

## **Message to Gonzaga Faculty**

September 4, 2009

Good Afternoon,

This e-mail contains additional guidance on the GU plan to respond to a possible outbreak of the H1N1 virus on campus. The contents of this message are limited to dealing with two of the academic issues that may arise from such an outbreak; i.e., increased absenteeism and the need to continue the academic program in the event the university is unable to hold class on campus. Plans for dealing with issues outside the classroom are in place. You can read separate messages sent to Gonzaga staff, students and parents on the GU Student Health Center's H1N1 update page at:

<http://www.gonzaga.edu/Student-Life/support-for-students/Wellness/Health-Center/>

**Absenteeism:** Due to the fact that the H1N1 virus is passed through contact with an infected person, medical guidance recommends having students who have symptoms of the illness restrict themselves to their residences until they are no longer contagious. The campus Health Center is advising symptomatic students to self-isolate for five to seven days. This guidance needs to be reflected in how faculty members respond to what could be high levels of absenteeism due to an outbreak of H1N1.

Please be as flexible as possible in both excusing illness related absences and in working with these students to make sure that they don't fall behind in their coursework. The Student Health Center will, per their normal operating procedure, continue to issue fee slips to students who see providers at the clinic. Many faculty members in the past have relied upon these slips or a doctor's note from another source as evidence of an excused absence. However, it should be expected that many students who come down with this illness might be dealt with through phone triage or may not seek medical care, at least until such time as the virus proves to be more potent than at present.

Faculty members should also plan for the possibility of themselves being absent for a period of time due to illness. The combination of the "regular" flu virus and the H1N1 virus could very well lead to high levels of

absenteeism across the faculty. It would be prudent for all faculty members to anticipate and plan for this possibility.

**Continuation of the Academic Program:** For reasons of finance, space, faculty availability, and student progression, we must be prepared to continue to deliver our academic program in the event we are unable to hold class sessions on campus for a period of time. Being ready to do so is the responsibility of all faculty members.

The implementation of this policy may vary across the institution, but the basic goal of continuing our courses in the event of a shutdown must be met. It is recognized that some courses (e.g., labs, tutorials, etc.) will have to be addressed outside of this general guidance. The deans have been asked to work with department chairs and individual faculty members in responding to the challenges presented by these scenarios.

Expecting that most faculty members will choose to use Blackboard as the primary platform for responding to this requirement, the following resources will be available to train and support faculty in their use of this technology:

1. Gonzaga Information Technology Services (ITS) will offer increased introductory Blackboard training per the schedule attached to the end of this message.
2. ITS has placed a number of Blackboard tutorials on their website and will be developing additional tutorials in the weeks ahead. The current list of options, the future tutorials, and the web site addresses are included at the end of this message.
3. The deans will be identifying a list of individuals in the college and schools who have volunteered to serve as mentors for those faculty members who desire help with Blackboard.

The law school will be using The West Education Network in place of Blackboard as the primary platform for delivering their courses in the event of a shutdown. Training has already been arranged for those law faculty members who are not conversant with this technology.

Due to the possibility that the H1N1 virus could have an extraordinary impact on our operations it is necessary for us to be prepared for an outbreak. My hope is that we will engage in this planning and then not have to put into operation. However, in the event we do, having your course ready to go in Blackboard or on another platform will allow students to continue their studies during any unavoidable disruption.

The deans are required to certify to the AVP office by October 5<sup>th</sup> that their programs are in compliance with these directives.

Thank you in advance for your flexibility and your willingness to act in the best interests of the institution and its students.

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