

**Subject:** Re: Message from the Provost

**Date:** Friday, August 7, 2020 at 5:52:46 PM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** John Morello (jmorello)

**To:** Nina Mikhalevsky (nmik)

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**From:** "Nina Mikhalevsky (nmik)" <nmik@umw.edu>

**Date:** Friday, August 7, 2020 at 5:28 PM

**To:** "Nina Mikhalevsky (nmik)" <nmik@umw.edu>

**Subject:** Message from the Provost

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

With the announcement that we are delaying on-campus instruction until September 14, I want to give you all some additional information and resources you can draw on, as we move closer to the first day of classes on August 24.

When I reflect on everything that has happened over this summer, I think it is important that we all take a few moments to acknowledge the outstanding and extraordinary hard work that has been accomplished by the faculty since the spring semester ended in May.

Hundreds of faculty participated in the ReFocus Online workshops and consultations, and continue to engage with the Center for Teaching and Digital Learning Support. Please go the [REFocus Online website](#) for all the workshop videos and other resources. There are also the many faculty who regularly met with each other in ad hoc working groups and sessions, like the Compelling Courses group, to discuss their teaching and research, and consider ways to connect with their students and enhance their teaching. Some of those groups are continuing into the fall.

We must note the enormous success of the COVID-19 In Context course and again, the large number of faculty who gave their time as presenters, student discussion leaders, and who volunteered to evaluate the over 650 student final papers. Keith Mellinger and Anand Rao did a masterful job organizing and managing all of the various presentations, Q & A sessions, and student discussion sessions— all without encountering any major “technical glitches” (even during some pretty serious weather events). I was able to watch all of the presentations except one, and like many of us, each week I looked forward to Mondays and Wednesdays (and one special Tuesday) at 4:00. Without exception, each class, each week the UMW community, parents and families, our regional neighbors, alumni and friends across the country and abroad were deeply interested in and impressed with the exceptional work of our faculty.

It is also important to recognize that many faculty, including members of the University Faculty Council, have also been working throughout the summer on the critical preparations and planning for the coming academic year-- as members of the Fall Planning Task Force and its numerous subcommittees, on the on-going Implementation Group, on the Campus Environment Committee, and in weekly meetings with the Academic Affairs staff. Academic departments, faculty in COB and COE, and the CAS chairs have all been meeting regularly over the summer to address issues and plan for fall.

Throughout this crisis with its constant uncertainty, chaos, and rapid change, as a faculty you have been extraordinarily dedicated and committed to our students and to our University. We have been hit with yet another change this week—but we will be ready for a challenging and productive fall semester.

**Fall Calendar.** All classes will begin on August 24, fully remote, and on-campus instruction will start on Monday, September 14. Classes will be held on Labor Day, but are cancelled for Sept. 10, 11 to allow for a phased move-in to the residence halls. All classes will return to remote instruction after Thanksgiving on November 30, and through the remainder of the semester.

**Faculty Development and Classroom Technology.** The Center for Teaching and Digital Learning Support have set up new sessions next week (August 10-13) in response to the change to a full virtual start to the fall semester. These sessions will focus on current 'hot topics' from conversations and consultations across campus. Session recordings will be available for those who cannot attend at the scheduled times. We are also looking at a special session for our adjunct faculty to learn more about the resources available to support them this fall.

This fall, every classroom that has an installed AV system will be equipped with added software and hardware to facilitate live streaming and/or recording (lecture capture) of classroom presentations. To achieve this, a webcam and document camera will be connected to the classroom computer. Zoom and Screencast-O-Matic will be installed on every classroom computer. All faculty will have access to full Zoom accounts managed by UMW IT Support Services.

Please do not purchase additional AV equipment for classroom use until you have tested what is already now in your classrooms. Be sure if you do consider purchasing something, you have confirmed with the technology support staff that it will actually work as you intend.

UMW IT is currently working on providing students and faculty with online access to discipline specific software (SPSS, Stata, ArcGIS Pro, and more) that is currently available in on-campus labs.

Details about all these faculty development opportunities, classroom technology upgrades, new software and other resources will be coming soon in an email from Jerry Slezak.

**Pre-Week Calendar.** A calendar of pre-semester activity is available on the [Provost website](#). Please note several key events:

- **President Paino's All University Address**, Monday, August 17, 9:00-10:00 am.
- **Opening General Faculty Meeting**, August 17, 10:00-12:00. In addition to the customary introductions of our new faculty, we will be giving the Waple Professional Achievement Award (ordinarily given in April) and the 2020 faculty teaching awards usually given at graduation-- the Grellet Simpson Award for excellence in undergraduate teaching, the Alumni Association Young Faculty Award, and the Graduate Faculty Award. We will also give the Topher Bill Award for faculty service, as usual. Finally, we will have a tribute to our colleague, Jack Kramer, who retired over the summer after 49 years at UMW.
- **University Faculty Council Meeting**, Wednesday, August 19, 4:00-5:30.
- Note: Honor Convocation will be a pre-recorded, virtual event just for new students this year.

**Spring 2020 Course Evaluation Report.** As you know, last spring, UMW altered its traditional course evaluative process to allow students to provide qualitative feedback on the transition to remote learning. 1460 students (35%) responded, and 97% of courses had at least one feedback element. Students expressed general satisfaction with the transition, with 63% subjectively describing a great, good or mostly good experience despite COVID interruptions. Many student accounts acknowledged the ways in which faculty efforts had truly been phenomenal. There were a wide variety of course elements and modifications that worked or didn't work, but nontechnical elements -- professor availability, communication and understanding, as evidenced in part by

alterations that were made to assignments, deadlines, and workload to account for COVID – outweighed technological elements in terms of student appreciation.

The results were shared on May 14 in a faculty forum and helped inform Digital Learning Support and the Center for Teaching in their summer training, Refocus Online. For those who wish to read the longer version of the report, next week faculty will receive an email from Debra Schleef with information on how to access the report.

**Eagle Health Journal.** All UMW students, faculty and staff are expected to monitor their health status and complete the self-attestation every day. Daily attestation is an acknowledgement of our shared responsibilities to each other as a member of the UMW community in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please be sure you are doing this every day, regardless of whether or not you are planning to come to campus that day.

**Office of the Provost changes for fall.** After 28 years at UMW, Ginny Irvin is retiring the end of August. Over that time, UMW has had many Deans, Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, Provosts, and Presidents. Through each turnover, Ginny made the extra effort to orient, assist, and work effectively with each new person who was serving as an academic affairs area leader. Some of us can speak personally to the disasters she has averted because of her capable and dedicated work on so many essential tasks and projects. She has guided and mentored numerous faculty and served as an invaluable resource and support to all of us.

Martha Link, who many of you know well, has moved from the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office to take over Ginny's responsibilities as Senior Administrative Coordinator for the Office of the Provost. Support for the CAS Dean's office is now being provided by a number of office managers throughout CAS, and some tasks will continue to be handled by Martha Link. Amy O'Reilly continues as Administrative Assistant to the Provost and she is now also serving as the Administrative Assistant for the Vice President for Administration and Finance, the Vice President for Access and Equity, and provides support to the Associate Provost for Institutional Analysis and Effectiveness.

We are all stressed and anxious about the fall semester—all of us. So as always, take care of yourself as well as those around you. Focus on what is essential, continue to be flexible, patient, and compassionate with yourself, your students, and your colleagues. Remember that you are part of a community of faculty and staff colleagues who support you, truly value and appreciate what you do, and care about you.

Be well,

Nina

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