

MESSAGE SUPPORTING GATEWAY TO COLLEGE STUDENTS DURING CAMPUS CLOSURES

MARCH 13, 2020

As colleges work to keep students, staff, and communities safe, some are closing campus or moving courses online. Gateway to College students will need extra support during these transitions. As always, the most important way to support Gateway Students is to maintain their relationship with faculty and Gateway staff at the college.

Relationship Building:

- Call or text students daily
- Provide online spaces for students
 - This can be an open chat on your college's learning management system or a Google hangout.
 - Tutoring and office hours can be done in this format as well
- Remind students to communicate any needs to their resource specialists (success coaches)
- Remind students to let faculty know if they are having trouble completing assignments
- Keep students engaged in school and with their peers. Having students share photos of their home study spaces, their pets, provide a quote, or answer some polls throughout the day gives them more reasons to stay logged on and engaged while lightening the mood. (check out @qccgtc on twitter for ideas).

Mental Health

For students who have anxiety, the constant news stream is likely adding to their anxiety along with the change in schedules or uncertainty about completing their courses.

- Find out what counseling services are still available from your college and school district
- Crisis Text Line is available 24/7 text HOME to 741747 (www.crisistextline.org)
 - Also note that Crisis Text Line reminds us to avoid using words like "apocalypse" or "doomsday" to describe COVID19
- Help students set boundaries about the news, limiting how often they check news and social media

Basic Needs

We know one of the concerns as students are staying home and away from campus is that they will miss access to meals and other basic needs. Social Distancing measures may also mean fewer work hours and create crises around housing or healthcare.

- As always keep communication open and remind students to let you know about barriers
- Find out what services are staying open at the college and in the community. (Especially food pantries, housing services, and clinics)
- Download these guides (<https://hope4college.com/supporting-students-during-covid19/> and <https://hope4college.com/surviving-covid-19-a-realcollege-guide-for-students/>) from the Hope Center for College, Community and Justice at Temple University.

Resources for Moving Courses Online:

- Remember your goal is engagement and continuity, this is not the time to create a “perfect” online curriculum
- Corinne Hyde, PhD from University of Southern California shares an [excellent set of 12 tips](#) on twitter. Follow her @DrCorinneHyde
 - Dr. Hyde’s tips include:
 - Keep in mind that you are not designing a robust, comprehensive online learning experience. You are temporarily making an on-ground course remote.
 - Don't change your entire teaching practice right now. There are a ton of tech tools out there, but this isn't the time to overwhelm yourself and your students with learning it all.
 - Consider upping your office hours or scheduling them by appointment. Things are going to be chaotic and your students will need more support and may have more questions. I use [@Calendly](#) for easy scheduling.
- Support your students. Set clear expectations and remind them to communicate as the unexpected comes ups.
 - Jesse Strommel (follow him on twitter: @Jessifer) sent this message to his students:
 - “I'm here to support you however I can. Take care of yourself and your family first. Our class should not be your priority. Everything about this class is flexible. Whatever happens, we will work it out.”
 - Jesse Strommel is an expert in teaching online and has a sample course on his twitterfeed if you would like an example.
 - Check in on their ability to connect (do they have wired connections, are they using their phones or computers) Make sure students have contact information for IT support at your college if they need to connect to the LMS for the first time from home.
 - Virtual Office Hours
 - Increase office hours and hold them online. Open up a video call or chat line either in your LMS or on a platform like Zoom or Google

Chat. 90-minute sessions tend to work well for student's schedules, you can do other work until students show up. Make it optional for students to share video but share your video so students can see you. Award points for attending office hours encourages students to connect and usually once they find out how easy it is to participate; they will keep coming back.

- Offer alternative ways to ask questions using email, your LMS, or via text
- Building content: Use existing content (TED talks, YouTube, see Corinne Hyde's feed for additional resources).
- Technical Tools
 - Your Learning Management System (LMS) use your existing system as much as possible
 - Texting (Remind.com allows for easy group texting)
 - WhatsApp (has video chat options)
 - Zoom
 - Closed Facebook Groups
 - VoiceThread
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Additional Resources for online teaching

- Stanford's Key Teaching Tasks to accomplish in immediately going online: <https://teachanywhere.stanford.edu/best-practices>
- [EdSurge K-12 resource page](#)

Supporting Staff

Gateway to College staff will be learning as they go, especially if they are implementing support from a distance. Make sure you have ways for staff to stay in touch. And we offer our staff the same grace and support we are giving our students during this time of uncertainty.

- Identify the platform you will use for staff communications
- Set up short check in meetings at least twice a week for updates and to discuss student progress. Zoom, GoogleChat, or conference call platforms can be used for these check ins
- Ensure all staff get the official updates about campus and Gateway
- For staff working remotely, encourage them to set up schedules and set up a dedicated workspace.
- Find out how IT support is being handled at your college and provide the appropriate contact information to staff.