



ACADEMIC CONTINUITY TEAM

Earlier today, President Tressel announced that, in response to the coronavirus outbreak, all on-campus courses will be delivered remotely for the remainder of the Spring semester, starting March 23.

The Office of Academic Affairs, led by the new Academic Continuity Team, has been working with department chairs and others to pull together a plan to make this transition a success.

Below is important information from the team that includes details about tools and resources available to help you with this transition. It is imperative that we work together to help our students through this unprecedented situation. I am confident that we are up to the challenge.

*Brien N. Smith
Provost*

Dear Faculty, Lecturers, Instructors and Teaching Assistants,

We are writing to you with important information regarding your transition to teaching virtually for the remainder of the spring semester. This is a big transition for the entire campus, and we recognize that you will be doing some very heavy lifting to prepare your courses. You have the central and critical task of continuing to educate, prepare and reassure our student body during this difficult time, and we are grateful for the work you are doing.

Staff and faculty from Distance Education, IT Customer Services and the Institute for Teaching and Learning have come together to form the Academic Continuity Team. ACT has been working non-stop this week to gather resources, technology, training and support to help faculty make this transition to online teaching. We have also been working with the team from Information Technology Services to coordinate our efforts.

In order to support academic continuity, we realize that we needed to address a spectrum of support needs, topics, delivery methods and levels of comfort. Our approach in developing these tools were to:

- Provide practical advice and resources;
- Help faculty consider equity and access issues for students
- Encourage communication;
- Expand support staff and faculty.

To help adjust as quickly as possible and to provide all the basic knowledge and skills to transition online, ACT created [a website](#) to serve as a central information hub. Resources include:

[How to Effectively \(and Quickly\) Move Your Course Online](#). This guide includes basic getting started instructions, best practices and tools to adjust your instructional strategies, student support and equity considerations, links to videos and guides for YSU-supported technology tools, and how to get more help in the form of live/virtual training, consultations and more.

[In-Person and Virtual Training](#). Starting Monday, March 16, ACT will be offering in-person and virtual training from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in a variety of online learning technology tools, including Blackboard Basics, Blackboard Collaborate, Instructional Media and Webex remote conferencing. You may sign up to participate in the training on the ACT website. All day training will continue through Thursday, March 19. Beginning Tuesday, March 17, recording of all trainings will be available.

[In-Person, Phone, and Virtual Consultation \(Drop In\)](#). Consultation and support services will be available beginning Monday, March 16 through multiple channels. We will provide service from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 8-5 Friday, and 12-4 Saturday. No appointment is necessary. Contact information for all members of ACT is also available.

[Blackboard Ambassadors](#). Faculty from across the university who have experience in Blackboard and in teaching in an online environment have agreed to serve as Blackboard Ambassadors. You will be able to contact your colleagues and ask them questions as well. We are grateful to be able to draw upon the expertise of our faculty community. Their contact information is available on the ACT website.

[Blackboard Shells](#). Every single class on the roster for spring 2020 has had a Blackboard shell created for it, so that is available for you as you begin preparing your online course. It is not a requirement that you use a Blackboard shell, but we encourage you to consider using YSU-supported technology (both Blackboard and other tools), so that we may provide you with the most support possible for this transition.

Please note that this [website](#) will continue to develop, as we gather and share more information or as we receive feedback on the tools and resources you need to be successful. Additional trainings and consult times will also be announced as we progress. We hope that we will be of service to you; do not hesitate to reach out to any of us if there is anything we can do to support you during this critical time.

Thank you,

The Academic Continuity Team

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Hillary Fuhrman, Institute for Teaching and Learning
Sharyn Zembower, IT Customer Services
Alison Kaufman, Institute for Teaching and Learning
Joe Alberti, Distance Education
Cary Wecht, Institute for Teaching and Learning
Stephanie Adams, Distance Education

