

MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST



Dear Faculty Colleagues,

The following statement from the Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee is endorsed by Pamela Grimm, Chair of Faculty Senate; Deborah C. Smith, President TT Unit AAUP-KSU; Tracy Laux, President, FTNTT Unit AAUP-KSU; and Melody Tankersley, Interim Senior Vice President and Provost.

Statement on Academic Freedom and Faculty Responsibilities in the Remote Teaching Environment

The Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee (ACC) has considered the impact on instructors and students from the continuing disruption caused by COVID-19. With a focus on issues critical to the continued academic progress of our students and the success of our instructors, the ACC continues to be concerned about the challenges that instructors and students face in remote teaching and learning environments. This statement reaffirms the University and its faculty's shared commitment to academic freedom and student success.

REMOTE INSTRUCTION

At Kent State University, the term "remote" reflects a new scheduling category created post COVID-19. A remote course is one that was originally scheduled to be taught in a traditional face to face format but is now being taught remotely. Remote courses do not incur an additional fee for students. Remote courses differ from courses formally designated "online" in that the "online" scheduling category existed pre-COVID-19 and online courses incur an additional fee for students. Both remote and online courses can be delivered synchronously, asynchronously, or any combination thereof.

Instructors and students who originally expected traditional, face-to-face instruction, and who have had to move to a remote format, may lack clearly defined expectations in this novel learning environment. Instructors must maintain a significant and appropriate level of instructor presence through meaningful synchronous or asynchronous interaction and feedback. All synchronous elements of a course must take place during the section's scheduled class time. Students must be informed about how the course will be

delivered, including expectations for synchronous and asynchronous components of the course, and the technology that will be required. In all cases, activities must meet the learning outcomes of the course. Within these constraints, instructors have the flexibility to use any combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction methods to meet the learning outcomes of a course.

ESSENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Remote instruction spans a continuum. On one end of the continuum is fully asynchronous instruction; at the other fully synchronous instruction, with live learning experiences/lectures/discussions/team exercises constituting the entire instructional time scheduled for the course. However, these are the extremes and faculty members teaching remote courses can use any combination of asynchronous and synchronous instruction. Individual instructors know their subject matter and they have a strong sense of students' abilities and challenges. Instructors are also keenly aware of their own strengths and limitations in various teaching formats and modalities. In keeping with the principles of academic freedom, all pedagogical choices are up to the individual instructor.

To learn more about the choices available and to ensure instructors have the tools they need to achieve the highest quality instruction, instructors are encouraged to consult with the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Continuing and Distance Education, their academic unit administrators, and their colleagues for resources and guidance as they master the transition to a remote teaching and learning environment.

As we reaffirm our shared commitment to the principles of academic freedom in these unusual times in higher education worldwide, we encourage instructors to be creative and make pedagogical choices that will leverage their own teaching strengths and give students the greatest opportunity and support for learning success.

Thank you,

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Chair, Faculty Senate

Deborah C. Smith

TT Unit President, AAUP-KSU

Tracy Laux

FTNTT Unit President, AAUP-KSU

Melody Tankersley

Interim Senior Vice President and Provost

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Associate and Assistant Deans
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