August 28, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As we come to the close of our first week of classes, I wanted to express my gratitude for everything you are doing to get our students off to a good start to the semester. Our campus may look and feel a little different this week, but the excitement of students beginning a new semester of classes is easy to observe, and I know how much of that is due to your efforts. So thank you, in the midst of the ongoing challenges of this public health crisis, for your commitment to our students.

I also wanted to touch base about a couple of issues that have come to our attention. There has been some confusion about the notification process for a student who tests positive for COVID 19 or who needs to self-isolate due to possible exposure. It is important to remember that far more students may need to self-isolate as a result of exposure than the number of students who may test positive. If a student tests positive for COVID or needs to self-isolate, the instructor will receive an email like the one below from Student Affairs. This notification follows the same process for notifying faculty of students’ extended absences due extenuating circumstances as have been used previously. This notification is not confirmation that a student is COVID positive. It is a notification that the instructor should provide accommodations for continuation of instruction remotely. If you need assistance with remote instruction, please contact the Office of Digital Learning.

Example Notification:

Sam Sam, Student ID Number:111111111 will be missing class and/or attending class exclusively online through September 16th. This student has been notified that they will need to contact each professor individually to identify proper steps moving forward. We ask that you extend reasonable leniency and flexibility where possible during this time. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact our office at 325-2671 or studentaffairs@ou.edu.

Students who choose to have their tests done through an off-campus source in Cleveland County will still be reported to Goddard. The University has an agreement to perform functions and activities relating to contact tracing for COVID-19 on behalf of the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH). If you are contacted by a student disclosing a positive COVID case in your course, please direct them to complete the COVID-19 Screening and Reporting Tool if they have not already done so. Please do not ask a student to disclose the reason for their absence since this may be confidential health information protected by HIPAA laws.
We have also heard from students that some faculty are choosing to take classes fully online that are currently scheduled to be delivered in person or as a hybrid format. This is not a decision that can be made unilaterally by a faculty member. It is our obligation to deliver the course in that way that is has been listed on students’ schedules. Please do not make changes in the mode of delivery. We will continue to monitor closely the health and health care capacity trends on campus and should a decision be made to move some courses to a fully online format, you will be notified.

I appreciate all that you are doing to support each other and our students as we navigate the challenges of this semester. Please do not hesitate to contact me or a member of my team with your questions and concerns.

Warm wishes,

Jill Irvine, PhD  
Senior Vice President & Provost (Interim)  
Presidential Professor, International and Area Studies  
Affiliate Faculty, Women’s and Gender Studies  
University of Oklahoma  
(405) 325-3221

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