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Mark J. Braun, EdD, Executive Director

June 4, 2021

Mr. Charlie Smithson  
Secretary of the Senate  
State Capitol Building  
Des Moines IA 50319

Ms. Meghan Nelson  
Chief Clerk of the House  
State Capitol Building  
Des Moines IA 50319

Re: Continuous Improvement Plan Report

Dear Members of the General Assembly:

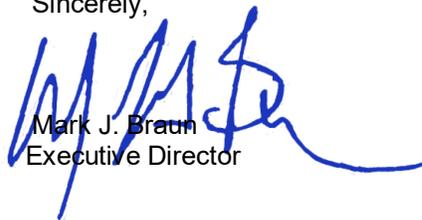
In accordance with 2015 Iowa Code §262.9.36, (which was enacted in 2012 by SF 2284), the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, has prepared a report describing the implementation of continuous improvement of courses with a combined enrollment of 100 or more students in 2019-2020. Enclosed is the annual report.

Assessment processes had some degree of interruption in 2019-20 as campuses were forced to respond to the global pandemic with mid-semester changes in instructional modality. Some data was still collected regarding the typical assessment activities, indicating continued use of responsive strategies such as modifying assignments and exams to better measure learning, adjusting the time spent on concepts based on student proficiency, and changing the textbooks or learning materials used to improve student learning.

The efforts of shifting classes of all sizes into an online format required additional efforts in making materials accessible, identifying ways to communicate (one-way and two-way; individually and in groups), and training faculty and students on use of learning management systems necessary for online coursework. While this was all necessary for continuity of operations in spring 2020, it was also an opportunity for all three universities to identify new ways of connecting with students in small and large class sections that helps inform pedagogy and learning strategies well into the future.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this report.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Braun  
Executive Director

\\Box Sync\Board of Regents Shared\BF\Legislative\2020 session\Reports\

Attachments

## University of Northern Iowa Enrollment Data in Large Course Sections

### Spring 2020

	Total Number of Courses Offered	Total Number of Sections Offered	Total Duplicated Student Enrollment
Fall 2014	98*	-	47,587*
Spring 2015			
Fall 2015	120**	787**	109,441
Spring 2016			
Fall 2016	187**	762**	109,441
Spring 2017			
Fall 2017	197**	787**	194,135
Spring 2018			
Fall 2018	114**	739**	100,309
Spring 2019			
Fall 2019	94**	612**	96,222
Spring 2020			

\* - Enrollment of > or = 200 students

\*\* - Enrollment of > or = 100 students

<b>Top Five Most Frequent Changes Implemented by Faculty as a Result of Assessments</b>				
	<b>2018 - 2019</b>	<b>2017 - 2018</b>	<b>2016 - 2017</b>	<b>3 Year Average</b>
Add, delete, or modify graded assignments	74%	66%	63%	68%
Change student experiences/activities in the course	65%	57%	56%	59%
Modify the amount of time spent on specific assignments	63%	63%	55%	60%
Change textbooks/learning resources in the course	38%	37%	39%	38%
Change assessment strategies to gain more accurate insight into what students are learning	32%	30%	32%	31%

## **Steps Taken to Assure Quality of Education and Student Achievement of Outcomes Online at UNI in Spring 2020**

UNI made several key changes to educational policy to help students navigate the disruption of moving to online instruction and individual faculty made additional adjustments to their classes and teaching styles to accommodate students who all faced their own unique challenges.

Faculty who had not already attended the Quality Matters training were provided additional professional development opportunities to assist with learning best practices for online course delivery. Faculty were also provided access to additional material on the <https://it.uni.edu/remote> website, which offered guidance on diverse delivery modes outside the on-campus classroom environment.

Faculty worked hard to create individualized instruction plans to accommodate students who were taking advantage of study abroad coursework and were recalled on short notice, and it was requested that all faculty update their syllabi to outline expectations for all student course work. Faculty were then also asked to provide clear communications plans to students in each course sharing how the course would progress the remainder of the semester after moving to an online format.

Administrators were in continuous conversations statewide to open access to campus computing and internet resources for all Iowa college students on any Iowa campus, which included all four and two year public institutions. Over 500 laptops were identified across campus for checkout to UNI students who did not have their own devices, and campus remained open for students to use broadband access in computer labs and other public spaces.

Rod Library and the UNI Bookstore continued to provide online resources, which allowed UNI students, faculty, and staff access to more than 50,000 ebook titles, and the Learning Center at UNI continued to offer online resources, which included remote assistance with writing and other student work.



## Office of Assessment

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Iowa City, Iowa 52242  
319-335-6101  
[assessment.uiowa.edu](http://assessment.uiowa.edu)

DATE: August 5, 2020

TO: Rachel Boon, Chief Academic Officer, Iowa Board of Regents  
FROM: Wayne Jacobson, Assessment Director, University of Iowa

RE: Update on Compliance with Continuous Quality Improvement Legislation

I am providing a report of the University of Iowa's compliance with Iowa Code Section 262.9(36) for 2019/20. Previous years' reports were based on a uniform structure that was originally established at the July 2013 meeting of project coordinators for each of the three Regents universities. This documentation has shown widespread use of continuous quality improvement strategies in courses throughout campus, with last year's report showing an average of 4.4 distinct strategies employed in each course with annual enrollments of 100 or more students. This use of continuous quality improvement has consistently been shown to be widely integrated throughout existing course structures and established faculty practices.

With the sudden unexpected transition to virtual instruction in Spring 2020, we asked departments to direct assessment efforts toward collecting information needed to support faculty and students under the exceptional circumstances caused by the pandemic, rather than verifying established practices already in place prior to the pandemic. Institutional assessment during the pandemic focused on documenting:

- Department efforts to support faculty and students after the transition to virtual instruction, collected from department leadership through annual outcomes assessment reporting procedures
- Institution-wide feedback from students on the transition to virtual instruction, collected through the ACE Supplement Survey
- Undergraduate plans, concerns, and feedback on university communication, faculty commitment, and support received from the university, collected through Pandemic Response Survey (PRS)

For your reference, I am attaching copies of:

- *Department Strategies for Supporting Faculty and Students During the Spring 2020 Pandemic Response*
- *PRS Instructional Quality Brief* (which integrates data from both the ACE Supplement and PRS surveys); additional findings from both surveys can be found at the links referenced in this document.

Please let me know if you need additional information from me about these documents or about institutional assessment and improvement efforts at the University of Iowa during 2019/20.

## Department Strategies for Supporting Faculty and Students During the Spring 2020 Pandemic Response

Learning outcomes assessment at the university rests on faculty expertise and department leadership. Each department establishes learning outcomes for its programs, determines how to best organize its curriculum to support student learning, devises appropriate strategies for assessing student learning, and decides how to use assessment findings to further develop its programs. An annual report showing the extent of department assessment efforts is available at [assessment.uiowa.edu/learning-outcomes-reports](https://assessment.uiowa.edu/learning-outcomes-reports)

Two weeks after the transition to virtual instruction was announced in Spring 2020, the university recommended that departments alter plans for their usual program-level outcomes assessment and focus instead on collecting information they would need in order to help support faculty and students during the pandemic (Appendix One). After the semester ended, departments were asked to provide an update on their efforts by using an online Assessment Short Form (Appendix Two); they also had the option of responding via the usual Assessment Update form if they preferred (Appendix Three).

The Assessment Short Form asked departments to address four questions. Approximately three-fourths of undergraduate degree programs responded by the beginning of July 2020. This summary provides an overview of common strategies identified by departments, followed by excerpts from descriptions provided by departments in response to each of the four question:

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### #1. Steps taken by departments to systematically hear from faculty

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#### 1.A Use of existing communication channels

Nearly all departments reported utilizing existing communication channels, such as faculty meetings, department email discussion lists, and committees that were already in place prior to the pandemic:

- Our department maintained an ongoing email discussion through our faculty listserv regarding how people were modifying courses, what things that worked well or didn't work well ... Some faculty shared how they were utilizing regular class time with respect to synchronous and asynchronous options. (Statistics)
- Regular zoom faculty meetings; email correspondence on teaching issues; regular meetings of Faculty Advisory Committee and ad-hoc planning group for Fall semester teaching. (Psychological & Brain Sciences)

*Our DEO devoted time at the beginning of each post-midterm faculty meeting to check with instructors on their well-being and the challenges posed by online instruction. (German)*

### 1.B Regularly scheduled open meetings

About half reported adding regularly scheduled meetings to discuss issues related to virtual instruction:

- To address common teaching issues that arose following the shift to all-online learning during the Spring 2020 semester, HHP began holding weekly Zoom meetings that all faculty are welcome to attend. ... Topics encompassed course delivery, exam administration (with a significant emphasis upon how to maintain academic integrity), impacts upon student learning and well-being, and identification of enduring teaching/learning strategies we may continue to use upon the return to in-person course delivery. (Health & Human Physiology)
- Weekly zoom meetings where faculty and instructors shared tips (Biology)
- Our Department Chair scheduled meetings in which faculty met for one hour each week for the remainder of the semester to share our experiences meeting the needs of students as they adapted to the virtual format. Discussions that took place were enormously helpful in allowing us (1) to develop evolving strategies that kept us attuned to the challenges students were facing and (2) to consider adopting different methods of delivering course material that other colleagues had found effective. (French & Italian)

*Teaching and Learning (College of Education) implemented weekly town hall meetings open to all faculty and staff to share updates on available resources, College and University updates, and strategies and tools available.*

### 1.C DEO or DUS outreach to faculty

Nearly as many departments reported regular individual outreach, initiated by the DEO or DUS, to help them systematically hear from faculty and address their concerns.

- The department undergraduate committee has developed a faculty and TA survey, in addition to weekly meetings, to assess challenges to instruction relative to the virtual delivery mode. The survey also seeks to document best practices and specific challenges for large, medium, and smaller courses. (Geographical & Sustainability Sciences)
- We had several "check-in" Zoom meetings with our faculty, tenure-line and instructional, to hear how everyone was doing personally and how the transition to virtual instruction was going. The DUS solicited written feedback about experiences with virtual instruction. (History)
- The Department chair has been holding virtual online lunches to hear from faculty and give support as needed. (Finance)

### 1.D Department-sponsored faculty development

About one in four departments offered faculty development sessions focused on preparing for virtual instruction:

- The Program offered a workshop for the instructors prior to switching to online teaching. At the workshop, questions and challenges about implementation of switching to online teaching for each course were discussed in depth. (Chinese)
- The DEO was extremely helpful at the start of, and throughout, the transition to virtual teaching. He walked us through various options for virtual teaching at an "in person" meeting, and through a video he taped and distributed through e-mail. (Philosophy)
- Offered online faculty meeting with breakout rooms to discuss instructional challenges and lessons learned as a professional development experience. (Teaching & Learning)
- Two college-wide teaching sessions were held. These included guidance on online teaching strategies [and] on the challenges that students may be facing as they attempt to keep learning among a variety of challenges. (Tippie College of Business)

### 1.E Facilitating collaboration outside of meetings

A variety of other strategies were used to facilitate collaboration among faculty and sharing of expertise within departments:

- We created a WIKI where faculty could share technical information on how they were dealing with technology issues related to doing real-time math on-line (e.g. apple pencil with ipad + screensharing) and how they were utilizing Zoom and UICapture and ICON to deliver recorded lectures to students. (Statistics)
- A college-wide ICON page was created to house resources regarding online teaching strategies. All TCOB instructors and TAs have access to the site. It also includes discussion boards to encourage virtual discussions. (Tippie College of Business)
- When one of us discovered something that worked well, that faculty member would e-mail the rest of us. When one of us encountered a problem, that faculty member would e-mail the rest for advice. In short, we learned from each other. (Philosophy)

*A new faculty-graduate student reading group, held on Friday afternoons via Zoom, provided space to discuss experiences in virtual instruction. (Anthropology)*

## #2. Steps taken by departments to systematically hear from students

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### 2.A Class meetings

About half of departments reported asking faculty to reach out through classes to hear about student concerns.

- We felt that it was best to let each instructor determine the exact methods to be used to get student feedback. Some used an ICON comment box with weekly assignments and the Announcements feature to get important information out quickly. Others sent out emails to students to ask them about how they were managing. This was a particularly important method for many of our instructors because we found that most students were more reluctant to ask for help. In several cases an email checking in on students who had missed assignments led to productive conversations about how we could adapt aspects of the course to help them complete it. (Religious Studies)
- Distributed examples of strategies that faculty can use to collect feedback from their students in order to help inform their ongoing decisions about teaching. (Dance)
- In classes, professors did a good job reaching out and communicating with students who went missing during the transition and no longer attended/turned in materials. We were able to contact the Dean of Students when this happened in order to ensure that the students received the help they needed. (Classics)

*Undergraduate teaching faculty were highly encouraged to send an informal "midcourse" evaluation following the transition to online learning. These results were not shared with the College. (Public Health)*

### 2.B DEO or DUS outreach to majors

About half of departments indicated that the DEO or DUS initiated regular check-in meetings and/or individual outreach to students, outside the context of individual courses.

- Each program head met via zoom regularly with the students in their program. The DEO conducted two virtual Town Halls with the students. The Department sent out a weekly newsletter. (Theatre Arts)
- The Dean held monthly open forums with students. Additionally, the Undergraduate Program Director surveyed undergraduate students re: technological and other support needs during the time of transition. Finally, the College hosted focus groups sessions with students after the end of the semester to get a sense of how things went for student across our programs. (Public Health)
- As DUS, I had a series of communications with students via email asking for feedback on their experience. I met with many students who had concerns (via Zoom) and then reached out to individual instructors (anonymously) with student issues and questions. (Physics & Astronomy)
- The Director of Undergraduate Studies sent regular emails to all German majors and minors inviting them to contact the department with any questions or concerns ... Via Zoom, the department maintained its weekly meetings of "Kaffeeklatsch," which provides conversational practice in German for students at all levels of our program. It quickly became clear that students were logging on to the sessions not just to practice their language skills, but also to preserve a sense of community among their peers and to share updates on their personal circumstances. (German)

### 2.C Surveys

Nearly as many departments reported reaching out through student surveys:

- The department has administered a survey to all GSS undergrads. The survey examined (1) student difficulty in accessing necessary technology and any other difficulties in completing their assignments, (2) if the changes in instruction had added to their workload in any way and/or affected their mental health, (3) if there was anything the department could do in addition to student health to support them, 4) and any other information they might want to express. (Geographical & Sustainability Sciences)

- We have surveyed undergraduate and graduate students, as well as graduating seniors. We have also held a townhall meeting for both undergrads and grads. (Journalism & Mass Communication)
- We surveyed our students using the anonymous survey tool in ICON to solicit information about the particular issues they faced, what we were doing that eased the transition, what other instructors had done that eased their transition, and other information about their experience. (Gender, Women's, & Sexuality Studies)

## 2.D Advisors

A number of departments also reported reaching out through advisors:

- The Global Health Studies Program has mandatory academic advising which means that the academic advisor continued to "meet" with GHS students via phone appointments after it was determined that students would not be returning to campus after spring break. (Global Health Studies)
- All advisors contacted their advisees individually. All instructors asked how they were doing in class regularly. (Japanese)
- Our academic advisor also made a point to ask her advisees in virtual meetings how they were doing generally and how classes were going specifically since the move to virtual instruction. (History)

## 2.E Student representation on department committees

Finally, some departments invited student representatives to participate on department planning committees:

- The DEO met bi-weekly with the undergraduate student reps. The student Reps consist of 4 to 5 students per class cohort. (Theatre Arts)
- Held weekly meetings with associate dean, the DEO, program coordinator, two student ambassadors, and two secondary education students to hear students' needs and concerns. (Teaching & Learning)
- We were unfortunately unable to convene our Undergraduate Advisory Board in person, but we did send an email survey to these students, who are made up of especially engaged juniors and seniors within the major. (Cinematic Arts)

# #3. Lessons learned through the department's interactions with students and faculty

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## 3.A Synchronous vs. Asynchronous Class Sessions

Departments did not come to a singular consensus on the value of synchronous vs. asynchronous class meetings, which is similar to [feedback received from students](#) on their experiences during virtual instruction. Departments reported advantages and disadvantages to each, some of which varied by discipline, class size, and the nature of course content.

- Satisfaction with mode of delivery (synchronous vs. asynchronous) was all-over the place, with some students appreciating the flexibility of asynchronous learning and other students appreciating the interaction with peers and instructors that came with synchronous class session facilitated by Zoom. (Public Health)
- Several of our faculty found that students valued weekly synchronous Zoom meetings ... These meetings helped create more of a sense of community than asynchronous discussion threads. That said, asynchronous ICON discussion threads were their own kind of revelation to faculty as some students (roughly half) displayed their knowledge of readings in deeper and more focused ways. (Cinematic Arts)
- We are using this forced experiment to find new ways to improve the effectiveness of our instruction. For example, recording all lectures, even those normally delivered face-to-face, provides students with the opportunity to re-listen to challenging portions. Breaking up a 50-minute lecture into 2 or 3 blocks helps students recognize the organization of related topics plus likely converts lessons into more digestible bites. The advantages of these changes were reflected in slightly improved performances on at least some final exams. (Biology)

*We are using this forced experiment to find new ways to improve the effectiveness of our instruction ... (Biology)*

Observations concerning synchronous instruction

- The faculty consensus formed very early in the transition to online instruction was that it is imperative that faculty members gather students every week so that actual interaction could take place between students and instructors. (French & Italian)
- Synchronous lab and discussion sections can work quite well via Zoom, but the expectation about participation needs to be set early and reinforced. (Physics & Astronomy)

- Students widely appreciated Zoom lectures that were synchronous and offered at the same time as their normal lecture courses. These sessions were also recorded for students who couldn't make the live time, but it was clear that students were more likely to engage when the lecture was live. (Classics)

#### Observations concerning asynchronous instruction

- Generally positive feedback about live Zoom classes, recorded Zoom classes and pre-recorded lectures. On average students rated pre-recorded lectures higher than live Zoom classes. (Accounting)
- Through interactions with students and faculty, we learned that students appreciated recorded lecture videos which provided extra flexibility to students' learning. (Finance)
- Although there are some learning goals that are best met through synchronous interaction, faculty reported that students appreciated videos and other asynchronous contact that allowed flexibility. (Management & Entrepreneurship)

Preparing for virtual instruction requires re-designing class sessions, assignments, and assessments. It is not just a matter of moving a traditionally face-to-face course to an online meeting schedule.

- A face-to-face class can't just be migrated to an on-line format effectively without re-working assignments and assessments. (Psychology & Brain Science)
- The department is also anticipating the possibility of using hybrid courses ... This will require significant reconfiguration of course design. (Management & Entrepreneurship)
- Faculty time and effort to redesign traditionally in-person classes for online OR to make changes to in-person courses to meet physical distancing requirements and maintain the quality of the learning experience. (Public Health)

*Faculty need time to adjust courses ... It is more than simply putting your class online. It is a reimagining of each course. (Journalism & Mass Communications)*

### 3.B Support for Students

Departments recognized a need for flexibility and consideration of challenges faced by students, both academic and non-academic.

- Empathy is central. Be kind. Bring greater flexibility to the classroom -- in terms of deadlines, assignments, learning goals, attendance requirements. (Gender, Women's, & Sexuality Studies)
- Students are really struggling, as are all people right now. The pandemic has exacerbated difficult life circumstances for many, and created new disruption and trauma. We are trying to be as kind, supportive and flexible as possible. (International Studies)
- Expectations need to remain high, but we need to be flexible. Some students definitely needed more emotional support than others. (Radiation Sciences)

*Students are really struggling, as are all people right now ... (International Studies)*

Importance of clear structure and communication as students manage multiple courses each being adapted differently

- Helping students stay organized seemed very important. Sending some type of weekly "Announcement" listing the readings/homework/lecture topics for that week seemed very useful to help students stay on track. (Statistics)
- One source of stress for students was the different ways each class approached online instruction and the need suddenly for the student to "keep track of five completely different sets of new deadlines, assignments, and requirements that had previously been pretty unified in the era of face-to-face classes." The desire for greater consistency with online approaches was feedback that several students shared. (Cinematic Arts)
- Some [courses] had more synchronous classes and expected a lot of involvement. Others, had minimal expectations. Students struggled with staying organized with deadlines and changing expectations of classwork. (Communication Studies)

Importance of manageable communication strategies

- Students seemed overwhelmed by the amount of email they were receiving ... Limited but personal contact, rather than frequent group or mass emails, seem to be the most effective way to communicate with students as we move forward to a likely-to-be-disrupted fall semester. (International Studies)
- Students expressed an information overload from emails sent from multiple departments. This may have contributed to their stress/anxiety. We may need to explore a better way to communicate without overloading the students with lengthy emails. (Radiation Sciences)

### Importance of proactively reaching out to students

- The students who were doing most poorly typically gave the least, or often no, feedback. This type of instruction and the added pressure for them to attract attention by asking for help can prove daunting for many students for several reasons. ... We would need to find better ways of helping and encouraging all students to communicate and engage. One possibility would be to require students to have regular individual meetings or email communications with instructors. (Religious Studies)
- Students who struggle even with traditional learning tended to struggle even more with online. And students with mental health issues tended to struggle even more away from face to face teaching. (Cinematic Arts)
- Instructors should proactively reach out to students who appear to be falling behind in virtual instruction, as encouraging and supportive contact seems to improve student performance in those cases. (Anthropology)

*The students who were doing most poorly typically gave the least, or often no, feedback ... (Religious Studies)*

### 3.C Feeling the Loss of Meeting In-Person

One of the more frequently recurring themes in [student feedback](#) was the value students place on direct interaction with faculty – greatly appreciating it when it was present, greatly missing it when it was not. A number of departments made a similar observation about students and noted that many faculty also reported missing in-person interaction with students.

- Faculty generally missed the face to face interaction ... Students missed the engagement with students and faculty, and a few felt lost. For many, it was difficult to not have a classroom experience to help structure their day and work. I think they adjusted and adapted to it but missed the engagement and structure that a classroom experience provides. (Political Science)
- Students truly desire in-person courses. We have not heard any feedback indicating that students prefer any aspect of online courses. We have learned that our in-person instruction and lab courses are immensely valuable to students. (Neuroscience)
- The students and faculty both need the personal contact with others. (Theatre Arts)

*Faculty missed greatly the person-to-person connection one gets from teaching in a classroom. (Philosophy)*

### 3.D Value of Meeting with Colleagues

Finally, a number of departments that instituted regular meetings noted the value of these meetings for both the collaborative problem-solving these meetings facilitated and the contribution of these meetings to sense of community within the department.

- Two unexpected benefits have arisen from these weekly faculty meetings, creating a stronger sense of departmental culture:
  1. Recognition of the shared value faculty place on academic integrity: how to fairly assess student learning has been the most-frequently discussed topic throughout all meetings, to include (1) appropriateness of exam content and format following the transition to virtual course delivery, (2) practices to minimizing technology limitations that may disadvantage some students, and (3) prevention of cheating.
  2. Discussions regarding how we each adapted our teaching practices has led to a greater appreciation for how each course contributes to the curriculum as a whole. There is also improved recognition of who possesses expertise with certain technologies and teaching practices and could serve as mentors for others in the department. (Health & Human Physiology)
- Faculty and graduate students appreciated the weekly check-ins and attendance was robust. (American Studies)
- Faculty members who participated in weekly meetings expressed gratitude for the ways this collaborative structure encouraged and supported efforts to remain alert to difficulties students might be having. These meetings also helped counter the isolation that grew as the weeks of having no face-to-face contact with students and colleagues passed. (French & Italian)

*We held several faculty zoom meetings in which instructors were able to discuss what was working and what wasn't working during virtual instruction. This proved to be very helpful. (Sociology)*

## #4. Questions or challenges that the department is anticipating as you plan for next year

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### 4.A Uncertainty

- We don't know a lot about the fall, so faculty and grad students are feeling extremely stressed and anxious and yet feel unable to plan yet because we aren't sure about whether our classes will be asked to be moved online (due to the need for classroom

space) ... We want to offer the best education we can, whatever circumstances we are working with, but [we are uncertain about] investing time in any particular course design because it might change. (Communication Studies)

- Faculty find it very difficult to plan anything given the uncertainties of how to conduct f2f instruction safely, for all members of the campus community. Perhaps our greatest concerns focus on our practicum course as well as our senior research seminar, where f2f instruction is most necessary. (Gender, Women's, & Sexuality Studies)
- Having to create multiple plans due to unpredictability of the situation. (Theatre Arts)
- Pedagogically, might our classes actually be better experiences for students in an online format rather than in an awkward socially distanced, masked, and unable to take advantage of the typical interactive elements of face to face learning environment? (Dance)

#### 4.B Health and Safety

- How can we provide the best possible education for students while also adhering to the guidelines for safety? (American Studies)
- The greatest challenge for us as we face the possibility of returning to face-to-face instruction in the Fall is the risk factor for instructors. For reasons of age and medical conditions, [many] of us can be considered to be at higher risk for severe illness for COVID-19. We are also concerned about the challenge of covering our teaching needs if one of us were to become ill for an extended period of time. (French & Italian)
- How to accommodate those who are at risk or are caregivers to those at risk, and who need to self-isolate. (Theatre Arts)
- Concern among instructors about uneven exposure to COVID risk, uncertainty about what the campus safety guidelines will be and how much flexibility instructors/DEOs will have in choosing when and how to adapt to remote instruction. (History)

*Is our rush to provide F2F instruction risking public health for our faculty, students, and community? (Dance)*

#### 4.C Faculty Work and Well-Being

- How can archival and other forms of research be done in this environment? Those who have children - how can time for work be balanced with childcare? How will the administration assess people's research productivity in the face of these challenges? (American Studies)
- Instructors are now considering how they can better present course material for student success in this setting. This in turn challenges instructors as they spend considerable time absorbing information on best practices, revising courses, and learning new technology. This may be happening alongside personal or family health concerns and increased family or community obligations. Many instructors report significant time stress and anxiety as well as concerns about maintaining research programs. (Anthropology)
- Would a scheduled, semi-structured forum for discussion of teaching could be a valuable opportunity for faculty members to share expertise, learn from one another, and help the department identify needs for additional support while there is still time to recalibrate? (Dance)

*Faculty are in information overload. (Radiation Sciences)*

#### 4.D Teaching

##### Challenges in Lab, Clinical, and Practicum experiences

- Discussions continue within the department, and among peers from outside of the University of Iowa, for best practices for delivery of lab courses. (Health & Human Physiology)
- Faculty are concerned that the time away may affect the students' clinical ability/confidence ... Students will need remediation, re-orientation, and re-education on multiple topics. (Radiation Sciences)
- We will continue to explore additional ways to manage the transition to a virtual laboratory space for our classroom. Some exercises simply cannot be done in the virtual laboratory setting. (Earth & Environmental Sciences)
- We of course are concerned about the ability to conduct high-quality laboratory experiences remotely or safely in small groups. (Physics & Astronomy)

*The two biggest challenges are execution of laboratories and other experiential learning while keeping everyone at safe distances as well as minimizing cheating during on-line examinations. (Biology)*

##### Challenges in assessment

- Course assessment (exams, homework, etc.) being on-line is challenging, especially for larger courses. (Statistics)

- It was difficult to be understanding and accommodating for students and maintain academic integrity to be fair to all students at the same time. Some students tried their best even in the most difficult circumstances, while some other students just ... completed much less work quantitatively and/or qualitatively than others. (Japanese)
- The biggest issue I heard from colleagues centered around exams and how to assess students. (Psychological & Brain Sciences)
- Assessment strategies that are compatible with social distancing requirements. (Accounting)

#### Challenges to collaborative Learning

- Adapting on-campus instruction to address social distancing requirements – particularly in-class teamwork and group assignments. (Accounting)
- Our faculty noted that conducting group projects in virtual instruction is more challenging compared to face-to-face instruction. (Finance)
- We also identified that the change in delivery did result in a perception of additional work or time to complete certain assignments. This was particularly problematic for courses requiring group work. (Geographical & Sustainability Sciences)

#### Challenges to classroom interaction and participation

- Creating community among students and fostering meaningful interaction in a remote learning setting. (History)
- Lack of time (e.g., responding to Discussion posts), lack of conversation and interpersonal interaction, lack of student engagement, lack of group work and collaboration. (English)
- If we have to go completely online, one challenge will be to keep students engaged and motivated. This applies both to the lecture materials and providing avenues for all students to ask questions and receive help. (Religious Studies)

## Additional Resources

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The ACE Supplement survey asked all students three open-ended questions about experiences with virtual instruction and one rating-scale question, “Under the circumstances, how would you describe the support you received for managing the transition to virtual instruction?” Responses are reported at [assessment.uiowa.edu/ace-supplement](https://assessment.uiowa.edu/ace-supplement).

After the semester ended, the Pandemic Response Survey (PRS) asked all undergraduates about concerns during the pandemic, their feedback on the campus response during Spring 2020, and their perceptions of academic support, student support, and virtual instruction. An overview of responses is reported at [assessment.uiowa.edu/prs](https://assessment.uiowa.edu/prs).

**From Pandemic to Planned:** Preparing for Virtual Teaching and Learning. Resources prepared by Distance and Online Education and the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Technology

**Examining Student Learning and Success in Academic Programs:** Resources and strategies for assessment of program learning outcomes, compiled by the Office of Assessment



**OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT**  
310 Calvin Hall  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242  
<https://assessment.uiowa.edu/>

April 2, 2020

FROM: Wayne Jacobson, Assessment Director, Office of the Provost  
TO: Undergraduate Program Assessment Coordinators

RE: Shifting Gears to Focus Program-Related Assessment on the Pivot to Remote Instruction

I hope you are doing well as we approach the end of this first week of remote instruction. It's hard to imagine how much has been invested in changing the way teaching and learning happen at the university in the last three weeks.

I'm writing with a change of plans for this semester's Annual Assessment Update. I'm planning to forego the usual Update process and ask you instead to focus assessment efforts on what the department needs to know in order to support faculty and students for the remainder of the semester.

Here are some options for systematic, inclusive outreach to let you hear from students and faculty:

- Invite **students** to a regularly-scheduled **virtual drop-in session** with the DUS and/or the department's undergraduate program advisor. These sessions can provide a place to connect in person with the department and fellow-majors, and also to raise program-related questions that they don't know where to take.

Research has demonstrated that even when faculty and advisors have a virtual "open door" policy, many of the students who most need additional support (often including low-income and first generation students) will hesitate to seek help unless they receive a specific, direct invitation to express their concerns. Nothing is going to be perfect, but this kind of (virtual) personal outreach is highly likely to give you more useful information than you can gain through surveys or web forms.

- Hold a regularly-scheduled **virtual faculty forum** to share strategies and compare notes on what's going well and what challenges are coming up in classes. Many faculty are experienced and comfortable with online instruction, but it's an entirely new experience for others. And all faculty are learning how to navigate a sudden transition to virtual teaching amid a worldwide public health emergency. A scheduled, semi-structured forum for discussion of teaching could be a valuable opportunity for faculty members to share expertise, learn from one another, and help the department identify needs for additional support while there is still time to recalibrate.
- Distribute examples of strategies that **faculty** can use to **collect feedback from their students** in order to help inform their ongoing decisions about teaching. Many commonly used [Classroom Assessment Techniques](#) are readily adaptable to online environments. Let me know if I can help you find examples, and you can also contact the [Center for Teaching](#) for more ideas on collecting, interpreting, and responding to student feedback.

The university is reaching out to students in a variety of ways, but most students are experiencing the university right now primarily through their interactions with faculty via online instruction. Your outreach to students may be one of the most important avenues the university has for hearing from them and for communicating the university's commitment to their learning and success.

I hope you can prioritize one or more of these short-term program-level initiatives in your department to quickly assess needs for change while there's still time to make adjustments during the remaining weeks of the semester. Please let me know if I can help you adapt these strategies to your department or develop other strategies for reaching out to students and faculty.

## Assessment Update Short Form

### (1) Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

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(1) Steps your department has taken to systematically hear from **faculty** about how they are managing the pivot to remote instruction:

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(2) Steps your department has taken to systematically hear from **students** about how they are managing the pivot to remote instruction:

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(3) **Lessons learned** through the department's interactions with students and faculty (noted above):

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(4) **Questions or challenges** that the department is anticipating as you plan for next year:

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## Learning Outcomes Assessment Update - 2019/20

Please select one of the following two options for completing this year's Assessment Update:

- Option A is to go online to complete the [Assessment Update Short Form](#), which focuses on steps taken to support students and instructors during the pandemic.
- Option B (below) is for departments that prefer to follow the same format that was used in previous years.

We will use this information to help document work done by departments and faculty to continue supporting students during the pandemic.

### *Information to Be Included in the Annual Update*

1. Department:
2. Date:
3. Actions Taken, Lessons Learned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Actions taken and/or lessons learned since last year's update</i></li></ul>
4. Current Focus of Outcomes Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Brief description of department's current area of focus (for example, particular areas of program being reviewed, assessment strategies being developed, or issues the department is examining)</i></li></ul>
5. Next Steps for the Department: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Follow-up actions or next steps that are planned</i></li></ul>
6. Contact:

## Perceptions of Instructional Quality

### *Student Feedback on UI Responses to the Disruptions Caused by the Pandemic During Spring 2020*

At the end of Spring 2020, the University of Iowa conducted two surveys to collect student perceptions of the transition to virtual instruction and their feedback on the university’s response to the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

The ACE Supplement survey asked three open-ended questions about experiences with virtual instruction and one rating-scale question, “Under the circumstances, how would you describe the support you received for managing the transition to virtual instruction?” While nearly 3 out of 4 rated the support they received as *Very Good* or *Adequate*, 1 in 5 rated it as *Inadequate* or *Extremely Inadequate* (as shown in Figure One). Responses to the open-ended questions are reported at [assessment.uiowa.edu/ace-supplement](https://assessment.uiowa.edu/ace-supplement), and selected examples are included below.

The Pandemic Response Survey (PRS) asked a range of questions on experiences in addition to virtual instruction. An overview of responses is reported at [assessment.uiowa.edu/prs](https://assessment.uiowa.edu/prs). Figure Two summarizes the distribution of student responses to PRS questions about experiences in their classes.

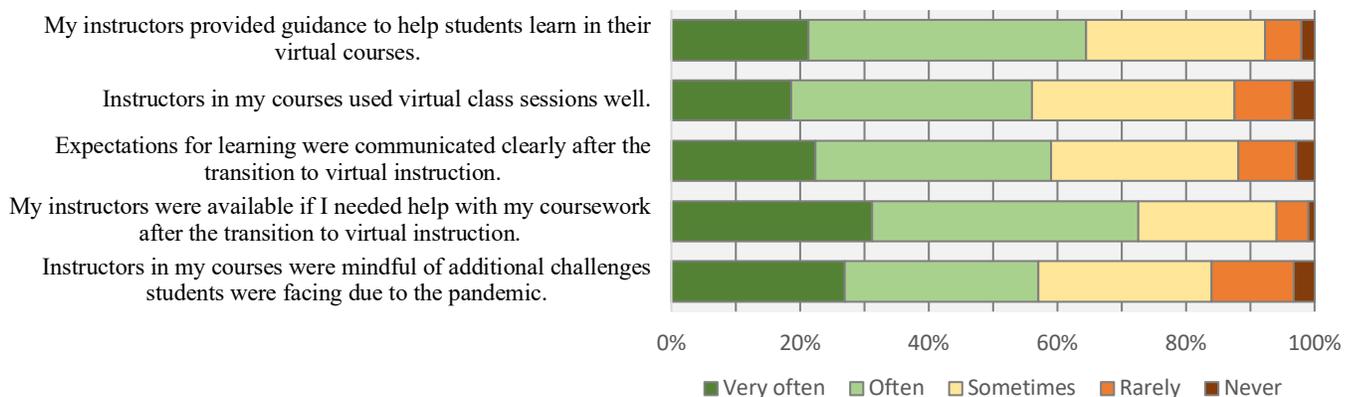
Responses consistently show 60-70% of students responding positively (“Often” or “Very Often”) to characterizations of class experiences; 8-16% responded “Rarely” or “Never” having these experiences in classes. Through both surveys, we see a mixture of positive and negative feedback, with few students reporting only positive or only negative experiences during Spring 2020.

Student responses to open-text survey items echo the patterns that are summarized in Figures One and Two. A number of recurring themes in these comments are especially important to consider as the university plans for future semesters:

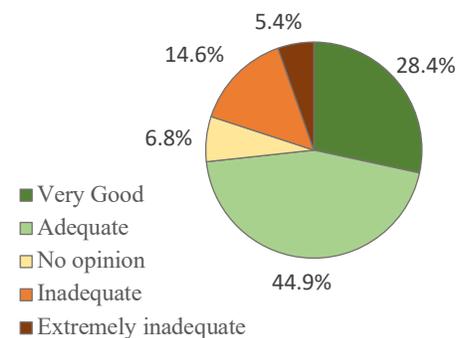
- *For students, there is no substitute for meaningful engagement with faculty.*
- *Good instructional practices for in-person classes are also important in virtual instruction.*
- *Challenges unrelated to learning significantly affected student ability to learn and succeed in their courses.*

Examples of student comments illustrating each of these themes follow on p. 2.

*Figure Two: PRS responses characterizing student experiences in their course*



*Figure One: ACE Supplement ratings of support for the transition to virtual instruction*



**For students, there is no substitute for meaningful engagement with faculty.**

*The more contact I had with professors, the easier the transition was. ... Having Zoom meetings so that there was some level of live interaction was more supportive than lessons that consisted of pre-recorded videos, additional readings or other assignments. Those types of fixes were more confusing, less personal, and more overwhelming.*

*What meant the most to me was still being able to have access to my professors, and meeting with them during their 'office hours' even though it was a little different considering our circumstances.*

*Being able to meet for discussion and engage in back and forth dialogue made a huge difference in what I learned. Also, being able to connect with professors via Zoom helped me feel less isolated and made it easier to ask questions.*

*Some professors were great and did everything they could to facilitate learning, some just posted old lecture recordings from previous years and checked out. When the teacher wants the student to learn as much as the student wants to learn, it doesn't matter whether we meet online*

**Good instructional practices for in-person classes are also important in virtual instruction.**

*Lay out everything each week and send out announcements frequently. Remind students of what's coming up as well as what's due and when ... Update the syllabus because things get very mixed up when trying to manage 4+ classes all online.*

*Direct support in learning material rather than just being told what to learn instead of how to learn it*

*I think it's important to have the ability to ask questions and interact with an instructor as you learn the material.*

*Professors sending out announcements regarding upcoming material, live discussion sections over Zoom to work through examples or questions, and providing extensive directions on assignments as expectations were difficult to gather from the online delivery method.*

**Challenges unrelated to learning significantly affected student ability to learn and succeed in their courses**

The PRS the survey asked students to identify how frequently a number of non-academic challenges interfered with their academic work (summarized in Figure Three). ACE Supplement responses noted similar challenges, and also revealed additional types of challenges that interfered with students' academic work.

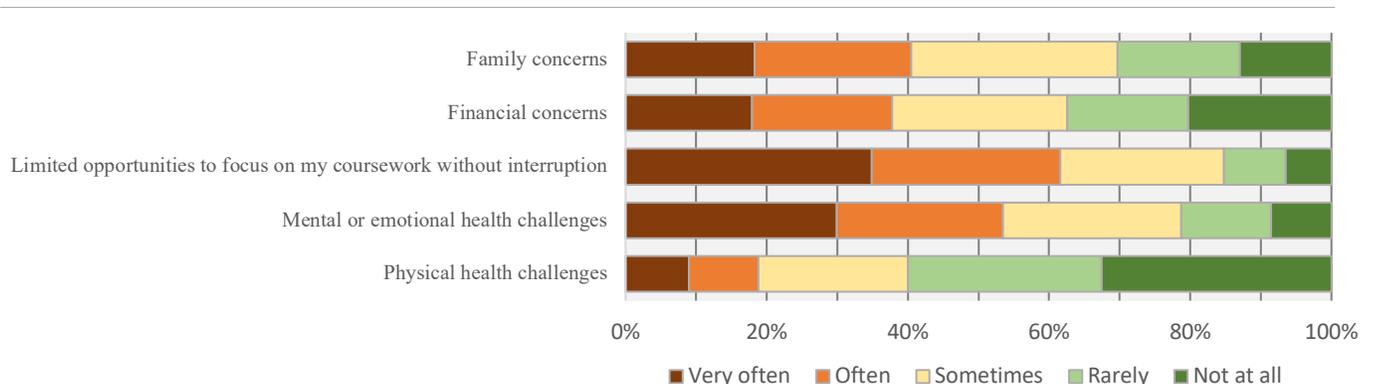
*Some professors ... did not seem to take into account the various difficulties many students were facing in our personal lives that we could not control. Some seemed to be under the impression that students were trying to take advantage of the changes by making unfair requests, but this was obviously not the case, and more understanding from those professors would have helped immensely.*

*I think the teachers understanding our situation and that because of this pandemic adjusted accordingly ... A couple teachers were extremely understanding and changed dates due to my circumstances of having my power shut off*

*Access to web cameras, printers, and specific system requirements were difficult to acquire.*

*I had a lot of research papers added to give us points we would have earned in class, but since a lot of my professors did that, it was time consuming. I also had a professor say our final was going to be ... open note (printed out notes only which I had to go to a store to pay and do) and then [it was changed to] open book (only hard copy of the book which I had the e-book of so I spent money expediting it).*

Figure Three: Responses to the PRS item, "How often have these challenges interfered with your academic work during the pandemic?"



# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## 2019-20 Annual Report to the Board of Regents Course-level Continuous Improvement Plans

### I. Executive Summary

For the academic year 2019-20, the Iowa State Board of Regents adjusted the traditional reporting requirements imposed by Iowa Code Section 262.9(36) to allow universities to respond to the sudden COVID-19 crisis. The adjusted requirements permitted institutions to highlight the efforts made by faculty and staff to ensure that students continued to meet course learning objectives as course content was moved online. Our report for this year includes: high level data points, common practices used to improve pedagogy, and a narrative statement detailing how our faculty strove to maintain student engagement and assessment in an online environment.

#### **Number of courses, enrollment, and students**

	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
Total number of eligible high-enrollment courses	671	692
Total student enrollment in courses (duplicated enrollment)	234,553	258,702
Number of unique students enrolled in courses	29,898	31,398

The three most commonly cited methods of assessment used in large classes are: formative assessments such as clickers or quizzes, faculty review of exams or quiz grades, and faculty

evaluation of presentations or projects.

The three most commonly cited changes that faculty make in response to course assessment results include: modifying student learning experiences/activities, retooling class assignments or assignment instructions, and adjusting the time devoted to covering specific course content.

## II. Spring Semester Initiatives 2020

### A. Faculty Training in Online Pedagogy

During the spring semester 2020, 6,100 ISU courses had an online presence through the University-wide learning management system, Canvas. While faculty may use Canvas to deliver online content, many in person courses use Canvas to post course syllabi and assignments online. One measure of COVID's impact on our spring semester can be seen in our faculty Canvas usage rates. Notably, while 63% of the university's spring courses had a Canvas presence on or before March 10, 2020, by March 19 that number had jumped to 86%-a 23% increase within a one-week period. The remaining courses that did not maintain a Canvas presence (14%) were largely comprised of honors seminars, dissertation seminars or learning communities. Within a two-week period in March 2020, faculty and staff converted 6,100 in-person course sections to courses delivered virtually. In addition, other activities such as our campus-wide lecture series, adviser meetings, and faculty office hours continued virtually using Zoom and WebEx. These two platforms experienced a nearly 3,000 usage increase.

This massive shift in operations would not have been possible but for the work of Iowa State's faculty and staff as well as the effort of Iowa State's Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). CELT dramatically increased their programming and outreach efforts and posted accessible instructional materials online to ensure that instructors had the information they needed to move courses online. The major initiatives launched by CELT included:

- Creating a Quick Start Guide that showed faculty how to move courses online, interact with students, create assignments, build a sense of belonging, and deliver experiential learning activities.
- Updated "Teaching with Technology" webpages, in particular, the Instructional Strategies and Instructional Tools pages with information about how and why to use certain teaching-related technology.
- Hosted a panel discussion on "Alternative Assessments" featuring three faculty presenters.
- Moved from bi-weekly teaching tips to a weekly teaching tip. Our typical, pre-Covid-19 "link open rate" of the teaching tip ranges from 40-50%. During Covid-19 from March through May, our open rate ranged from 49-59%. The industry average for open rates within constant contact/higher ed is 19%.
- Established the CELT Response Team which held virtual open hours featuring CELT staff members and instructional designers. The CELT Response Team was available

8am-5pm to answer inquiries from instructors. In March, we hit a high of 20 inquiries per day.

- Worked with the Library to integrate Course Reserve materials seamlessly within individual Canvas courses.
- Assisted the Graduate and Professional Student Senate in moving their annual Research Symposium to a virtual event space.

## B. Representative Classroom Innovations

### 1. **Large Class (Chemical and Biological Engineering)**

Dr. Monica Lamm, Associate Professor CBE Department, CELT Faculty Fellow

Dr. Lamm replaced in-person class sessions with voice-over screen capture videos. In keeping with all of which were under 10 minutes in length. To adequately cover course content, Lamm produced and posted on average three videos per class period. She used a variety of classroom engagement strategies. For example, as an alternative to "turn to your partner" questions used in in-person lecture segments, she created Canvas discussions. Each Canvas discussion used the setting "users must post before seeing replies" checked to ensure that students engaged in their own independent thinking. At regular intervals, one of the co-instructors in the course reviewed the responses and posted a summary for students to clarify misconceptions about the course material.

In addition, Dr. Lamm created weekly low stakes quizzes in the course to encourage students keep up with course content and to allow them to track their learning process. In addition to the quizzes, students had to upload homework assignments to CANVAS. To enable students to "meet" with her during the semester, Lamm created virtual office hours.

### 2. **Large Class (Mathematics)**

Dr. Steve Butler, Associate Professor and the Barbara J. Janson Professor, Department of Mathematics

Dr. Butler used pre-recorded lectures delivered at roughly the same pace and content that used in in-person lectures. This format gave students the flexibility to watch the lectures on their own schedule, pause the lectures, and revisit lecture content as needed. During the spring semester, we were aware that some students had to share computer and wi-fi capacity with other family members and wanted to accommodate those students. In addition, we kept multiple lines of communication open with the students, including email, regular Canvas announcements, and a substantial number of scheduled virtual office hours. We structured assessments to use a variety of on-line tools.

3. **Large Class (Apparel, Merchandising, and Design)**

Dr. Kelly Reddy-Best, Assistant Professor, Apparel, Merchandising, and Design Program

To promote engagement during this course, the instructor required students to answer questions related to course reading assignments on the course's virtual discussion boards. Students logged into Canvas during the scheduled course time (3:40-5pm T/TH) to answer 5-6 questions. Students were instructed to spend 5-7 minutes on each question – the amount of time they'd normally spend in class on the learning activity. After students answered each question, they had to respond to the responses posed by two other student's responses with "what new you learned from their response" or "what is one thing you could expand upon in their response." The instructor then responded to at least one of each students' posts within the class period (as though she was commenting in real-time).

4. **Studio-Based Course**

Rob Whitehead, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture and CELT Faculty Fellow

Architecture 302: Architectural Design Studio IV, aims to teach students how to design and document urban housing schemes. This design work is reiterative and requires a considerable amount of time and discussion between the instructor and the students--in many ways it mimics the professional world of design. As the course transitioned online, the instructor mimicked how the professional world of architecture often practices. He used Zoom to organize class meeting times at regular times as a class and then consulted with each design team individually as well. During these design crits, Zoom gave the class the ability to share screens and interact with each-other in real-time. This fall, the instructor will use Canvas and CyBox to share additional drawings, photos, and written assessments and reflections. One item that MAY change is our reliance on using primarily digital representations of the work--normally we use drawings and models to test the work--but without access to fabrication labs in the College we will have to adjust to more drawing-centric activities. Learning outcomes will be adjusted accordingly.

E. **Extension Specialist**

Dr. Angela Shaw, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition

As an extension specialist, some of our team spring meetings/programs were held virtually and we reached out to the Iowa State University Extension IT group for

assistance in holding spring meetings/ programs via Connect and Zoom. For the programs that required face to face for certification (no virtual option), this fall we are conducting a risk assessment, programs/meetings with more than 20 individuals, will be rescheduled for a later date. For all programs/meetings with less than 20 individuals, we will assess the immediate needs of our clients and seek to deliver the programs in smaller groups.

### III. Summer 2020 Initiatives

Although Iowa State is proud of the efforts made by faculty and staff in the spring to move courses and academic services to a virtual environment, we have taken several steps to improve the quality of our online programming. To begin, the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice-President, in consultation with the college deans, issued a new policy document titled: "Summer Guidelines for Virtual Instruction." These guidelines require faculty to incorporate increased opportunities for faculty-student engagement into online courses. We are in the process of updating these guidelines for fall instruction.

In addition, CELT has taken extraordinary steps to improve instructors' ability to teach online.

Total participants to CELT summer programming to July 2<sup>nd</sup> is **647**. Some major new highlights with regards to programming are:

- "[Choose your instructional tool adventure](#)" a 30-minute session focused on various [instructional](#) tools
- The CELT team, collaborating with campus partners, established the [ISU Course Template](#) creating a straightforward the process to aid instructors in including the must-have elements in their online courses.
- Development of [virtual Summer CELT Course Design Institute](#). We had an initial limit of 15 people per three institutes. We had to raise the number to 30 for June and now 50 for July and August! SVPP and CELT are providing \$500 stipend to participants who go through the programming and submit a Quality Matters self-review.

Training participation by topic:

#### ONCE stand alone trainings on ISU Course Template

June 1: 65 participants

June 9: 39

June 30: 34

#### ONCE Departmental Trainings

since May 8th: 372

#### Online Team-Based Learning Program

June 23-25: 32

Inclusion sessions

Syllabus: 5

Accessibility: 11

Inclusive Learning Environ.: 11

Quality Matters Programming

APPQMR (June 11 & 12) : 11

Instructional Adventures

Communication: 13

Study Tools: 8

Engagement: 16

Summer Course Design Institute

June 22-25: 30

July and August CDI – are currently enrolled at 50 individuals each.