 cameras and COVID has delayed delivery. Keep adjusting schedules. Hope they will be here on time. If not, OIS will adjust with web cameras. Moving forward with this premise. Also, there has been questions about resources for students. Please understand we cannot provide all resources for all students. Do not have this capability, time, or money. Have quoted an order for 60 laptops for student use. That quote is being reviewed for CARES Act funding. Process will need to be set up about how the resources will be disseminated. Dr. Johnson and others are looking at this. Also picking up 30 ATT hotspots. Can get more if we need them. Ken also knows there is concern about Adobe classes. Quote for this is also with administration to be approved for CARES Act funding. Diligently working on this as well, and trying to acquire the licenses. In the spring, Adobe did it for free, but they are not willing to do this anymore. This next piece will come as an announcement, but please remember that when faculty and staff begin showing back in office, be considerate when starting your office computer that it will need to update. Please pre-plan and understand that time and reboots will have to happen. Even if you left the computer on and you were remoting in, you may also find that there are reboots or installations to finish up. Expect initial delays and delays in connections to printers, network copiers, etc. Also, when you are coming in with wireless devices, you may have changed passwords since leaving campus. You may have to reconnect your wireless devise. Keep in mind these things and that they are a part of the process of a long, no-use period. One other item, ATU has devices like microphones, wireless headsets, monitors, and more. Support services has created a catalog request for these items so you can make sure you are prepared to do the pivot. Think about your work-from-home environment. Especially for new faculty or Adjuncts that may not have already been doing the work-from-home process. This is also in the document he sent Jennifer and Dr. Aulgur. OIS is trying to work with every office and committee to anticipate every scenario. “We will work with you. Please be patient with us and we will do everything we can to ensure a successful semester for faculty, staff, and students.”

Dr. Aulgur thanked Ken for this time and commitment. This ended the formal agenda. Any open forum or questions?

* Marika asked about setting capacities in Banner. For example, if we look at an MT course and COVID capacity is 32, but in Banner it is 50. How are DHs thinking about handling who Advisors need to contact for changes? What is the plan?
* Dr. Robertson replied, as far as he knows, course capacities are correct and set by section. It was up to DHs and faculty who would teach in what rooms (or get a different room if your course is too big).
* Tammy noted one thing she is confused about: Let’s say a class is set at 50 (in normal times, the room would hold 50 students), but 25 students are attending on Monday and 25 students are attending on Wednesdays due to COVID. What happens if one day population decreases? How will the Registrar and Advisors know if that happens?
* Dr. Robertson stated *course* capacity was set by DHs and faculty ought to know the course capacity. *Room* capacity is set by COVID limits. Course capacity listed in Banner, and ARGOS (dumped into Excel) is correct.
* Alexis pulled a course list last night and sorted by just F2F instructional method. About 60% of the courses are over COVID room capacity.
* Dr. Aulgur replied this is something that Deans and DHs need to put immediately on their radar. If a course cannot be split and meets one day a week, if a course is over capacity for the room assigned, etc., then faculty must find a bigger space.
* Dr. Cezeaux let us know there is confusion here. To her, a F2F course cannot be split. If the course splits, then students will not have enough instruction. The only courses we can split are hybrid. F2F must be at, or less, the COVID limits.
* Dr. Robertson agreed. Totally F2F classes cannot go over the limit.
* Dr. Cezeaux told us there was also confusion when the FAQ was submitted. The courses that Alexis mentioned need to be moved to hybrid, or get a different classroom. Has everything been done where new sections of courses can now be added?
* Alexis was planning on sending an email this afternoon that everything is ready to go. But, waiting to hear from Dr. McMahan to give her okay (as far as the optimization).
* Dr. Cezeaux will ping Dr. McMahan and let her know we are waiting. Different people are out and this is holding things up that we need to wrap up. Will confer with her before everything is opened again.
* Tammy suggested a WebEx meeting with just Deans, DHs, Registrar, and Marika’s crew. These are individual department issues. We know there are different types of classes and we can discuss this more at length in another venue.
* Dr. Aulgur thinks that is a solid recommendation and will go to work on setting this up.
* Dr. Greco, the last time we met, spoke about student ability to request online only courses. Change has been made to allow students to submit a request for the student to move online if they have a health issue, or a family member has a health issue. It is his understanding, if a student does not have a health-related issue or is not living with a family member that does, then the student will be required to attend class during the in-class period. We need to verify this will be university policy.
* Dr. Aulgur is not aware of any deviation of the policy.
* Dr. Cezeaux wants us to be prepared for students who can receive accommodation that *does not* affect the whole semester. Still need to find out what to do with students who need a temporary accommodation. This is still up in the air. We want to make the distinction between people who can now put in accommodations for the whole semester, but we also need an understanding for those who only need temporary accommodation.
* Dr. Aulgur replied this discussion is on the Dean’s radar. There is a difference between a traditional accommodation and temporary accommodation. No matter how we split it, how do we minimize the faculty burden and still serve our students? This is a key challenge.
* Dr. Greco mentioned, based on follow-up from the communication sub-group, his faculty have been sharing with our MT students the class list and when they expect students to be in class. Several students have asked for in-class sessions to be synchronized so all meetings are on the same day. He recommended to the faculty member they tell the student it would not be feasible to do this. But, we need to be aware these questions will come up. The sooner faculty publish their in-class schedule, the sooner the issues can be addressed.
* Dr. Aulgur thanked Dr. Greco.

To end the meeting, we will publish Ken’s document with today’s minutes. Will be on pandemic information page (after delivery to the committee). Please feel free to share minutes with colleagues and will post historical minutes to the page as well. If there is anything else, any other critical information items to post, please let Dr. Aulgur know. He thanked everyone for their time and commitment. Will plan to meet again next Wednesday.

From Chat:

Jeff Robertson – 50% of student do NOT want online, the college experience. 50% of the students want ONLY online (fear and safety). Can’t have both.

Tracy Cole – Marika, we set our course capacities in Banner. Is this a sufficient way to set the maximum number of students in a course, regardless of modality?

Tom Nupp – Speaking for myself, I have been still working on the plan for a blended course. I’m also hesitant to send out messages to students while things are still in flux.

Marika Lederman – Before we leave the meeting, I would like to discuss the covid capacity subject, please.

Jeff Bright – Does Banner allow publication of syllabi? At my last institution we published our syllabi to banner and students had access when they looked at the schedule.

Jeff Robertson – Yes, lets. COVID capacity is the current chair in the room for face-to-face instruction at a single time/date gathering. Course limits could be greater than that if hybrid. Course limits could be all over the board.

Jeffrey Cass – I agree with Dr. Bright. I was at a Banner institution, and we had to publish syllabi. It was a state requirement. Shouldn’t Institutional Effectiveness over see that?

Jeff Aulgur – Yes

Richard Schoephoerster – Yes that is fine, they will do hybrid and only portion attend physically at a time.

Alexis – Exactly, if it’s being split, it needs to be mixed technology.

Jeff Robertson – 1. FACE-TO-FACE Course: Instruction is face-to-face 100%. 2. MIXED TECHNOLOGY: MT49 (less than 50% online). 3. MIXED TECHNOLOGY: MT99 (more than 50% online). 4. 100% ONLINE: No face-to-face instruction.

Jeff Bright – Technically shouldn’t every class be at least MT49 since we are going virtual after Thanksgiving?