

From: Williams, Shelia **On Behalf Of** Dahlberg, Teresa
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 3:03 PM
To: TCU Faculty
Subject: The TCU Connected Campus: A continuity plan for academic affairs

On Behalf of Dr. Teresa Abi-Nader Dahlberg

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you! As we near the last day of class, I continue to marvel at how much you have accomplished despite unprecedented challenges, not seen in our lifetimes. I continue to feel blessed to be within the Horned Frog community and hope the end of the semester will allow you a much-needed break and a chance to rejuvenate.

I write today to inform you that we are making great progress toward the development of our *TCU Connected Campus* plan – our plan to ensure Texas Christian University is prepared for the remainder of 2020 and beyond. We are dealing with so many factors outside our control, it is critical that we prioritize an academic continuity plan that allows us to deliver the TCU experience in various and flexible ways.

To be clear, at this time, we are planning for a return to campus for the fall semester. However, this effort is meant to ensure we have a refreshed continuity plan that allows us to deliver the TCU experience regardless of how the pandemic affects us in the coming months. Our students and our parents have confidence in TCU, and these efforts will strengthen our ability to deliver on connected culture.

I am grateful for your willingness to join me in keeping our students engaged and learning both on campus and online. For the near future, I am focused on this plan as my highest priority.

An introduction to the TCU Connected Campus plan for academic affairs ...

We aspire to advance our vision beyond online instruction, and towards extending broader *TCU Connected Campus* experiences across multiple formats of learning and engagement - including on-campus and virtual domains. These *connected* experiences include the hallmarks of a TCU experience for which we are known: high-quality, personalized instruction, academic progression, student advising, student services and opportunities for extra-curricular engagement across programs and campus wide.

Near-term goals are two-fold:

1. **Your Summer Just Got Smarter:** As we move toward the conclusion of the spring term, we continue to cultivate ways to keep our TCU students connected to our campus community. One way is by offering our students opportunities in summer courses. With the support of the Koehler Center, we are poised to offer high quality, engaging summer courses to keep our students engaged, connected and on course in their academic progress. A website has been

launched to provide information and resources in one location at <https://www.tcu.edu/summer/index.php>. Additional financial aid opportunities are available for this summer's terms. Information can be found at <https://financialaid.tcu.edu/apply-for-aid/summer-aid.php>. Please keep these resources in mind as you engage with your students at the close of this semester.

2. **TCU Connected Campus:** TCU fall courses as well as other extracurricular aspects of the connected campus experience demand our flexibility and extra attention to the student experience. This means that we must be prepared to continue learning and engagement within various modalities as well as movement between these modalities.
 - **On Campus:** traditional course delivery with all students on campus.
 - **Modified On Campus:** all/most students attend classes on campus, but medium or large gatherings are prohibited.
 - **Online:** online learning delivery if health guidance does not permit students to return to campus.
 - **Dual:** flexibility of delivering and transitioning between both on campus and online coursework. Students attend classes on campus, but online class is also delivered to students who are not able to be on campus.

Two key expectations for “instructors of record” are:

1. TCU instructors of record for the summer and fall 2020 semester will be verified by the Koehler Center as having completed the Hybrid Course training or as having demonstrated skills to opt out of all or portions of the training. Training will take up to 12 hours (online), include inclusive classroom training and must be completed by August 1, 2020, according to a prescribed schedule that enables development and verification of over 1,000 instructors by that date. This professional development will enable us to include live virtual instruction in all online courses and continue the TCU high-touch, personalized learning even when online.
2. TCU instructors of record for fall 2020 will redesign their courses as needed to support delivery within the four modes described above. Articulation of such will be included in syllabi. The deans are forming college-centric teams to support course redesign for individual courses and programs. Setting student expectations for learning across the four modes will help alleviate anxiety if and when transitions occur.

The pandemic is imposing personal challenges on each of us, as well as mandating our intense focus on teaching during all of 2020. This means that our planned progress on

scholarship may be slowed. I previously referred to the TCU Faculty-Staff Handbook passage *"In the case of an extraordinary experience or event beyond the individual's control that affects a non-tenured faculty member's performance... the faculty member may request an extension of the probationary period"* (p. 52). I will extend the probationary period for any faculty member requesting such based on COVID-19 as an "extraordinary experience" for faculty within their first five years on the tenure track. You may request extensions now, or request such at the normally scheduled time.

This is a lot of information to absorb, but I promised that I would keep you informed. Over the next week, I will continue to work with faculty from each college, the faculty senate executive committee and Deans, who have been reviewing the draft plan and providing feedback. We will provide more details over the coming weeks. Also, we are working with the marketing and communication team to develop descriptive messaging and strategies to support our investment in proactive planning.

This work will not only proactively prepare us for whatever the next few months bring us but will put TCU in a position of strength for the future. I sincerely appreciate your patience and grace as we navigate through this together.

With deep gratitude,

Teresa

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