

September 16, 2009

TO: Academic Department Chairs

FROM: Cindy Brown, Ph.D.
Vice President, Academic Affairs

RE: INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PLANNING

This memo follows the August 31 communication to all MCLA faculty and staff regarding our preparations for an anticipated influenza outbreak.

As noted, the current H1N1 flu strain is a pandemic. We are fortunate that there has been little direct impact on our community from the flu to date. However, anticipating a fall resurgence of this strain, we want to be ready.

It is important to emphasize that current CDC recommendations are that all of those who might come down with the flu – students, faculty, and staff – go home to recuperate. A large outbreak on campus *will* lead to significant classroom absences and students leaving campus. Some instructors may also be unable to physically meet their classes if they adhere to these guidelines, either because they are ill or would need to be at home caring for family members who are ill.

I am requesting that each academic department plan so that we may continue to offer courses should the pandemic lead to disruption of classes due to extensive absences and/or closure of the College. These preparations are similar to those MCLA made during the 2006 avian influenza outbreak, with more attention to the technologies now available to us.

Please read the attached document entitled “MCLA Preparedness Guidelines.” This document provides planning information, asks that contact information be collected on all staff members, that an office support back-up person be designated should the primary contact person be out sick, establishes parameters to maintain office operations should staff call in sick, and outlines how faculty can communicate with students during an outbreak.

To document faculty and staff contact information, essential office work functions, and approaches to communicating with students for each course, please fill out the three forms that are available at <http://www.mcla.edu/pandemic>.

During September, I ask that chairs:

1. Ensure they have up-to-date contact information for each department member. This will be necessary should staff have to assist extended family and should MCLA need to contact people during such a time.
2. Determine essential functions of staff and faculty who have alternate assignments.

3. Document the essential office functions, and back-up personnel for these essential duties.
4. Ask each faculty member teaching for your department in fall 2009 to post a copy of each syllabus they are teaching in Blackboard Vista. They need not do any teaching online, but rather should view this posting as a contingency in case online communication is required to maintain academic continuity. Mary Kavanaugh is available to assist with this task. Additional information was recently sent to faculty on three scheduled workshops designed to assist them in putting essential elements of classes online at <http://www.mcla.edu/pandemic/faculty> .
5. Ask each faculty member to test the email address list for their class or classes to ensure this basic communication is working. Please note that faculty should use students' MCLA emails *only*.
6. Maintain a copy of all forms and information in your office, and submit copies to Academic Affairs (Dawn Jamros), and submit another copy to Human Resources (Marilyn Truskowski).

I recognize the additional work this places on each office and department. But I believe that our concerted efforts today will help us to work through a difficult time should a pandemic occur.

Please plan to complete the first draft of these steps no later than **October 2, 2009**. If it would be helpful for me to attend a departmental meeting, please contact me. I will ask Jim Stakenas and Marilyn Truskowski to attend the September 24, 2009 department chairs meeting to answer your questions. Thank you for your attention to this important planning.

cc: Mark Berman, Chief Information Officer
Dawn Jamros, Staff Assistant, Academic Affairs
Monica Joslin, Dean of Academic Affairs
Mary Kavanaugh, ATAG Coordinator
James Stakenas, Ph.D., Vice President, Administration & Finance
Marilyn Truskowski, Director, HR