

UF/IFAS
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
Office of the Dean

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March 12, 2020

UF/IFAS Faculty:

As you know, the university has mandated that all instruction be moved to an online format beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 and students have been encouraged to return home. While the President's announcement indicates a projected duration until at least March 30, we should be prepared to continue online delivery of formal instruction through the end of Spring semester and perhaps longer if circumstances warrant. Our goal is to prevent the spread of coronavirus on the campus and in the surrounding community. Many students, especially those who consider Gainesville their home or who are restricted from traveling to their home will remain in Gainesville. Campus housing and other campus services will remain open. Graduate assistants and student workers can continue their assigned duties. However, no students can be compelled to remain on campus.

There are several ways that courses can be delivered online either synchronously or asynchronously. Our goal is to achieve stated student learning outcomes and progress of students to graduation. Links to resources will be included at the end of this memo.

Important considerations for moving courses online:

- Instructors should make every effort to maintain the components of the current syllabus and meet the course's original Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), albeit through alternative methods.
- If courses are delivered synchronously, the course should continue at its currently scheduled times.
- Quizzes and exams should be conducted in an online format. High-stakes exams (15% or more of the course grade) should be proctored and the university has made Honorlock available for moving exams into Canvas at no cost to the unit for face-to-face courses being moved to online this spring.
- Faculty are encouraged to consult with their unit leader, undergraduate or graduate coordinator/committee and other faculty about alternatives for assignments and assessments. **Any proposed changes to the syllabus that would affect how a student's grade would be determined must be approved by the department chair and CALS Dean's Office** (submit directly to returmer@ufl.edu).

Lab courses

Laboratory and field-based courses provide significant challenges. Instructors of these courses should carefully review the student learning outcomes and prepare online and/or independent activities to best achieve those outcomes. While hands-on experiences that are conducted on-farm or at field sites are allowable, no student can be compelled to remain on campus and so in all cases, alternative activities must be provided to students.

Student Teaching/Internships/Practicums

Students who are placed in schools, community agencies or other worksites for internships can continue their experiences at the discretion of the work site. Faculty should be prepared to provide alternative activities should the internship/practicum site close.

Undergraduate Student Research

Undergraduate students who are working in research laboratories for course credit, as OPS employees or as volunteers may continue their work, although as stated above no student can be compelled to remain on campus. Protective measures as outlined in many communications and on [UF COVID-19 Updates website](#) should be employed.

Graduate Student Research

As noted in university communications, there are no restrictions or limitations on research activities at the University of Florida at this time, including access to research facilities. All OPS employees, including postdoctoral associates and student/graduate assistants, may continue to work as appropriate. Protective measures should be employed to minimize the risk of infection.

Office Hours

Faculty and graduate teaching assistants should schedule online office hours using Zoom or a similar tool.

Thesis and Dissertation Defenses

The Graduate School has waived the requirement for the committee chair and external member to be physically present at the defense. Thus, defenses may now be conducted entirely using Zoom.

Use of Campus Facilities

The Gainesville campus and UF/IFAS Research and Education Centers remain open and students may use campus facilities to access computers and other tools needed to complete course assignments.

Academic Advising

Staff and faculty should conduct advising via Zoom or a similar tool.

Resources for Online Teaching

The university has established a site to help faculty with transitioning face-to-face courses to online delivery: <https://elearning.ufl.edu/keep-teaching>. The Resources page has a number of useful tools, particularly for those who are less familiar with online teaching. Your colleagues and departmental support staff are also a source of assistance as is the CALS Center for Online Learning and Technology (COLT).

CALS faculty needing additional assistance transitioning their on-campus courses should complete the online [services request form for COVID-19 related assistance](#), to ask for technical support on instructional technologies or help with Canvas course sites, reserve a recording room, borrow recording equipment or request video help for online labs. All faculty should be aware that as we prioritize helping with the transition of on-campus to online courses in response to the COVID-19 situation, COLT will not be taking new non-COVID-19 related requests for assistance at this time, and current projects will experience delays.

A Teams site for CALS Teaching Support is being developed with information and tips for moving teaching online. It will also serve as a platform for CALS faculty to share their experiences, ideas and questions about the immediate rapid transition to online learning, and going forward, about teaching and instructional

technology generally. It will be especially helpful for faculty to share ideas related to moving labs online in this short time frame. Site channels have been set up for posting questions and ideas and organizing resources by topic.

To join the Team, use the join code **w78rmv5**. If Teams is not already open on your computer, search for Microsoft Teams from the Windows icon at the bottom left, then click "Join or create a team" at the bottom and enter the code in the "Join a team with a code" option (see details to get started with Teams at <https://it.ufsa.ufl.edu/tutorials/teams/>).

These are extraordinary times and you are being asked to do extraordinary things. Please know that your efforts are appreciated, and your questions/comments/concerns are welcomed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elaine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

R. Elaine Turner
Dean and Professor

cc: Jack Payne
Joe Glover
Department Chairs
Center Directors