



XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA
College of Arts & Sciences

1 Drexel Drive • Box 113
New Orleans, Louisiana 70125-1098
(504) 520-7652 • FAX (504) 520-7916

March 13, 2020

Dear Students,

We have been receiving numerous questions about our plan for instruction in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) as it relates to COVID-19.

I would like to update you on some of the things that we have been doing in CAS to make sure that our instruction is not interrupted. You may not be aware, but the University has a Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Faculty Development (CAT + FD). The faculty of CAS has had training and is fully aware of some of the best practices for online instruction. If you have special accommodations, please notify Ms. Sheila August, Disabilities Services Coordinator at 504.520.7607 or slaugust@xula.edu (or Associate Dean Dr. Vaz-Deville) and specific instruction will be provided.

The College has been moving to this format of instruction to make sure that we can continue instruction in times of emergency. As I craft this letter, I, unfortunately, cannot tell you exactly how long we may need to use online instruction so we can continue practicing social distancing. But social distancing is important because it is a key strategy to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

If you decide to stay on campus, please follow the instructions provided by the President. Remember do not congregate and please continue to practice preventative strategies (e.g., washing hands). We need to break any possibility of spreading COVID-19. It is not easy having to make the decision to move all instruction to a synchronized platform online; however, we want to make sure that we do our part. We are asking you to use this time to do your part.

Today at noon, I met with the CAS Dean's Executive Leadership team via Zoom. Using Zoom's features, I captured the meeting. We had 23 people on the teleconference and I was able to demonstrate the power of the technology which went really well. We can have synchronized meetings. All courses on Bright Space can be taught by this method.

I have talked to a number of parents about the CAS plan. The President and the Provost are making plans for the University and if the strategy shifts, you will be provided information on what the next steps will be.

Knowing that this situation is evolving quickly, I can imagine that you might be anxious. I would recommend that you pay attention to the university website. It will provide you up-to-date-information. Normal, healthy routines are especially important in moments of stress. Some other things to consider:

- Be sure to get plenty of sleep and eat well.
- Engage in good mindfulness practices
- Use your resources



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An important part of being a Xaverite is being a conduit for just and humane leadership. Each of us is called right now to do our part and make changes in our daily lives that will help slow the spread of the virus and mitigate the impact on our community, nation, and world. We are counting on you to lead and model the way.

A CAS college update will be provided Monday afternoon.

In this season of Lent, I ask you to remind yourself of what it means. We need to remember that we are called to pray, fast and give. I am taking this time of social distancing to remind me of the important reconciliation, redemption, and reflection. I believe that we need to practice "radical hospitality with Ubuntu." It is a 1 Peter 4:8 idea - pray for each other with fervent charity.

Peace and safety,
The Dean's Office

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Camellia Okpodu".

Camellia Okpodu, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Xavier University of Louisiana

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Vaz-Deville".

Kim Vaz-Deville, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Xavier University of Louisiana