

Enid Campus

Emailed from Enid 10/6/2020

It has been addressed that a possible furlough option is all employees furlough once or twice a month.

- There are strong concerns with taking faculty out of the classroom and away from the students once or twice a month. If this were to occur even once a month, an instructor is technically working 15 of the 16 weeks in a semester.
- This directly affects the students in a way that is not in their best interest.
- If this is the decision decided upon, there needs to be transparency with students and parents.
- Will students/parents be okay with losing their instructor(s) for a week during the semester? Especially when their tuition and fees are not being reduced.
- Can faculty be furloughed in this way? Is it considered a breach of contract? Legal?
- Many would like furlough decisions to be addressed before January. It is preferred furlough decisions be made (and told) based upon initial enrollment numbers (late November/December) as opposed to final enrollment numbers. That way individuals can make necessary decisions if needed rather than waiting until after the semester starts.
- Would furloughs, or even potential elimination of faculty and/staff positions, be by campus or by institutional seniority? If, say, numbers improve in Tonkawa in SP2021, but drop in Stillwater, would Stillwater be more likely to have furloughed or RIFs than Tonkawa?

RESPONSE: No decisions have yet been made about furloughs and the length of time that may be needed if they are used but we will follow legal counsel if we have to use this option. Lisa noted that some faculty were sharing that the cuts would be 20%; there is no basis for this assumption at this time.

Is our institution being viewed as a business when cut decisions are being considered? Difficult times results in very difficult decisions being made. Are cuts being driven by numbers as opposed to tradition and feelings?

- Do our enrollment numbers justify the current number of faculty within each division? Some division(s) feel enrollment numbers do not justify the current number of full-time faculty within that department.
- Do our enrollment numbers justify keeping some degree programs? Is it time to cut some degree programs for which the enrollment numbers are very low?
- Do our numbers justify the number of staff within some offices? Overstaffed office(s)?
- Do our numbers justify campus programs (ie ~ Enid community/pep band was cut)? Cost/benefit of all programs need to be evaluated.
- Are the cost/benefit of areas such as the radio station being considered? With zoom capabilities now, is the cost of ITV still necessary? Suspend professional development temporarily? These are a few questions being asked.

RESPONSE: All of these questions have been part of our review for a number of years during budget hearings as we've had cuts and will continue to be part of the discussions.

Additional Questions/Comments:

- It seems our online enrollment numbers are consistently stable or on the increase. Perhaps we need to 1) offer more online classes and 2) make a concerted effort to offer more degrees that can be completed online.

RESPONSE: We've done both. See numbers in the schedule letter on 10/7 for online offerings. Note the electronic approval process that is in the works for additional degrees this year.

- Some interesting news came out about OSU and UCO. They are eliminating their spring breaks this year and starting classes a week later in spring. This has me concerned that NOC will take the same route. I personally would rather have spring break. It's kind of a time in the middle of the semester that I can decompress and catch up with everything. It's also the time, my children are out of school, my spouse takes off and we get some valuable time together in the middle of the chaotic school and work schedule. I personally think if NOC is going to consider this, the faculty should be involved in the decision. I think this needs to be brought up during the faculty affairs meeting. I don't know how all of the rest of you feel about this, but with everything going on, the possible furloughs and budget problems, the continual expansion of our duties, we should at least get a say on whether we want to eliminate spring break or not. I mean we already lost fall break in all this chaos.
- I think we need to add these items to be taken into consideration in regards to spring break....
We have non-traditional students with kids out.
We have concurrent students whose family use spring break for vacations.
Many students see spring break as a time to decompress and get their mental health in a better state.
Others use it as a time to catch up on anything.
With the furloughs and everything, the possibility that we would lose this break in the semester is just something that is really just hitting hard. I mean, we give and give, we continue to expand our duties without a raise, we as faculty have been put through the ringer honestly and to possibly do this without even asking us or even students, who we know will be upset, an opinion about it is just upsetting. I personally am still angry about fall break and the whole thanksgiving. I didn't need a week off for thanksgiving. Wed, Thurs, Fri was enough for me.
- I have heard students complain already that they are paying the same amount even though they are not able to attend traditional classes as usual and are required to zoom.

REPOSENSE: Students still have the option for in-person classes with access to on-site services. In only a few areas are classes using alternating attendance and this does not keep students away from campus services.

- Taking spring break away is not a good decision in my opinion. Especially if we announce it this early. How can we know what March will bring? We ALL need that break. I do not believe it will be well received by students either. Have we considered that they are the consumer here? Personally, if I were a student & knew spring break were eliminated I would transfer elsewhere. Everyone has families and a great number plan family vacations during that break.

RESPONSES ON ALL SPRING BREAK TOPICS: Note the MOU with OSU and other reasons as listed in the Oct. 6 letter.

Stillwater Campus

Emailed from Stillwater 10/6/2020

According to a previous email: If the class members and instructors are considered “primary contacts” by the Health Department, they will all be contacted by the Health Department, the room will be closed for 24 hours, and then it will be thoroughly cleaned. I have had numerous students tell me they have tested positive and received the emails from NOC & OSU about students being quarantined. Although the emailed letters do not actually state that the student(s) have tested positive, the students have told me themselves. I have yet to see the rooms I teach in be closed for 24 hours. Are we not following our own protocol or plan? I may be wrong since I teach in Stillwater MWF then at the UC/in Tonkawa on TR, so maybe the rooms are actually closed for 24 hours, but none of my Stillwater colleagues have noticed any room closures.

RESPONSE: As verified by Jason Johnson and Diana Watkins, we have had no primary contacts in any classrooms to date. The Health Department would consider these people who have been exposed without the safety protocols we’re following of 6 feet and a mask. Diana verified on 10/6 that Stillwater classrooms are disinfected every night with the electrostatic sprayers. Larry verified also on 10/6 that the protocol is being followed still in Enid and Tonkawa.

Gene noted there is a difference between CDC and scientific community guidelines with the latter not showing evidence for the recommendation for 6 feet distancing.

Emailed from Stillwater 10/6/2020

- “I would like to know if they are planning to participate in the payroll tax exemption (hopefully not).”

RESPONSE: We are not participating in the payroll tax exemption per President Evans.

- “What is the driving decision for the virtual classes only after fall break/thanksgiving break? Is it for student safety? If so, why are we (faculty)required to come to campus to teach, respond to students, meet with committees, etc. electronically? Is it assumed that the faculty are not trusted- that their location dictates their commitment to students? If it is for safety precautions, does admin realize that the message they are conveying to faculty is that THEIR safety means nothing to the college?”

RESPONSE: Contact with students will be reduced for all employees after Thanksgiving Break. Services will still be available, some students may still be in residence hall, and we will need to be enrolling for spring, but Health Dept. recommendations have reinforced that after holidays and vacation breaks, there is an increased likelihood of new cases. Classes will be conducted virtually during that window and faculty, like all other employees, will be able to work in their office areas to continue the important work of the college.

Emailed 9/29 from Stillwater

I have not had the chance to speak with all the faculty either about COVID, but the ones I have spoken to have said that they feel as though the numbers of cases Stillwater and the Stillwater hospital capacity numbers (and safety for us) do give good enough reason to move to virtual.

RESPONSE: Note that there is not agreement across the institution on this as indicated by the reply below from Enid (9/25)

FYI...while the number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase, and angst rises among faculty, I've not had any new "issues" associated with covid to report. The main topic is always, "when is enough, enough, why not transition now?" "Why is it so political, just follow the science!"

I have spoken with some faculty that feel differently. They have angst feelings towards the thought of transitioning to distance learning. Within the math department in Enid, the four of us have had very few students needing to isolate/quarantine. Personally I have been surprised and grateful for having so few needing to isolate/quarantine. I also took a look at NOC's Weekly Pandemic Update. The active cases (0% for employees, 0.8% primary contact for students and 0.6% student positives) are very low. Personally I do not see that the numbers warrant us to transition to distance learning. And that is not being stated as a political viewpoint :)

I did send out a poll to the faculty, per their request, to see how they felt about having an ad hoc COVID19 committee vs utilizing the faculty affairs to discuss and share information for any concerns regarding teaching in the pandemic. According to the Survey Monkey results, 64% would prefer a committee, and 36% would prefer to utilize the faculty affairs committee.

RESPONSE: With other campus responses, we can discuss which option most faculty prefer overall on the committee question.

Tonkawa Campus

Emailed from Tonkawa 9/30

FYI...I sent out asking about a committee structure concerning COVID with 3 options...1) status quo, allowing FA to handle, 2) form task force, or 3) seek faculty representation on Emergency Response Team. Thus far, 6 responses: option 1 has 2 votes, option 2 has 1 vote, option 3 has 2 votes, one person didn't care.

Additional items for consideration at our next meeting:

- 1) What can we do about getting support for at Student Wellness/Campus Nurse on the Enid/Tonkawa Campuses – I would imagine that there is some sort of grant or other way we can get for support for that. It seems odd that we have a Nursing School but have to go to an urgent care in Enid or Ponca for some of the simple stuff – like testing. – This would be a great retention tool.

RESPONSE: shared with Jena Kodesh to search for other grants; one was applied for when Brandi was in grants coordinator role but we were not approved

- 2) What can we do about recruiting adjunct folks – i.e. so we can add more courses and at off times like evenings and weekends.

RESPONSE: Faculty contacts with students in doctoral programs and relationships with local agencies such as Vance have been most helpful in the past. Please talk to your division chairs about areas of need as other fte faculty's desire to teach the online sections might be one challenge.

- 3) I am sure it is going to come up – but in the COVID plan there is a statement about “employees” being on campus after Thanksgiving – not sure that it is exactly clear to everyone – what this means. Same with the Furlough issue – for faculty. (We got it explained in the chair's meeting – but I don't think that it is fully clear across the board.)

RESPONSE: addressed again in letter to be sent 10/8/2020

- 4) Now that we aren't as locked into the Food Service Contract – can we do more food pantry items – for students, employee and faculty, i.e. the “convenience” store option. We have seen an expansion – but I know we were limited before because of the contract – but this also might be a revenue generator.

RESPONSE: Yes, there are opportunities for review. Please share any specific suggestions with Jennifer, who is looking at expanding variety in offerings.

Gene—Recommended that it would be helpful if students receive emails about campus job opportunities in the dining facilities as well.

- 5) I've been having too many minor issues with the ITV classrooms, such as no volume, projector not working, etc. I know IT is probably overwhelmed right now, but with students in the classroom, a distant site, and on Zoom, I need all the equipment working to teach my classes.

RESPONSE: Remind faculty to submit regular tracking orders.

- 6) ...we have to start focusing on recruitment. We have the looming word “furlough” being thrown around so I think maybe that needs to be on the forefront of the faculty as well.

RESPONSE: Oct. 1 task force is continuing this work in recruitment/retention.

- 7) Zoom has brought on another work load. I have always complained that students don't email and communicate with teachers. They are this semester and I spend an hour every morning just answering emails.

RESPONSE: Agreed, everyone seems to be working harder right now to adapt to the changes. We hope some degree of normalcy returns soon.

- 8) When mass e-mails are sent, IT-Machia will send out an e-mail to faculty concerning use of Bcc vs Cc if they used Cc instead of Bcc. IT wants all to be sent out as Bcc, not Cc. The purpose of the Cc is to allow transparency, and for all to see who's in the know. If faculty receive correspondence from the "author" with no Cc, than they have no idea whom else has seen the correspondence. Therefore, often resulting in confusion and redundancy because now they have to inquire with xxx and xxx to ascertain details or address concerns/issues.

RESPONSE: Suggest that transparency can be achieved in noting who has received the messages with salutations.

Emailed from Tonkawa 9/24

"I'm not sure if anyone has said anything to you but often times when having a Zoom class there will be an extra person in the class. The screen says *** and they won't answer when called on. I believe it is someone from IT monitoring the class."

RESPONSE: It is not unusual for IT to check in on classes to ensure there are no technical difficulties that they need to be aware of (e.g. dropped calls that the instructor may not see) but we're checking in to this issue.

Request for Faculty Feedback for next time: What additional protocol should we write into institutional guidelines (as opposed to instructor preferences as described in syllabi) for students taking classes online live?