

Dear Colleagues,

Are you well? Are you taking time to breathe and to connect with your peers and your communities? It's Friday afternoon in NYC, and we've nearly made it through an incredibly tough week. Thank you for staying with us and being committed to our students and to learning.

I'm humbled by the trust many of you have placed in me this week, and honored by the expertise and knowledge you've shared. Thank you. We do good work together.

Please read on for end of the week thoughts and responses to the shared questions from yesterday (this is a long email, and I promise to write only one per for Saturday and Sunday):

Frameworks:

On Wednesday evening, I mentioned frameworks as one of today's objectives. Frameworks are stabilizing. They set limits to what can be done and provide cues for organization. Frameworks are also conceptual. Our values and belief systems are frameworks. As you think about making the move from March 10 class conditions to March 18, think about both these definitions. Let your values help you decide what you keep and prioritize in the transition, and let the organization you had in place guide how you organize the course going forward.

Shared Questions:

What do we do for students with no or limited access to the internet and the technologies (computers, smartphones, software) they need to continue with classes?

The Library remains open for its regular hours and has computers and internet access available for students. Please check the library website for details. Additionally, the computer lab in L2 NB allows students to borrow laptops while they are on campus. However, they do not allow students to borrow the laptops for extended periods of time outside of the campus. There may be additional options: please continue to check your emails for information.

How do we continue to accommodate students with disabilities (e.g., hearing, vision, mental health)?

All essential services are available at the college, including Counseling, the Wellness Center, and other student support offices. The Disabilities Office can advise on accommodations. These FAQs from CUNY may be helpful: <https://www.cuny.edu/current-students/student-affairs/student-services/disability/student-faqs/>

What do I do if my internet access and technologies aren't reliable, available, or up to date?

If your home internet access is not working, please contact your internet provider to resolve the issue. If you do not have access to smartphones, laptops/tablets/desktop computers (only one is needed), contact DoIT for assistance and consider visiting the college (if you do this under other conditions) and public libraries to use the free machines during the times they are available. If your equipment is too old to support the current versions of Blackboard and Microsoft 365, or any other software and platforms you believe are essential to your teaching, I regretfully and respectfully suggest finding ways to upgrade or use someone else's machines.

How can I get help if I need hands-on, step-by-step help understanding Blackboard at a beginner's level?

Click on this [link](#) to set up a virtual appointment with DOES instructional designers. They will work with you gently and supportively to make it happen. Also, if you know faculty in your department who use Blackboard confidently and skillfully, reach out to them to see if they might volunteer an hour to demonstrate their knowledge. Peer mentoring makes the difference.

How can I move my course to remote teaching and learning if I'm already overloaded and overwhelmed? Are there more reasonable expectations and advice for those of us with extremely limited time (and energy)?

First, take a deep breath. And then another. You are in excellent and well populated company. Then, think about your course or courses that need to be moved. Is it possible that your expectations could be scaled down while continuing to support student learning? Can you use email (assuming everyone is reading and responding to email) and a central online storage place (Blackboard, Google Drive, Dropbox) to hold assignments and resources? Now, for meetings, do you want to try Collaborate, Zoom, Skype? Which would cost you the least time to learn and set up? Try these three tips and take some more deep breaths. You can do this. You are doing this. It can be simple and stunning.

Weekend Plans

The last few days have been dizzying and demanding. This weekend, please plan to take a break, for at least 15-30 minutes, and imagine letting go of the worries, the obligations, and the expectations (as well as the conversations filled with friction and the frustrations of not having needs met). Do what works for you, and take this time to let go.

Please plan to follow your typical weekend routines, as you can, with families and spiritual communities, with yourself and those you love. Be safe and follow advice about social distance and cleanliness, please. And live in your environment as much as you can.

Please trust your choices. If you want to be alone, value that. If you need community and connection, make it happen and safely. If you want to work on your courses, please keep going. And if you know you need to protect your weekend from extra demands, that's okay. We are

going to be ready even if our courses aren't perfect and the first few days are off-balance. We are going to be okay.

Self-care:

This resource came to my personal inbox, and I highly recommend it: [Care for Your Coronavirusanxiety](#)

In addition, please connect with your communities and let yourselves be human, If you need any counseling assistance, please call 855-492-3633 or log-in into the [Deer Oaks website](#) and type “cuny” (all lowercase) as your username and password.

Let's continue to be here for each other and true to ourselves.

Warm regards,

Gina