

From: [Summers, Greg](#)
Subject: Academic Affairs Update, 08-28-20
Date: Friday, August 28, 2020 1:04:42 PM
Attachments: [Academic Affairs EDI Strategic Plan 8.27.20.docx](#)
[Academic Affairs EDI Strategic Timeline 8.27.20.docx](#)

Colleagues,

We have reached the end of a long summer of preparation for the fall semester. Personally, as I look ahead, I feel any number of contradictory thoughts. We have all worked extraordinarily hard and done, it seems, everything we can; and yet, it's easy to feel completely unprepared for the challenges that await. Today, I could offer a hundred important updates on a variety of issues big and small; and yet, I'm not sure there's anything new left to say.

The university has updated its [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#). This page will continue to be the best place to find answers to questions you may have. Information will be updated and revised with great frequency. Note the prominent links at the top, which include the Symptom Screening device which we're all to fill out daily when on campus, a new form for reporting cases of COVID-19 for use by both students and employees, the COVID Hotline, and FAQs. A public dashboard for tracking instances of the virus on our campuses will also soon be available. Finally, I will continue a weekly meeting with the deans, department chairs, and directors throughout Academic Affairs so that we can all work together to manage what I'm sure will be rapidly changing circumstances.

We continue to receive concerns from students this week about course scheduling. Many are struggling especially to understand the online alternatives they have available if they feel unsure about attending in-person. As you recall, we have encouraged instructors to provide asynchronous online options for all in-person activities and all synchronous online courses as well. Given the disruptions the virus is likely to cause this fall, we expect many students will struggle—as they quarantine and isolate, care for family, and balance work and school—to maintain firm attendance in synchronous activities, either in-person or online. Please be as flexible as possible with deadlines, makeup assignments, and other accommodations. Our students are feeling every bit as stressed, exhausted, and anxious as we are, and they will appreciate your patience and understanding.

Lastly, I want to update you on the important progress we have made on issues related to diversity and inclusion within Academic Affairs. This past week, the terrible events in Kenosha have reminded us yet again of the need to stay focused on these issues. To that end, please see the attached Academic Affairs Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and a related timeline. Lindsay Bernhagen has authored these documents with input from many stakeholders across campus. I want to thank Lindsay for her leadership in this work. To help formalize the role she is already playing, Lindsay will now serve as the Diversity Officer for Academic Affairs. She will help to coordinate the development and implementation of the EDI

strategic plan, ensure that students have strong curricular engagement with EDI, and pursue other related priorities. Lindsay has volunteered for this role, but it is not ceremonial. We will all benefit from Lindsay's leadership and expertise. I'm certain she would welcome any additional input you might have on the attached plan.

Thanks, once again, for the amazing work you have all done this summer. Have a restful and safe weekend, everyone.

Greg

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