

Dear Fellow ASF Member,

I hope as you start out week 2 of classes resuming (and week 3-4 of working at home), you are finding some settlement in our new way of working for the time being. It's amazing how busy I find myself with online meetings all day and staying caught up on email and projects while trying to maintain some semblance of normalcy. I think I am busier at home!

I know how much it means to our students that we administrative and service faculty members are not even skipping a beat in the way we are serving them (to the best of our abilities). Even if you feel like your work is more back-office functionality at times, I know that they are incredibly grateful that they can rely on the people and systems to help them accomplish their goals this semester.

As your ASF State President, I continue to have 4 hours of phone calls/meetings per week with the system office. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Sami Gabriel and I meet with Labor Relations to discuss issues and questions that arise during the week. They have been incredibly responsive in meeting our needs or seeking information on our behalf. I am grateful for the strong relationship we have with our Labor Relations representative these days. If you ever have questions or concerns as a MN State employee regarding anything with COVID-19 that your HR staff or local ASF leadership cannot answer, please email me at trahim@winona.edu. I may know the answer or will find out information for you.

The other two meetings I have each week are with Ron Anderson, Senior Vice Chancellor, and the IFO and MSCF state presidents. These calls are full of information about next steps in things that the system office is working on or thinking about. These meetings are very collaborative and I truly feel like our voice is being heard more than ever. Last Monday during the spring State ASF Board meeting, we brainstormed a list of academic and student services questions/concerns that I brought forward that they are working on answering. The IFO State President was thankful for the variety of perspectives that we bring to the table about how things could/should be done. If you have academic or student service concerns or questions as we navigate these unusual waters, please email me as well at trahim@winona.edu.

Here are a few updates from my phone calls last week as we look past Spring 2020:

- As soon as the stay-at-home order is lifted (scheduled for this Friday but could be extended), modified face-to-face classes will resume. If the stay-at-home order is extended, those faculty will need to figure out how to do the instruction in some other way or continue it on in the summer if/when they can. They will NOT be extending the spring semester timeline.
- Summer classes should be planned for in alternate delivery modes with VERY FEW face-to-face offerings. Restrictions that need to be considered include another/longer stay-at-home order, physical distancing, and CDC guidelines for group size. Campuses and faculty are encouraged to re-evaluate timing (perhaps later in the summer) if there are heavy face-to-face classes on the books.
- For other summer programming (registration, orientation, camps, festivals, etc.), campuses are encouraged to look at where these things can go online. I know some campuses have had some successful early registrations online already with incoming students. It will be a campus-based decision on what to keep on the schedule, but they must keep in mind the restrictions above (stay-at-home order, physical distancing, group size). Previous information I heard is that nothing of this nature should be offered until at least the end of June.
- The System leadership and campuses are beginning to scenario plan for Fall semester. The current models forecast a resurgence of the virus in late fall.

- SCENARIO A: Broad concern about face-to-face classes. Look at mostly online and limited face-to-face classes.
- SCENARIO B: Maybe another stay-at-home order where there could be no face-to-face instruction.
- How do we potentially move from Scenario A to Scenario B in the same semester if a resurgence of the virus does occur?
- The Academic & Student Affairs Unit is working on considerations and planning principles of perhaps front-loading or back-loading all or certain classes at the beginning or end of the semester. Another thought is looking at 8-week courses instead of 16-week courses.
- Obviously all of this is only in discussion mode and could change on a dime as more information becomes available.
- In terms of P/NC grades for this semester, everyone acknowledges that this is an unusual term. The position of MN State right now is that for Spring 2020 only, P grades must be accepted for transfer within the system. There are obviously longer term implications and they are looking at putting together some different work groups in the fall to look at different practices and policies. They are also seeing information that professional and graduate schools around the country are realizing that P/NC grades are being used and they would accept these types of grades in the short term.

My apologies for the length of this email! Please know that I am here with you and advocating for your personal and professional needs to the best of my ability. There are so many services and opportunities to help US be successful through Teamsters, the State of Minnesota, and our health insurance plans. I hope that you will take advantage of anything you and your family needs during this difficult time. Please reach out to me if I can be of any assistance. Thank you for all that you are doing to get everyone to the end of the semester while staying healthy.

In solidarity,
Tracy Rahim
State ASF President