

## COVID-19 Communication Update

Update for Faculty and Staff

March 17, 2020

From: Todd Jokl, Dean of RIT's College of Art and Design

College of Art and Design Team of Staff and Faculty,

I would like to begin with a quote from Professor Frank Cost that was shared yesterday:

*“This will be the most challenging course I have ever taught and it will likely be the most challenging the students will take in their collegiate career. As I shared with the students, I also think it will be their defining moment and will be the one they remember for the rest of their lives.”*

~~Thank you all so much for actively participating in yesterday's all college meeting and afternoon of program and course development as we transition to alternative methods of course delivery and interaction for the remainder of the spring session. I wanted to take a moment to reiterate some of the key takeaways from our meeting as well as share some important new developments. I have tried to distill much information into a digestible number of bullet-points. Please excuse the omission of details due to brevity.~~

**First, please refer to these important resources:**

RIT: <https://www.rit.edu/coronavirus>

CAD: <https://inside.cad.rit.edu/>

CADTech Coronavirus help and updates: <https://confluence.cad.rit.edu/display/CIASKB/CADTech+COVID-19+Response>

**Important new developments:**

- While this was insinuated in an email from the President yesterday, it is now clear that undergraduates will not have access to academic facilities for the remainder of the spring semester.
- I imagine you are aware RIT announced today that access to labs and studio facilities for graduate research (including our creative activities) will need to come to a close by Friday, March 27. Therefore, you should work with graduate students so they can bring their work in their studios, labs, etc. to a close or to a remote location.

- Campus housing remains open until April 5. Again, students with extenuating circumstances should work through the MyLife Portal to request an accommodation to remain in housing.

Of course, these present new challenges. However, as we walked around and talked with programs yesterday afternoon, it was clear that many were already preparing for this possibility.

### Points that I would like to reiterate from yesterday's meeting include:

- Yesterday's meeting highlighted the importance of a team effort where our staff, faculty, and students are all essential in achieving success. Thank you to so many of you who have brought this to the forefront already!
- Increasingly, administrative staff will be working remotely. Your dedication continues to be what holds CAD together and I know there are many questions we are still to encounter. Once we are able to get March 23 under our belts we will strive to provide additional resources to support administrative staff!
- Revised course syllabi should be posted to MyCourses by Friday, March 20 and you should share information with your students by 5PM that same day.
  - Please submit revised syllabi to your school departments
    - SOA/SAC: Fran Chinnock and Glen Hintz
    - SOD: Marie Haschmann
    - SOFA: Mary Barnard
    - SPAS: Mary Lavender
  - Please ensure the course goals and outcomes are listed on the syllabus
- Please review your course goals and outcomes by visiting the active course directory at: <https://inside.cad.rit.edu/facultyadjunctstaff/curriculum-resources/course-outlines/>
  - A course should meet the respective goals and outcomes.

### General Course Comments and Questions:

- Asynchronous modes are preferred.
- Moving into synchronous is fine but not required, but please ramp-up to synchronous in the next few weeks.
  - **If a course goes Synchronous, it should meet during its regularly scheduled time!** This will avoid students having multiple synchronous courses meeting at the same time.
- Regardless of delivery mode, **please stagger your assignments.**
  - Most students will have 4 or 5 courses all beginning once again on Monday. If all of their classes have assignments due in the first week, even our strongest students will be overwhelmed!
    - Consult your colleagues, especially within programs and courses for the same year students and try to coordinate when assignments are due.

- From the zoom chat and afternoon conversations, “Can a course finish before the end of the semester?” A: **Yes, so long as it meets the approved course goals and objectives.**
- It is recommended to release content on MyCourses incrementally. You need not have all content for the entire semester posted on Friday. In fact, it is more helpful for the learner if content is released in increments as it is needed/required.
- Re-posting a zoom chat comment from Carol Fillips: Provide a multi-hour window for when projects are due (ex/ 11AM-9PM) instead of a specific time (just 9AM). This will help reduce anxiety and enables students to troubleshoot if they are having trouble uploading a file, etc.
- Student support services (ILI, DSO, Accessibility Services, other) will remain active and provide information to students and faculty on an ongoing basis.

## NASAD

Finally, today, NASAD emailed all member institutions with information about how to approach these challenges. I am copying pertinent information below for your information. Generally speaking, though, they note that art, design, and craft schools are facing a particularly demanding challenges—and that as artists, designers and crafts people we are uniquely prepared to meet these challenges!

NASAD describes how we should take this opportunity to examine the basic functions of our programs and our courses. “when the customary delivery system is disrupted or no longer available.”...we can temporarily reprioritize in order to achieve the basics functions we have set forth through our course goals and outcomes. And, quite perfectly stated “As artists, we are centered in creativity, in finding new ways to express and do. Difficult times call for creativity and for timely and carefully considered experimentation, especially with method, but also with function as necessary.”

Excerpt from NASAD Executive Director Communication on 3/17/2020:

**Coursework and Basic Functions.** Each course in a curriculum has a set of core purposes that can be thought of and expressed as basic functions. Basic functions may be labeled as goals and objectives or carry some other designation. At the course level, it may be useful to concentrate on these several basic functions, especially when the customary delivery system is disrupted or no longer available. Courses and experiences that function to teach the studio aspects of art and design through actual practice and exhibition provide a case in point. When exhibitions and critiques are cancelled, when creation lessons and classes, are no longer taught, especially in groups, it may be useful to look at which basic functions addressed by these courses can and cannot be taught by other means. The principle just articulated suggests the utility of reprioritizing temporarily – finding means for fulfilling or concentrating on certain functions of specific courses during the period when all the usual basic functions of that course cannot be addressed.

**Creativity and Solutions.** As artists, we are centered in creativity, in finding new ways to express and do. Difficult times call for creativity and for timely and carefully considered experimentation, especially with method, but also with function as necessary. Consider building temporary solutions around appropriately selected features of artistic work such as

theme and variation, idea development over time or in space, controlled balance and imbalance, proportion, metamorphosis, controlled scattering and gathering, juxtapositions of opposites, random or apparently random presentations of material that aggregate in time, recognition and use of natural orders, sequences, and reactions, and so forth. Remember that while fulfilling specific curricular content-based functions, it is acceptable to break from traditional conventions. Often such breaks become the bases for discoveries that become or influence new conventions.”

**My best to staff, faculty, and students who may read this thread. Onward in creativity and let us overcome these challenges head-on.**

Todd Jokl