

From Laurel's Desk – March 2020

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I started this introduction in early March when enroute to Portland, Oregon to attend the International Center for Academic Integrity conference. If you are a regular reader of Academic Newsletter and the introduction, you know that my introductions are written around a theme. In the past, I have written about empathy, patience, and flexibility. My initial theme was going to be “in it for the long game” to highlight a number of change projects we are undertaking that have a long horizon and the challenges with making change. As I picked up the work again more recently, I realized I would need to adjust as these long-term initiatives pale in comparison to the coronavirus pandemic that is fully occupying all of us. To say we are working in uncommon times is an understatement.

On March 13, President David Agnew announced our plan to address how we will operate a large, complex learning institution within a context of changing conditions, most of which we cannot control. There is a feeling of uncertainty and a need for clarity, the latter of which is difficult to achieve. We have asked you to make changes in the way you teach your courses within a very tight timeframe. What is clear is that we are all focused on our students and their learning. We will continue to exhibit empathy, patience, and flexibility towards students and colleagues as we work to complete the rest of the semester under difficult conditions.

We are witnesses to history. We will look back on this time in five, ten, or more years and remember the impact globally, nationally, and locally. We will remember how we all pulled together to support our core work with students. That is resilience, my friends. We are in this for the long game.

I want to thank you for all that you have done to keep students at the centre and to make student learning first not just a mantra, but our way of doing. Keep well, take care of yourself.

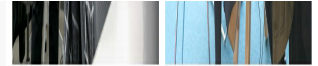
Laurel

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