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Faculty COVID-19 Reflection 22

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Spring 2020 | COVID-19 Reflection

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Academics and the Pandemic

I'll start this section with a sample email from one of my students, which was reassuring to me with the circumstances of social distancing and continuing academic growth within the confines of a semester of many challenges for our students. This example has four happy boys under the age of 12 now being home schooled by our student who has to juggle a new way of life. Typically, I don't receive a mid-semester critique of needed classroom materials and resources.

This class is totally online but I felt relief that this student found the course materials and text selection very helpful for her continued work to finish the semester.

The precautions JSU has taken because of the COVID19 pandemic has made it possible to continue my work with an added element of more technology. My courses were already online but I had to make some adjustments. From the example above, the students had added responsibilities at home and less time or less quiet time to study and prepare assigned work. My Dean didn't allow pass/no credit grades and stayed with letter grades due to state certification and national accreditation, so total points remained important. To help with accumulating the points, I dropped late assignment penalties. I emphasized I'd be ready for home telephone calls to provide assistance and of course via email. Students have taken advantage of both. Several of my faculty interactions have been on Zoom. I'm on committee for Gov. Ivey so our group was allowed to meet via conference calls, which we did vs traveling. MY workload has remained about the same. A lot of the ease of transition is directly due to the fact my courses were already on canvas and essentially we had only about a month left in the semester. Regarding faculty development, I had already completed 6 of the required 5 sessions.

I do miss collegial interactions, attending campus social and cultural events and having my office and all my files available. I had a presentation ready for the 1st Annual Faculty Research Symposium April 2 and will have to wait a reschedule in the fall.

For Fall Faculty Development, one or two sessions should be devoted to how to quickly transfer in class activities into online activities and other hints/methods for student collaboration and ideas for placing labs in online formats. Perhaps have a panel or forum with hints and discussions on how to navigate without your office but home instead.

JSU's administration was very effective in keeping us updated, carrying on normal short and long term necessities, i.e. student recruitment, etc., providing technological support for secretaries at home, and deans and dept. heads checking on faculty in a caring manner while

keeping business and meetings rolling. I think the University staff was available and supportive and visionary. Thank you.