Learning Experience Workgroup Members

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Under the direction of New York State, SUNY, and local officials, MCC is committed to assuring the safety of our faculty, staff, and students while delivering high quality educational experiences. Given the current situation, it seems almost certain that resuming classes with our traditional modes of instruction will not be possible for the Fall 2020 semester. In keeping with this, we are developing guiding principles that allow us to deliver as large a percentage of our classes/class activities either online or remotely for Fall 2020. The experiences of the Spring 2020 semester will help us as we address instructional delivery and support of instructional delivery moving forward so that MCC faculty and staff are equipped to best serve our students.

Instructional Delivery

MCC is exploring various delivery methods that include courses with labs or other face-to-face elements; courses delivered with remote instruction; and courses delivered fully online. Unless we are directed to restrict activities due to increased public health concerns, MCC plans to retain the advertised course format for the duration of the semester.

Instruction Including Some Face-to-Face Activities

In some cases, the move to remote instruction in the Spring 2020 semester created obstacles for delivering course learning outcomes. In preparing for the fall, we expect conditions will permit some limited access to campus for hands-on course components; lectures will be delivered remotely or online. With this in mind, we developed a list of courses and labs that will be considered for face-to-face instruction in the fall.

Process for Identifying Courses and Labs to be Considered Face-to-Face in Fall Semester

To identify labs that should be considered for face-to-face instruction in Fall 2020, a subgroup of this workgroup referenced several key documents produced by SUNY, AACC and ACHA. These documents

provided guidance related to high context programs that require face-to-face modality to ensure learning outcomes are met and that industry competencies expectation are achieved. These references also outlined the safety guidelines that should be followed in terms of maintaining safe social distancing, the sanitizing of lab environments between classes, and the wearing of face masks by all faculty and students involved in the face-to-face instruction.

With this understanding, subgroup members worked independently across the following areas of the College: VaPA, STEM, Health Sciences, Business, CTE, ATC, EBP and Corporate College. Employing criteria for high context programs, a first inventory was generated consisting of 324 identified labs. With input from representatives from the Operations and Facilities workgroup, the inventory was revisited by subgroup members and reduced by 48 individual labs, or 15 percent. Additionally, based on input from the Operations and Facilities workgroup, fields for estimating the percent of the lab that would be held face-to-face in fall was added, as was building location. The Operations and Facilities workgroup is reviewing the list and are assessing rooms as part of a more in-depth feasibility study. Labs are being evaluated to determine the number of students they can accommodate safely allowing for no less than 40 square feet per student. Also, to be considered is the quantity and cost of PPE to support safe student use and the density of students in each building when multiple classes are scheduled at the same time.

Each divisional Vice President continued to work with their respective areas to further refine this summary.

Work Necessary to Prepare for Face-to-Face in Fall Semester

Given the input required by the both the Operations & Facilities and Finance workgroups as to the logistical, supply and financial feasibility of each of these labs, it is anticipated that the work of the subgroup will need to continue through the month of June to fully define how face-to-face instruction can be safely conducted in the fall.

The Facilities and Operations workgroup will need to complete their site visits for each learning space associated with an identified lab for compliance with health and safety guidelines and to determine sustainable PPE recommendations. This iterative process will involve further dialogue with Tony Perez and Blaine Grindle of the Facilities and Operations Workgroup, and Heze Simmons and other members of the Finance Workgroup.

We will work closely with faculty in relevant instructional areas to develop contingency plans in the event it becomes necessary to move from face-to-face to fully online or remote instruction, if so directed by College officials or future mandates and/or guidelines as dictated by SUNY, Governor Cuomo and/or State, Federal, County or local governmental or health authorities.

The subgroup recognizes that the College will need to develop clear and consistent protocols regarding PPE and sanitization of classrooms to direct faculty who are teaching in, and students who are working in, face-to-face labs in the Fall 2020 semester. We anticipate developing these protocols as we move forward in June.

Update July 2020: This process of review of delivery method continued interactively during June and July, reducing the number of face-to-face sections planned for fall 2020. In July, the Master Schedule was updated to have the student view accurately reflect the planned mode of instruction. Each class with a face-to-face component had a review of the occupancy limit to accommodate social distancing and to establish a plan for regular sanitization of the instructional spaces.

Remote Instruction

While MCC has delivered courses online for the last two decades, the use of remote instruction is less familiar. Nevertheless, faculty showed incredible ingenuity in creating effective experiences for students

through, for example, holding synchronous lectures and group activities via Zoom. Other vehicles that were used to deliver remote include:

- MyLab Math
- Screencast-o-matic video creation, editing, and sharing
- Vimeo and YouTube for hosting video content
- For healthcare programs, continued work with facilities and preceptors via remote means, utilizing online formats to engage in real-time problem solving and trouble-shooting to support staff at clinical; and Dental students work on typodonts via Zoom
- Lab "kits" issued to students for use at home
- Collaborative Blackboard activities such as sharing work for mutual critique and feedback including video and photo projects, and students engaged in public speaking
- Figure drawing classes used remote access models and HD images of renowned works.

Faculty can draw on these experiences and other best practices to build remote classes for the Fall 2020 semester.

Update July 2020: In June 2020, the following definitions of modes of instruction were distributed to all teaching faculty members and to college leaders across the campus:

Proposed Instructional Methods for Fall 2020 (revised 6/17/20)

Instructional Code	Description and Examples of Instructional Methods
TDN (code 1*)	**Traditional** Face-to-face instruction, no reduction in seat-time. Instruction can be web enhanced. (note: this will not be available for the fall 2020 semester)
SLN (code 2)	**Online** Instruction occurs asynchronously online; 100% of direct instruction occurs under time delay. Instructors may hold optional synchronous online activities.
RMT (code 3)	**Remote** 100% of the direct instruction occurs remotely in real time via Zoom or some other learning platform. Students will be required to attend class meetings remotely based on the class meeting schedule. Example: A class is originally scheduled to be delivered MWF 10-10:50. The faculty will meet with student synchronously MWF from 10-10:50, each week.
RMT-H (code 4)	**Remote Hybrid** 50% or more of the direct instruction occurs remotely in real time via Zoom or some other learning platform, but synchronous class time is reduced from the established course seat time. The balance of the learning outcomes in Remote-Hybrid would be completed asynchronously. Example: A class is originally scheduled to be delivered MWF 10-10:50. The faculty member decides to meet synchronously MF 10-10:50 and to hold an asynchronous activity of instructional value that is of a length of 50 minutes each week.
BH (code 5)	**Hybrid—Brighton Campus** A portion (50% or more) of the direct instruction is delivered to the students either online (asynchronously) or remote (synchronously) or remote-hybrid (synchronous and asynchronous activities) with the remaining portion of the instruction delivered face-to-face at the Brighton Campus. Example: A food service class with both lecture and lab is originally scheduled to be delivered Tuesdays from 3:00 to 3:50pm for the lecture with a lab scheduled Tuesdays

Instructional Code	Description and Examples of Instructional Methods
	from 4:00-7:50pm at the Brighton Campus. The lecture portion can be delivered either in a REMOTE or REMOTE-HYBRID fashion. However, the lab or a portion of the lab would be delivered in person.
CH (code 5)	**Hybrid—Downtown Campus** A portion (50% or more) of the direct instruction is delivered to the students either online (asynchronously) or remote (synchronously) or remote-hybrid (synchronous and asynchronous activities) with the remaining portion of the instruction delivered face-to-face at the Downtown Campus. Example: A Biology class with both lecture and lab is originally scheduled to be delivered Mondays from 1:00-1:50pm and Wednesdays from 1:00-2:50 with a lab scheduled Mondays from 2:00-4:50pm at the Downtown Campus. The lecture portion can be delivered either in a REMOTE or REMOTE-HYBRID fashion. However, the lab or a portion of the lab would be delivered in person.
HYF (code 6)	**Hyflex** Combines online and face-to-face instruction simultaneously into one single course section. Students are able to participate in class in different ways: as a synchronous distance learner (via real-time, video streaming); as an asynchronous distance learner (accessing materials, recorded lectures, and responding at a later time); as a face-to-face learner (physically present in the classroom); or as a flexible learner (with a degree of choice as to how they participate each week; sometimes face-to-face, sometimes by streaming class sessions, etc.). Example: Consistent with overall restriction on face-to-face learning for student and faculty safety, this category might not be available for general use.

*The codes correspond to the SUNY designated instructional modes for reporting purposes.

Managing Learning—Use of Blackboard

The majority of our faculty use Blackboard for some or all of their course management. It serves as a vehicle for sharing documents, communicating with students, calculating grades, and posting notifications and assignments among other functions. Universal use of Blackboard benefits our students because it provides an experience consistent among their classes.

Blackboard facilitates uninterrupted course delivery in the event an instructor is ill or needs to step away from class to care for someone who is ill. Substitute instructors would be able to more easily follow the course layout and students would benefit from a more seamless transition.

> **Recommendation:** We recommend that all Fall 2020 courses use Blackboard for posting Course Information Sheets, sharing contact information with students, posting office hours, using the grading center, and providing contingency plans for courses with face- to-face activities in the event the college is forced to cancel these activities for reasons of public health. Additional recommendation Blackboard use includes having faculty post assignments and course documents and for communicating with students. This will require that all MCC faculty with a teaching assignment for fall complete at least a basic "jumpstart" Blackboard training prior to the fall semester, if they have not already done so.

Update: In June 2020, all faculty members were sent a message that, regardless of their mode of instruction in the fall 2020 semester, will be required to use our Blackboard learning management system for a select few operations. Again, these requirements were originally proposed by MCC's

Learning Experience Workgroup. Blackboard is a course management system that allows you to provide content to students in a central location, communicate with students quickly, and provide grades in an electronic format to students. Students can submit assignments and tests electronically and work with a variety of built- in Web-based tools such discussions, wikis, journals, and blogs. Students can also work within groups for team-based assignments.

To assist students in easily locating basic course information and instructor contact information, all faculty teaching in the fall will be provided with a Blackboard shell for this purpose. Universal use of a Blackboard shell to house fundamental course information benefits our students because it provides an experience consistent among their classes. For the fall 2020 semester, all courses are required to use a Blackboard shell for the following:

- *Post course information sheets*
- *Share instructor contact information with students*
- *Post office hours*
- *Use the grading center to post student grades*
- *Communicate contingency plans for courses with face-to-face activities in the event the college is forced to cancel these activities for reasons of public health.*

The Learning Experience Committee also recommends that faculty post assignments and course documents in Blackboard. All of these actions would greatly facilitate uninterrupted course delivery in the event an instructor is ill or needs to step away from class to care for someone who is ill. Substitute instructors would be able to more easily follow the course layout and students would benefit from a more seamless transition.

Our Instructional Technologies group has developed web-based resources that include Blackboard training options for faculty depending on their level of proficiency and planned use. Self-paced training will be provided in basic Blackboard functions that would equate to what Instructional Technologies refers to as Level I Blackboard training. The courses use an open, self-paced fully-online design at different levels that target the following audiences:

- *Those who have never taught online before*
- *Those who have taught online, but not using Blackboard Learn 9*
- *Those who have taught in Blackboard, but not with Monroe Community College*
- *Those who are already MCC certified, but would like a refresher.*

Assessing Learning—Grades, Exams, Alternative Grading System

Fundamental aspects of course delivery such as assessments, exams, and grading, must be reexamined under the circumstances where all or most courses are delivered remotely.

- Many faculty members include attendance as a component of the final grade. Remote instruction poses new considerations for recording attendance and adjustments might be needed such as using attendance procedures similar to those for asynchronous online classes.

    Recommendation: Ensure class attendance practices do not inadvertently penalize students for events beyond their control, such as coronavirus-related illnesses. In addition, attendance practices must be structured so they do no disincentivize students from staying home if they are ill,

- Traditional face-to-face proctored testing will not be available for the fall semester and online proctoring options are not always available. Faculty were encouraged to seek alternative assessment techniques to meet course learning outcomes. This included using authentic tasks that upheld academic integrity, Blackboard tests with large randomized pools of questions to make a unique test for each student, and timed tests.

Recommendation: MCC should convene a cross-divisional committee to identify remote proctoring technology and other testing options that are affordable, reliable, accessible, and equitable. The committee would be charged with providing a recommendation for limited number of proctoring solutions that have both high-tech and low-tech options.

Update: In June 2020, we charged an ad hoc committee to look at remote proctoring options and to identify alternative pedagogical and assessment models that would make it possible to significantly reduce the felt need to base assessment on proctored exams. Under the current circumstances we want to stress that finding alternatives to proctored tests will help us in our effort to reduce pandemic-related risks to our students. The committee was asked to identify a standard campus technology solution that is affordable, sustainable, effective, and user-friendly for most faculty and students. The committee was also asked to identify a lower tech protocol for using Zoom or other synchronous methods for virtual proctoring where the standard technology solution is not feasible and/or desirable.

Moreover, the committee was asked to develop a protocol for a very limited on-campus proctoring option for students who cannot use either of the above options. Their report has been received and feasibility of and plans for implementation of the recommendations.

- MCC adopted an alternative grading system for the Spring 2020 semester to mitigate some of the negative pressures for students in adapting to remote instruction. As we move forward, students are continuing to grapple with stressors related to the pandemic and they will continue to be uncertain about elements of remote instruction for summer and fall. Additionally, MCC faculty are still learning to deliver content remotely.

    Recommendation: In order to give students the opportunity to learn without being penalized for struggling unduly with remote learning, MCC should explore the continued use of an alternative grading system for Summer and Fall 2020.

Support of Instructional Delivery

Quality instructional support enhances the experiences faculty are able to deliver to students. We learned there are important considerations for supporting faculty with remote instruction. This includes professional development and training opportunities for faculty; enhanced library and learning support services; facilitation of communications to and from students; and class accessibility.

Professional Development and Training Opportunities

Our Teaching and Creativity Center helps faculty members engage in reflective dialogue and apply current research to actual practice. The TCC continued its mission remotely and they are adding resources specific to delivery of remote instruction available on the TCC's website. The Virtual Campus is refining its Blackboard Level I training to support the recommendation that all faculty master certain identified Blackboard features.

Library and Learning Support Services

The role of the library in instructional support will not change in substance, however, the mechanics of the support must be adjusted. Library staff built a COVID-19 webpage to provide information on such things as library resources, research help, information on courses reserves, and interlibrary loans. They also created a one-stop coronavirus resource page for faculty and students with links to internal and external sources of information on the pandemic.

Learning support services will continue to offer high quality options to help our students. These will include synchronous and asynchronous tutoring; course-based learning assistance and supplemental instruction; academic workshops; and structured supports for certain student populations.

Communications

Developing a coherent communication strategy is always important, but the Spring 2020 semester taught us that the choice of strategies for remote instruction is even more consequential. For example, over reliance on email as the main vehicle for content delivery and collection of student work overwhelmed both students and faculty. Additionally, ensuring that students and faculty use their MCC email will avert potential miscommunications.

Accessibility

Faculty and students may have encountered challenges related to accessibility with the speedy move to remote instruction. As we move into continued remote instructional delivery, we should be proactively identifying and eliminating aspects of course formats that interfere with accessibility. This should include the use of closed-captioning of instructional videos and the use of 12-point font.