August 10, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

In preparation for the upcoming academic year, I would like to share a few resources that will support your work preparing for the start of classes.

Course Design and Teaching
The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) offers many teaching resources available online, including the Creating an Inclusive Classroom website to help you create an environment that supports learning for all students. Visit CELT's upcoming events site to learn more about using Canvas and other CELT professional development programs offered throughout the academic year.

Syllabus Preparation and Statements
CELT's Mindful and Learner-Centered Syllabus Checklist is a useful reference to create or update a syllabus. The checklist includes required and recommended syllabus statements related not only to free expression, but also to academic integrity, disability accommodation, Prep Week, harassment and discrimination, and religious accommodation.

The Syllabus Statements option is available in the Canvas course navigation. If not visible by default, instructors can enable Syllabus Statements inside their Canvas course(s). This option is automatically populated with the required and recommended syllabus statements and can help ensure students are aware of these important policies.

As a reminder, Iowa State's Free Expression Syllabus Statement is required to be used verbatim in all university courses, as communicated in November 2020, and affirmed by the Board of Regents.

Student Mental Health Resources
Instructors are encouraged to provide students with information on how to access resources related to health and wellness. Student Health and Wellness has developed a Faculty, Staff and Employee Toolkit to support student health and wellbeing. Consider linking to the toolkit from your Canvas course. Instructors can play a critical role in creating a campus-wide culture of wellbeing by promoting mental health through the Cyclone Support and Therapy Assistance Online campaigns.

Class Attendance
Class attendance policies, and student expectations related to attendance, were impacted significantly as a result of COVID-19. As was the case in Fall 2021, we continue to follow the attendance policy outlined in the Faculty Handbook whereby faculty set their own standards for attendance.

Instructors should communicate attendance expectations clearly to students through the course syllabus, in-class and via Canvas announcements, and other relevant means. Instructors are encouraged to be flexible in their expectations as the conditions related to COVID on our campus continue to evolve. Visit the ISU Public Health website for the most current information.

Prep Week Policy
The last full week of classes before final examinations is designated as Prep Week. Instructors generally may not give final examinations during Prep Week. Due dates for mandatory graded submissions that occur during Prep Week must be listed on the syllabus and communicated at the start of the semester. Exceptions to the policy must be approved by the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost.

Required Course Presence in Canvas
All Iowa State courses are required to have a presence in Canvas, the university's learning management system. CELT has a number of resources available on the Canvas website, including a Quick Start Guide. The website also includes a helpful section if you are planning to use the Online Testing Center to administer exams this semester.

Student Engagement
The COVID-19 pandemic created numerous changes to students' academic experience over the last two years – both for students on campus and those who were still in high school. A Spring 2022 Faculty Senate Taskforce on Student Engagement created a set of recommendations to help all of campus engage students in their academic experience. Please consider adopting some of these recommendations in your course this year. Of particular note is the suggestion to use the first week of a lab course to build community.

Resources for Students
Iowa State's Dean of Students portfolio includes many departments with resources to assist your students, including Student Accessibility Services, Multicultural Student Affairs, the Academic Success Center, the Writing and Media Center, and the Office of Student Assistance. Other services such as Student Counseling are available through the Thielen Student Health Center. Many college Student Services Offices also provide support options for students who may be struggling academically or financially.

Final Stage of Moving Students from CyMail to Outlook
The multi-year project led by ITS to move students from CyMail to Outlook will be completed this fall. All students will begin fall semester using Outlook for email and calendaring. Some students may not remember this change is happening and a reminder from you so they don't miss an important email or assignment on their calendar might be helpful!

Learning Spaces
The IT Audiovisual Experience Team encourages you to visit your classroom before the semester begins to do a test run with the technology. If you have questions about learning technology or would like an individualized training session, please contact the team at 4-9063 or email at avxt@iastate.edu. As a reminder, should an unexpected classroom technology issue arise during class, contact the Solutions Center at 4-4000 and they will quickly route issues to the Audiovisual Experience Team as needed. The goal of the AVXT is to be in the classroom within 15 minutes of receiving a page from the Solution Center.

Best wishes for a successful Fall Semester,

Ann Marie VanDerZanden
Associate Provost for Academic Programs