

Teaching Tips: Planning for Course Continuity During Emergencies Related to Hurricanes and H1N1

Pensacola has been fortunate to have experienced quiet hurricane seasons during the past three years. However, among the many lessons learned following the direct impacts of Hurricane Ivan (2004) and Hurricane Dennis (2005), faculty at UWF have learned to anticipate the potential disruptive effects of natural disasters on their courses. This fall, we face a new potential source of disruption: widespread illness related to the H1N1 virus.

Include safety and emergency preparedness information on your syllabus

Instructors should include information about safety and emergency procedures on the course syllabus. Describe how your course would be continued or completed if an emergency were to close the University for an extended period of time, including a description of the tools you would use to continue class instruction electronically if face-to-face classroom instruction were suspended (e.g., following campus evacuation for a natural disaster or if the campus were quarantined to control a pandemic).

Learn to use the instructional tools available through eLearning to communicate with students and maintain continuity of the course electronically in the event that the campus is quarantined for face-to-face instruction to prevent spread of infection.

The basic eLearning tools that might be used to support continuation of a face-to-face class during quarantine include:

- Grade book for tracking and posting student grades on assignments
- Drop boxes for submitting student assignments and providing feedback on assignments
- Procedures for posting and sharing documents and other course materials online
- Group mail to efficiently contact all students in the course via email
- Announcements and News tools in the course for communicating with students in the course

Additional eLearning tools are available that more technologically-skilled faculty might use as part of an alternate plan to support instruction and maintain course continuity following an emergency.

Select one day during the semester to conduct a test run in which you conduct class using these electronic tools. This exercise will develop and promote technical literacy skills in both faculty and students.

During hurricane season (June 1 through November 30) faculty should consider including one or two days of “flexible time” in the course schedule to accommodate potential campus closures or class suspensions related to emergency conditions. When this unscheduled time is not used to accommodate an actual emergency, it will create some flexible class time in the course that will enable an instructor to adjust the pace of the course and spend additional time on topics

Suggested text for inclusion on syllabus is provided on the Syllabus Construction page:

<http://uwf.edu/cutla/frs-syllabus.cfm>

Information about hurricane preparedness plans is available on the UWF web site:

<http://uwfemergency.org/hurricaneprep.cfm>

Information about other emergency procedures is available on the UWF web site:

<http://uwfemergency.org/>

that students find challenging.

Describe your policy on how you will handle official adjustments (closings and delays) to the academic calendar, including any rescheduling of examinations or assignments due to inclement weather or other campus emergencies. If necessary, make arrangements to communicate with students directly if weather conditions cause an official cancellation of a normally scheduled class. Alert students to existing emergency plans related to inclement weather, including information about where students can obtain information about campus closures. Official closures and delays are announced on the UWF website and broadcast on WUWF-FM.