



Thanks for all your work this week, your engagement with each other, and your support for and patience with our WLS staff as we manage a lot of information and a lot of new processes and ways of being in the world. As questions and concerns emerge, please continue to communicate with each other, be problem-solvers, and monitor official communications from UTRGV, CLA, and WLS.

It is just as important to create the space you need for yourself, your families, and your own physical and mental well-being. The CLA Dean's Office and our WLS Offices will carry whatever weight we can to support your needs as staff and teachers and members of our WLS family.



Important Upcoming Dates for WLS

Important Spring 2020 dates on the academic calendar have not been revised as of March 20.

- **Weekly Friday WLS Zoom** Every Friday @ 10-11am: These weekly check-ins are not required, but I want to make them regularly available so that we can address and discuss any WLS issues that emerge this semester.
- March 23: Classes resume
- April 10-11 Easter Holiday
- May 1-7: Final Exams
- May 7: Spring classes end; Official last day of the term
- May 11: Grades due at 3pm

CLA/WLS News

From Walter, on Remote Teaching (3.20.20)

"[A]s we have said before, it is important that our approach to our students, and to everyone in our community, be guided by empathy and compassion. One way to do this is to limit as much as you may be able to, synchronous requirements as part of your course delivery, including assessments. If you do need to, for example, have live ZOOM lectures, that is fine (though all required synchronous interactions must occur during the assigned course period). However, be sure to record and post them in Blackboard so that students unable to attend may be able to view them later. The same applies to assessments."

- Equipment and materials lists; Walter is making an order; laptops aren't happening because there simply aren't any to buy; staff know how to relocate the location of your asset if you take a UTRGV device home.
- All searches without offers out already are suspended.
- All summer courses are likely to be online; I have reached out to affected face to face teachers assigned to courses this summer in case there are requests to drop or change these courses.
- Anyone can come on to campus to use their offices and ITV rooms (during their scheduled class times), even classrooms if that is conducive to planned activities.
- International students. If they need to travel or need our support, we need to be as flexible as possible.
- On Friday, we developed detailed staff continuity plans with a list of work-related activities that staff can do from home. A staff rotation plan is in the works for CLA so that building visitors know where to go for support while working with a skeleton crew. We can flex work studies so that only one works at a time. We can have a work study in an office by him/herself as long as there is a full-time staff member in the building. We will need to account for a staff members' 8-hour work days with a log. In the coming days, I will work with WLS staff to develop a list of activities we can help with if needed (that may not be activities we were providing support for before).
- I am reaching out to several UTRGV units to get information on computer lab availability, student access to technology, student outreach for those who may not be easily reachable thru online means, and a shared set of community resources for students.

Writing & Language Studies

BSABH 2.202
One West University Blvd.
Brownsville, Texas 78520-4933
(956) 882-8246

ELABS 329
1201 West University Drive
Edinburg, Texas 78539-2999
(956) 665-3441

wls@utrgv.edu

WLS Continuity Plan

We've submitted a [detailed continuity plan for WLS](#) that includes an opening statement about Outcomes. This is important to understand because if the academic calendar is not changed for Spring 2020, we need to make assurances that existing SLOs were in place and regular assessments were in process/completed.

WLS COVID-19-Related Questions/Answers from WLS Meetings this Week (3/18 & 3/20)

- You can check out your office computers if you need to. Please report the UTRGV tag # to Nora.
- Webcams and other requested technologies are in process of being ordered. I do not have an update on delivery.
- Revised syllabi: make sure that revised syllabi are available to students thru Blackboard and upload them to FPT thru the Scheduled Teaching link.
- There have been a lot of questions about the likelihood of changing over to pass/fail grades for Spring 2020. No official word yet, but all concerns and arguments that I've received have been passed up the chain to Walter.
- Create a clear and flexible attendance plan for your courses.
- Keep course conversion simple. This is not the time to experiment with bells and whistles. Find your comfort zone, find your students' collective comfort zones, and help each other do good work as teachers and learners.
- Students want to hear from you, even if that's recorded audio min-lectures or feedback. Any bit of contact helps a sense of accessibility and normalcy. (Jose Davila-Montes)
- You can adapt almost any if not all grading systems to Blackboard. If you need help, just let me know or reach out to your ILT team for a reference to someone who can help.
- Accommodations are being managed by our UTRGV office, but make sure that any students who pre-existing accommodations have access to what they need to complete your classes.
- In terms of assessments/assignment submissions, don't create more problems and complexity. Submission windows or marking assignments LATE but accepting them will cut down on email traffic and complaints about accessibility and students getting work to you.
- Student engagement is our priority. Consider using Navigate (icon at my.utrgv.edu) for attendance and Early Alerts. [[Navigate screenshot](#) | [Instructions](#)]
- As we look ahead to summer courses and potentially having them online, remember to request copying Blackboard shells thru a COLTT ticket when Summer Courses are loaded into Blackboard. We'll let you know when that is available.

Compliance

- 3.20.20 deadline: Outside Activity Report needs to be submitted even if you're reporting that there's nothing to report. You can access the Portal through this [WEBSITE](#). Then please call Compliance at 956-665-2653 or email them at compliance@utrgv.edu for help.
- Upload syllabi for all Summer and Fall 2020 courses, even if some of Fall 2020 is tentative, the syllabi with requirements for materials have to be uploaded in FPT.
- Your Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 book selections should be done.