

MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST



Dear Faculty Colleagues,

Congratulations! You did it! Because of you, our students succeeded this semester. They engaged in meaningful instruction, they made progress toward their degrees, and approximately 5,000 students graduated with their Kent State diplomas. Because of you, your colleagues were supported and uplifted. And because of you, we are positioned well to plan for and lean into a somewhat different, but still distinctive, Fall 2020 semester. Thank you! I am so proud to work with you and grateful for you.

Today I want to update you on three issues: Summer and Fall 2020, faculty development opportunities for enhancing remote instruction, and new guidelines from the Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee for ensuring our success as we move forward.

Summer and Fall 2020

As you know, we will have only online and remote instruction during Intersession, Summer I, and Summer II sessions this year. We are still in discussions about instructional formats for Summer III, but will make final decisions before the end of May, as I have [communicated](#) before. **Please continue to check your email for updates about Summer III.**

On April 30th, President Diacon [announced to our community](#) that our preferred course of action for Fall 2020 is to *resume face-to-face instruction* on our Kent State Campuses and appointed [reopening committees](#) to plan the processes and guide our implementation. **Resuming face-to-face instruction will not mean "business as usual."** As we plan to offer some face-to-face instruction on campus, we will continue to need remote, online, and hybrid models for instructional delivery, as well. I know that regardless of the delivery method, our courses will continue to be relevant, challenging, and engaging.

We do not yet know what this will look like for specific courses, but we are working with your department chairs, school directors, and deans to make those plans. I know they will be reaching out to you. In addition, these plans will be guided by the work of the Ad Hoc Continuity Committee and the Academic/Student Affairs Reopening Committee. As a university community, we will keep you updated via regular communications from the [Steering](#)

[Committee](#), headed by Manfred van Dulmen, and will let you know as soon as we have new information. **Thank you for your continued patience and understanding as we plan for the Fall 2020 semester.**

Faculty Development for Remote Instruction

The Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Continuing and Distance Education is joining forces to provide faculty development sessions for enhancing remote instruction techniques. These workshops offer a \$1,000 stipend upon completion of the work and will help you better prepare for future remote instruction. The [application can be found here](#).

Updates from the Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee

The Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee continues to work on ensuring appropriate guidelines and temporary policies are in place to help us continue with our academic mission throughout the summer and into next academic year. As a reminder, all the documents created by this committee can be found on the [Provost Office Website](#). The two newest sets of guidelines are:

- **[Recommendation Concerning Full-Time Non-Tenure Track Faculty Personnel Actions in the Event of Campus Disruption](#)**. This document provides guidelines for equitably reviewing FTNTT faculty members in light of challenges they may have faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **[Recommendation Concerning University-Level Professional Development Funds for Faculty Members in the Event of Campus Disruption](#)**. This document provides details of how unspent university-level funding sources will be treated, rolling from this academic year to next. Funds include those from the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the University Teaching Council (UTC), the University Research Council (URC), and the Professional Development Excellence Pool (PDEP). Any funds that were awarded by the CTL, UTC, and URC that individual faculty members were not able to use during the disruption will be carried over to the next fiscal year and made available for similar purposes. Additionally, any funds in the CTL, UTC, and URC budgets that were not able to be awarded or spent will be carried over to the next fiscal year and made available for similar purposes. The CTL, UTC, and URC shall determine, through their own governing processes how carry-over funds that were returned and/or unspent will be distributed (e.g., available for the original recipient; returned for redistribution) and eligibility to apply for those funds, as well as funds available for the current academic year. These same principles apply to PDEP funds scheduled for distribution in academic year 2020-21 and beyond, as applicable. The individual professional development funds that were distributed to full-time non-tenure track faculty members in academic year 2019-20 are available for their use consistent with university policy.

Additionally, the committee has created [guiding principles and expectations](#) moving into summer and fall, and has also outlined how any [guidelines, procedures, or policies will apply in the summer and the fall](#), as well as those that are still under consideration. Most notably, the Pass/Fail options that were expanded for programs and students for Spring 2020 **are not in place for Summer 2020 or next academic year**. However, I ask instructors to continue to apply flexibility around student absences and documentation for incomplete grades during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank You, Again

I know I've said *thank you* in my communications to you this semester, but I sincerely cannot say it enough times or with enough emphasis to let you know how truly appreciative I am of your excellent work. I am not surprised by it, because excellent work is what you consistently do. But I am so very thankful. Please take care of yourselves this summer—we need you! Stay healthy and strong. I look forward to seeing you in August.

My best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melody". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'M' being particularly large and stylized.

Melody Tankersley
Interim Senior Vice President and Provost
Kent State University