# 3.22 Syllabi & Course Outlines

## Faculty

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**From:** Faculty 1
**Sent:** Monday, March 25, 2024 10:22 AM
 **To:** Lindstrom, Derrick D <derrick.lindstrom@nhcc.edu>
 **Subject:** Syllabus requirements

 Good morning, Derrick,

 This email is my official comment regarding the syllabi requirements.

I support maintaining the current syllabus language that was approved on an expedited basis last fall.

I want the syllabus to include the language used for the HLC argument and to be consistent with HLC requests. Thank you!

 **From:** Faculty 2
**Sent:** Monday, March 25, 2024 10:59 AM
 **To:** Lindstrom, Derrick D <derrick.lindstrom@nhcc.edu>
 **Subject:** Syllabi Requirements

 Derrick,

 This email is my official comment regarding the syllabi requirements.

 I support maintaining the current syllabus language that was approved on an expedited basis last fall.

 I want the syllabus to include the language used for the HLC argument and to be consistent with HLC requests.

 Thank you,

**From:** Faculty three
**Sent:** Monday, March 25, 2024 1:51 PM
 **To:** Lindstrom, Derrick D <derrick.lindstrom@nhcc.edu>
 **Subject:** Policy comment

 Hello Derrick,

 This is in regards to syllabus language. Here is my formal comments I would like for the record:

 I support maintaining the current syllabus language that was approved on an expedited basis last Fall.

 I want the syllabus to include the language used for the HLC argument and to be consistent with HLC requests.

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My feedback on 3.22 is a syllabus checklist is a good thing. Let's move forward.

I have some comments on proposed policy 3.22 concerning Course Syllabi & Course Outlines. I’m impressed with the proposed policy; looks great. This will go a long way to satisfying future reviewers, and provides clarity that will assuredly improve instructors’ and students’ experiences.

My only reservation is the language indicating that in lieu of including the various required items on syllabi, “functional links” can be included instead. I’m worried that this exception could make compliance with HLC expectations difficult. Here are my thoughts: First, I’m worried about transferability of courses for students. Students count on syllabi being filed with the deans/administrative assistants when transferring credits to other institutions. After a couple semesters have gone by, the linked information will no longer be accessible – for instance, if the link is to D2L content that has become locked or removed. Should all linked information (everything not included in the syllabus) be directed to deans as a separate set of files (PDFs perhaps), to ensure records are archived?

A related concern I have is that there isn’t any specification about where a link should be housed – are we expecting that any relevant links appear exclusively on D2L? Or would publisher-maintained websites be allowed? Are we asking the school to be responsible for maintaining information on websites the school has nothing to do with?

A second worry is that this increases the work load for deans or others who conduct the beginning-of-semester syllabus audit – they’ll need to not just look at the syllabi, but follow every link to ensure the relevant info really is present. The chances that things slip through the cracks increases.

And finally, I just worry that a future reviewer/accreditor would fail to follow the links, or just be generally unimpressed that all essential information about a course wasn’t included in a single document and I’d rather not surprise anyone. For instance, the carve out for links seems to allow an instructor to hand out a syllabus that says little more than “See D2L”. Probably no faculty members would do this, as it seems plainly silly. But my worry is that a reviewer will look at our policy and wonder how we ensure that this doesn’t happen. We would need to have a good answer.

If the concern among faculty is that we’re trying to avoid excessively lengthy syllabi, instructors can break documents into parts – essential info in the syllabus and more detailed explanation of assignments, schedules, etc. on D2L.

3.22 – Course syllabi - The “functional links” addition is problematic.  Our links are always changing and this language risks that an HLC reviewer either won’t bother to click on the link or it might not work years later during a site visit.  I also doubt students will click on the links either, and they will miss important information regarding Access Services and Academic Integrity.  We used to just include the language for various statements. There is no reason we can’t do that other than it makes the syllabus longer.  If an instructor doesn’t like the length, they can break it into parts and post both the longer complete version and also syllabus sections divided into grading, college services, assignments, etc., on D2L.  The links also limit students’ use of the syllabus for obtaining course equivalencies for transfer.  Many of our students come with courses taken five or more years ago.  The likelihood that any link still exists after that amount of time is very low.  The “functional links” addition doesn’t seem to serve our accreditation needs or the needs of students.

The current policy was revised Fall 2023 to address Higher Learning Commission concerns around faculty syllabi and went through Expedited Review. Since that time, faculty have revised their syllabi to follow policy and HLC feedback on the change was positive. Consistency and oversight were HLC concerns that the Fall 2023 syllabus policy directly addressed.

In spring semester, we had 100% faculty compliance and HLC affirmed our accreditation with monitoring. I think the monitoring piece is worth noting. Our accreditation was affirmed with the understanding that the Fall 2023 policy is our policy. Revising it immediately may be a mistake. Therefore, I would argue that the Fall 2023 policy should be continued with no revisions.

If the revised language “Faculty may provide functional links to the above information in lieu of including it in their course syllabus.” is approved, I have concerns about record-keeping. There needs to be a way that all the information can be gathered into one document and submitted to the dean with the syllabus so that if students need the info later, it can be passed on to them. As written, it isn’t clear where the information is stored and what length of time the links need to remain functional.

If the committee approves these revisions, please address the location and duration of the functional links.

And, lastly, thank you for your work! My email probably doesn’t convey it but I think this is a good policy (with or without the revisions) and I appreciate the work you’re putting into this.

I fully support all of the language in these policies, especially the syllabus policy. It requires clear communication to students of all the essential elements of a course while It masterfully navigating Board Policy, MSCF contract, and some expectations of the HLC. Bravo. Personally, with regard to the syllabus policy, I would be fine with only allowing links for items "k" through "r" in Part 4 Subpart A, making everything above "k" required parts of the primary syllabus document. But that is only given as a suggested bone to throw to anyone arguing against the link option.

Thank you for your work on this!

I don't know how "Criteria for the evaluation of student work" is defined, and so that makes me wary.

When considering the necessity of detailed course syllabi, it's important to balance academic freedom, pedagogical flexibility, and the provision of necessary information to students. Mandating faculty to include exhaustive details, such as the breakdown of credits into lab and lecture hours and a comprehensive list of all assignments and tests complete with due dates, may appear as an overextension of administrative oversight. This approach could potentially stifle the dynamic nature of teaching and learning, where adjustments and modifications are often made in response to the evolving needs of the classroom. It also imposes an additional administrative burden on faculty, who already navigate the complexities of curriculum design, teaching, and research.

While transparency and clarity regarding course expectations and requirements are undoubtedly valuable for student success and planning, it is crucial to find a balance that respects the professional judgment of faculty and the pedagogical imperatives of courses. Encouraging a more flexible guideline that includes essential information without demanding excessive specifics could foster an educational environment that is both structured and adaptable. This would support the ultimate goal of education: to provide a rich, engaging, and responsive learning experience for students.

I'm just wondering if we need to state specifically that the outcomes and course description language should come directly from the course outlines?

I feel we should be taking the HLC recommendations as seriously as possible.  That requires all of us to step away from a mindset of “what can we get away with” to “what can we do to ensure a great score with HLC on the next visit”.  Since Joel and Mary both worked together address the issues of syllabi their emails that came out were very helpful in providing some context for me.  We should do whatever best aligns with the spirit of HLC requirements.  I do not want to proceed forward with the bare minimum requirements, or interpretations from faculty that promote syllabi that are dissimilar. From this standpoint, I vote to remove “functional links” as an option for faculty.  Furthermore, I would like an official syllabi template that every instructor must follow.  I understand that may come in conflict with interpretations about the MSCF contract, but that does not matter at all to me if it means we could lose accreditation.

Speaking more broadly than just the syllabi, I would like every decision made about moving forward with these policies to be framed from that same perspective: *What can we do to ensure that we will have a top score on HLC visits.* I think it is important to note here that HLC is not just some bureaucratic institution that makes up rules to make the lives of faculty harder but utilizes best standard practices to ensure quality assurance of higher education.

This may strike some faculty members as a rather draconian comment for the committee, but I feel it necessary to ensure our compliance.

Why do I feel this way?

I am a graduate of NHCC.  I am a testament to the power of this institution, and one of the best days of my life was getting hired here as a faculty member (and hopefully soon a *tenured faculty member*).  I take great pride in what NHCC has to offer and am really excited at the prospect of helping to grow our institution into an invaluable member of our surrounding community.  I understand that where I am coming from is a program that has outside accreditation and that I came from industry where compliance is routine, so my views on this are certainly not objective.  However, my goals are to ensure the longevity and the power of this institution, and therefore, my career.  I have a strong passion for community and technical colleges, and I truly believe that they are arguably the most important way for people in the United States to improve their lot in life.

So, if during the process of developing policies there is any chance, no matter how minuscule, HLC could find any of the wording problematic, *I do not want it as a policy*.  I want full compliance and no question as to whether we are in full compliance.  I want our next evaluation to be as smooth as possible and for the HLC representatives to say, “Not only did NHCC improve dramatically, but they are the MOST compliant college in the history of HLC.”

I recognize that this may be interpreted as a move to steamroll different perspectives, but I am so tired of bickering over things that can put our institution, and our diverse students and community, in jeopardy.

I will voice my agreement with Michelle and Cody. I can understand why some might want the more streamlined appearance of a hypertext syllabus, but such things are rarely functional for an entire academic year, much less afterwards.

I also do not understand the desire to restrict access to syllabi. The slippery slope argument doesn't seem meaningful to me here, and I would argue that syllabi are best seen as public documents, part of the noble work of the academic commons, and not as a private field to be fenced off.

I don't see a large issue with adopting the proposed language on what to include in the syllabus. Do I personally think some of it overly prescriptive? Sure. That said, given our audience and the context (HLC, threatened accreditation, etc.), an ask this small isn't about the verbatim thing they're asking; it's about assessing whether we are engaging in their process in good faith. And we should be if we want their accreditation status.

I don't see having a tentative schedule with a boldfaced note that the schedule is tentative and subject to change as (As Mary has said) "the hill to die on." There are far larger issues we need to address than providing what is essentially a rough draft of the schedule.

As you've said, this is language I can live with.

I am fine with most of the policies being considered right now (though I don't love the class cancellation for those of us who teach mostly face-to-face and/or hybrid, I can live with it).

The syllabus policy, though, I have issues with. I talked through my issues with Heidie, and we reached a compromise we could both live with for my spring syllabi, which I greatly appreciated. So please know that I am not upset about that process at all. It was very affirming and helpful.

However, according to Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and MSCF, our system's intellectual property policy is that syllabi and assignments created by an instructor are the unique intellectual property of that instructor (with, of course, certain exceptions). While I can be asked to share my syllabi with transfer institutions and HLC, but it remains my creative work and is protected as such.

I really don't mind using a syllabus checklist to guide my work, just as I don't mind looking at sample syllabi and assignments my department collects for inspiration.  I've used one or another versions of the checklist Jane Reinke created a hundred years ago for us for years and years, modified by examples I've seen from other faculty in my field and through helpful information I've received about best practices from the STaR Center and consultations with Deanna. My syllabi and assignments are evolving documents, just as my classes are, and I enjoy creating them in a way that I feel best serves my discipline at large and my students at NHCC in particular.

I've been teaching for 30+ years now, and here at NHCC since fall 2001, so I've had a lot of time to think about how best to teach my classes. I've had lots and lots of feedback over the years from my students (most importantly) and my supervisors (some of whom have been wonderfully helpful and supportive), not to mention my amazing fellow faculty. More recently, we've all benefited from a robust institutional research arm of the college, and having direct access to disaggregated data has been incredibly useful to me as well. I take all of that feedback very seriously, I do my best to stay current in my field,  I work on curriculum innovations with my department to continue to improve the way we serve students through our classes (most recently Gateway and the new Workshop classes), I talk about teaching composition monthly with my department during our Comp Talks, and, in general, I work very hard to continuously improve my teaching.

Why does this matter with regards to this policy? Let me explain.

At NHCC, I regularly teach multiple sections of two classes (College Writing I and II) over and over and over, year after year, and as my discipline, our student population, and our modes of delivery have changed, so have my courses, including my syllabi and assignments. I have to note, too, if you take a look at the data about my students' outcomes, retention, etc., as well as at my students' evaluations of my work, you'd probably conclude that I am pretty good at this thing.

Many years ago, I stopped giving students a full course schedule and detailed set of assignments at the beginning of the semester. I teach mostly students in their first or second semester of college. Many of those students are first generation and have no actual idea what a syllabus even is. Many have been told they are "not college material." Many are unsure about their ability to do college level work. Almost all are frightened about being asked to write anything longer than a couple of pages. Most of them know nothing about how credit hours and homework work in college. Many of them went to high schools that focused on getting them graduated, not on preparing them for college.

So, I found, to immediately throw 17 weeks of work at them when we first meet is to set up a situation where someone who already is questioning whether or not they even belong in college is likely to give up before they've even begun.

Faculty who regularly teach students who have already successfully completed two or more semesters of college work are dealing with students who have a lot more confidence and experience than most of my students do. It may make a lot of sense to give them all that detail right away, so they can manage their time – because by then they have figured out that managing their time is necessary and important. That's actually something I have to teach my students. They've never done anything like this before. They've often not been asked to do any significant amount of homework, and they also tend to assume that college is the hours class meets and they can fill their other hours each day with work. In other words, I do a lot of what is normally considered "first year experience" teaching in my classes, especially College Writing I.

In this context, it is important to me to emphasize to students that each assignment builds on the last, and so it doesn't matter what Essay #3 is about right now, as we are just working on Essay #1 at the moment, and that's where our attention and focus should be. When students become anxious and overwhelmed, they cannot think clearly about what needs to be done now, today, this week. Instead they tend to shut down and give up. I do everything I can in my classes to try to prevent that from happening, including just presenting the class one assignment, one week, even one day, at a time.

I also need to be able to adjust what I'm doing in each section I teach as I go for difference groups of students. My night students often have different needs than my day students, for example. Some classes need more review of technical issues like paragraphing, citation, and punctuation; other classes need me to spend more time on large organizational issues, argument, and/or finding, interpreting, and integrating source material. I would never assume that each section of College Writing I that I teach should move along the exact same timeline in the exact same way. That would be a huge disservice to my students.

And, again, it's not like I haven't done this. I did full semester dumps of information the first day of class for at least four or five years before I realized that this made things easy for me, but not for them. It's harder to do things the way I do them. It's harder to allow endless revisions of any assignment. It's harder to allow late work without penalty. It's harder to keep my classes truly student-centered rather than me-centered. But, for me, because I take my ethical obligation to student very seriously, it's worth it.

I would never tell anyone else, especially in any other discipline, to teach the way I do. I assume I know what's best for their discipline and their student population, which varies a lot across campus. I therefore deeply resent being told (by HLC, by the team who went to the HLC hearing, and now by our college, through this policy) what my syllabus must include – particularly when some of the things I'm being told I must include I KNOW are not in my students' best interest.

To be clear, I don't mind at all that everyone teaching College Writing I has to make sure students meet the same learner outcomes and that those should be in our syllabi. I agree with Minnesota State that the Course Outline, not the syllabi, represents and defines what should be happening in the class. I have a deeper worry, though, that we continue to be nudged toward the idea that we should all be teaching the class in the same way, using the same assignments (for transparency, ease of transferability, etc.), that our syllabis should be identical in even more ways than they are supposed to right now.

I'm on a statewide committee now that is charged with implementing a curriculum change that MinnState is saying not a curriculum change and that the union opposes (because it is). It's hard to balance needing to make recommendations about how this change might best be implemented in order to avoid having that dictated to us as well – MinnState says that's the curricular part that we actually have control over – while also keeping in mind that this is not a great way to create the change the system wants. Lots of resistance; little substantive conversation.

The same thing bothers me about the syllabus conversation that has happened over email so far. I feel like the HLC team members simply don't want to have the conversation. They are dismissive of concerns. The decision has been made. They made a promise. We have to do a thing. End of discussion.

What are we doing in academia if we can't at least have the argument?

And Deanna's point about HLC is well-taken. They are not, I think, ogres who will punish us if we don't follow the letter of the promises that team made to them, especially if there are good contractual, system-level, union, and even Constitutional reasons not to. And fear is not a great motivator for me, anyway. I'd prefer evidence.

I understand the NHCC team somehow saved us from the certain doom and am grateful, but numerous promises were made on our behalf without any consultation outside of the team (nor any transparency about their actions). Joel's email statement helped a lot, but it would have been great to have this information in real time. I would vastly have preferred being allowed to read the team's response to the initial report as well as the transcript of the hearing itself.  I don't understand why there is so much secrecy around all of this.

It bothers me even more that, instead, we get a letter from HLC to read about their expectations for our work. It is very specific, and I read it carefully, but then when I noted how interesting it is that  everything we've been told about having to do because we promised we would do it wasn't actually in the letter, and there was information in the letter that had not been previously shared (like serving adult learners better – something that matters to me a lot, as I teach night), it was explained to me that, basically, that the letter is not the thing at all and we do have to continue to worry about ALL the things, not just the ones listed in the letter. And I'm just not at all clear what all of the things that have been promised even are. Surely I have a right to know at least that.

Back to the point of the email, though: Clearly one of the promises includes requiring all us to make schedules/due dates and assignment details part of our syllabi whether we want to or not, whether it would be good for our students or not, whether or syllabi are our unique creative work, our intellectual property or not. Because they promised.

There is something terribly wrong with this picture.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts. I do truly appreciate it – and all of you.

Please accept these as my formal comments on the NHCC Policy 3.22 (Syllabus and Course Outlines).

RE: Part IV Subpart s: *“Faculty may provide functional links to the above information in lieu of including it in their course syllabus.”*

I vehemently oppose adding this provision into the syllabus policy. As a member of the HLC Response Team, I believe that adding this provision creates several eventual problems for both students and future HLC reviewers.

HLC made it clear during our work with them last summer and fall that they view a syllabus as a singular, inclusive document. While we live in the digital age, having links to various other digital documents (e.g. D2L pages, etc.) dilutes a syllabus and the purpose therein. Further, once the term ends, the functionality of those links will diminish. D2L pages, for example, have sunset dates on them. This would make reviewing linked syllabus information difficult or impossible for institutions reviewing old syllabi for transfer, or for state and federal accreditation reviewers.

Arguments have been made that official course outlines should be what is reviewed by ‘receiving’ colleges when transfers occur. I have been involved with dozens of such reviews over my career for both out-going and in-coming students. Course outlines rarely include enough information to allow a thorough evaluation. The syllabus is always the key.

I appreciate the concise list of what is required.  This list helps each of to be sure our syllabus includes the appropriate things.  I do not support any wiggle room on any inclusion of the information, such as "links to information are allowed," if there is a remote possibility that the wiggle room in question will cause the HLC to hesitate or even "need to look more closely" at our college.  Maintaining our accreditation status is far more important to me than any desires about customizing official documents that are used as evidence of how we do our work.

I have two concerns about the syllabus policy change and wanted to get your input as members of the policy committee and D2L support.  This is also my formal feedback to the policy committee regarding the proposed change.

The first concern relates to the requested information.  The information requested to be on the syllabus doesn't bother me in general because I already have most of it in my own syllabi.  The one exception to this is due dates for assignments.  In my view, a syllabus is a collection of contact info, course descriptions, list of assignments, grading expectations, and important policies to help students understand the course they are enrolled in and to provide guidance for how to navigate that course.  Due dates, or a course schedule as I label it for my courses, is an entirely separate thing.  The MinnState definition for a syllabus that Ed linked in the faculty email chain from yesterday doesn't mention due dates or a calendar/schedule of assignments.  The two pertinent sections that stand out to me are:

"Subpart C. Content
A course syllabus includes the pertinent information from the corresponding course outline and the details of the course as determined by each individual instructor. The details may include meeting dates, times, locations, instructor contact information, grading policies, required materials, course requirements, statements or references to college, university, or board policies, accommodation requests, etc."

"Subpart D. Uses
Faculty members use course syllabi to organize class information and communicate the instructor's plan for conducting the course. A course syllabus helps clarify course goals and objectives, assessment and evaluation standards, grading policies, and student responsibilities associated with the course. Students use course syllabi as guides to learning and course expectations. Faculty and students may use course syllabi for student grade appeals."

There is room for additional material at instructor's discretion but I think it's telling that assignment due dates or a semester-wide calendar are omitted entirely from the definition.

Moreover, I do believe students are entitled to see the due dates for assignments in a course and that faculty should provide them in the first week of the semester.  I do this myself, but instead of being added to the syllabus I list them in a separate document that is immediately below my syllabus so that they are accessible in the same content module.  This is partly because my syllabus is a lengthy document on its own and there's no advantage in adding several additional pages.  My asynchronous COMM 1010 classes have 40 assignments, for example, so it's not as simple as adding one small section towards the end.  This information should be provided but I don't think it should be required as part of the syllabus.

There is also a logistical issue that I'm hoping Missy can weigh in on.  I use the syllabus and course calendar templates for accessibility purposes.  Is it even possible to use both templates in the same HTML file?  It looks like they are mutually exclusive, so I'm not sure how a combination of the two would work on D2L without making a pdf or Word doc.  What's the solution here?

The second concern relates to the MSCF contract.  Per one of Deanna's comments in the faculty email chain, requiring faculty to include items in their syllabi is a violation of the MSCF contract and Board Policy on syllabi.  If this is the case, the rest of the discussion is moot because contract and board policy trumps local college policy.  If we can't contravene both the contract and board policy, then the most the college can do is request that faculty include the proposed items but can't require them to do so.  No one else in that faculty chain has commented on this and it seems crucially important.  Or am I viewing this incorrectly?

As always, I appreciate your counsel and any insights you can provide on these issues.

## Staff

In the 3.22 Course Syllabi and Course Outline Policy, it states: Faculty may provide functional links to the above information in lieu of including it in their course syllabus.

* There are some sections that I know are rather cumbersome, like the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Goals or Academic Integrity statement, so I’m assuming that is what most instructors would use links for, and not the more important information. However, I do think it’s important that the document, being as important as it is, be complete as a single document. I think it benefits the student to have all this information in one single document, even if that document is many pages.

Because the majority of comments opposed the inclusion of functional links, we have removed that language. Thanks everyone for your comments!

# 3.55 Class Attendance and Participation

## Faculty

For 3.55, I once defined an extra credit activity for attendance in online asynchronous class as 1 time per week sending me 3 things, 1. a statement of how they were doing, 2. statement of what they were working on in the class, 3. a question. Now, this was extra credit, but I found that their questions were often not about the class and would be things like "What's your favorite movie?" How might that interact with the definitions here? I don't have any real concerns, I'm just thinking through possibilities because even students who attend in person are not guaranteed to interaction with me about academic matters. Likely no changes are needed, just thinking.

Thank you for your thoughts.

In the context of 100% online asynchronous classes, redefining student engagement and attendance extends beyond the mere submission of academic assignments or exams. Genuine engagement encompasses a multifaceted approach to learning wherein students actively participate in and interact with the course content within the Learning Management System (LMS). This active engagement is crucial for fostering a deep understanding of the subject matter and building a sense of community among remote learners.

These potential changes, with their emphasis on meeting a minimum of just one of the criteria for "attendance," raise significant concerns regarding the integrity of the educational experience. By allowing the possibility that a student could submit just one assignment per month and be considered as "attending," we risk undermining the essence of what constitutes meaningful engagement in a learning environment. Such a policy does not adequately account for the importance of regular, active participation and interaction with course content, whether the class is held in person or through a Learning Management System (LMS) in an online setting.

This approach to defining attendance may inadvertently set both faculty and students up for failure. For faculty, it challenges the ability to effectively teach and assess student understanding and progress, as consistent engagement is crucial for identifying areas where students may need additional support or enrichment. For students, it risks a shallow learning experience, where the opportunity to engage deeply with material, develop critical thinking skills, and participate in collaborative learning is diminished.

Moreover, education, irrespective of modality, is as much about the process of learning—the discussions, the debates, the iterative process of understanding and applying knowledge—as it is about the outcomes, like assignments or exams. A policy that allows for minimal engagement fails to capture this essence, potentially impacting student preparedness, satisfaction, and overall educational outcomes.

We understand the concerns around engagement being far more than the submission of assignments. Our intent was to remove the statement that allowed faculty to measure attendance simply through whether or not students have logged into the course. The 2021 changes to Federal regs that redefined Regular and Substantive Interaction now disallow logging into D2L as attendance in online. At this point, our main goal is to align with Federal regs.

## Staff

In the 3.55 Class Attendance and Participation Policy, it states: Faculty may define attendance using one or more of the academic engagement activities above. Faculty will communicate their standards for attendance to students in writing. It is good practice to include this information in the course syllabus.

* Are their policies around how an instructor reports LDA? If not, should those directions be included here?

Right now, there is no policy around LDA. There are currently conversations around how we do LDA and how we might move forward, so we’re saving the policy piece until the LDA conversations reach a conclusion. Thanks!

# 4.4.2 Class Cancellation

## Staff

I saw the policy about Class Cancellations and wanted to see about adding more clarification to Part 5 (Rescheduling Face-to-Face Courses).

This part 5 talks about faculty being able to reschedule a class, but I’m wondering if this includes faculty moving the class online (just like Part 4) or giving the students an alternative assignment to work on and/or videos to watch?  Both of these scenarios happened in our division this week. One instructor cancelled their class and had the alternative assignment & video and would therefore fill out an absence form. The other instructor moved the face to face class to Zoom and I don’t think they are planning to fill out an absence form. According to this policy, would both be acceptable as “rescheduling?” Or is “rescheduling” considered setting up a new face to face meeting?  Currently, the academic dean is on vacation.

I’m just trying to get clarification on what’s acceptable and what is considered “rescheduling a class.” It feels like there is a grey area here.

Face-to-face classes can only be rescheduled to a different face-to-face make up day. They cannot be moved to a different modality. We are concerned that students who sign up for a face-to-face modality have their courses delivered in this modality.

## Faculty

4.4.2- There are two spelling mistakes: Part 4 – “instruction” in third line from the end of the section and History section – “language” in the additions.

Thanks!

For 4.4.2 I think this needs more definition "Blended/hybrid courses that are not assigned online synchronous insturction in the course schedule, cannot modify instruction to online synchronous without prior approval of all students enrolled in the course and the dean." Would a syllabus policy saying, "this is how I'll do synchonous online if needed..." suffice? Would it require at least 1 pre-planned online synchronous meeting in the course schedule?

We believe this is good practice to talk about with students during the first week of classes, and it’s also good to notify your dean about the class’s decisions. Because moving a blended/hybrid to online synchronous (if the online portion is not already synchronous) requires student approval, the syllabus is probably not the place to put it, unless it’s added to the syllabus after the class agrees!

Dear All,

I realize I'm a day late with this, but the weather has inspired me to say just one more thing, for the record:

If we want faculty to teach face-to-face, why penalize them by forcing them to take a personal day when they cancel class due to weather (and the college remains open)? Online instructors don't have to take personal days due to weather, after all. This becomes an incentive, at least during our snowiest semester, to teach online rather than face-to-face. Personal days are few and precious; why not allow faculty to take sick leave if they cancel due to weather instead?

Part 5

The media code for face-to-face classes allows for up to 25% online delivery. Therefore, faculty should be able to cancel a class but meet with that class over Zoom (and record that meeting); in this case, rescheduling the class would not be necessary, nor would taking sick or personal leave.

Jayant and Anthony both promoted doing this in unsafe driving situations. I think it should be more explicitly stated in this policy.

We can’t speak to previous administration. Currently we do not believe it is fair to expect students who sign up for a face-to-face class to have access to the online modality.

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Questions and comments on two parts.  First, in the text changes for Part 4, about the Hybrid/blended classes, it says that faculty "cannot modify instruction to online synchronous without prior approval of all students enrolled in the course and the dean."  How will it be determined that ALL students approve? Would this require an affirmative response on the record? I rarely receive active responses to my messages or assignments from ALL students in my classes.  Could there be a limited time given for student objections and if none are given, it would be considered as approval?

Secondly, regarding Part 5, about rescheduling Face to Face.  "Rescheduling" a makeup session is the only option listed. Is this really all that we could do? Could the rescheduled course time be "made up" during one synchronous zoom meeting at the same time as the regularly scheduled face to face course? Could the rescheduled course meeting be "made up" by assigning students to watch asynchronous video lectures, read some text, or do other assigned work?  I see these as a reasonable short-term solutions to allow a faculty member to continue teaching and allow class continuity despite a short term illness or situation which does not allow a faculty member to be in the room or building for a day or two.  These type of options seem much more likely to "meet the needs of all enrolled students" than rescheduling a class meeting at any other time than its originally scheduled time. That scenario seems nearly impossible to work out for all enrolled students.

We do believe that having the conversation about moving to online synchronous early in the semester is good practice. In the cases we know of, faculty have obtained all their students’ consent to move to online synchronous. If students do not agree, the class would be able to be replaced with an online asynchronous activity.

See our response to the previous comment regarding face-to-face moving online. We know that many of our students do not have access to technology except on campus. At this time, we value upholding our commitment to face-to-face instruction as much as is possible.