

College of the Redwoods' planning for contingencies for the fall semester

May 9, 2020



Given the great number of unknowns created by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult to predict what life on college campuses will look like in the coming year.

However, College of the Redwoods (CR) is taking this time to review all areas of the college and to refine processes and innovate solutions that will ensure continuity of instruction for current students, support for incoming students, and compliance with state regulations and academic standards.

CR is stressing the need for faculty to be flexible in an environment that may change rapidly and helping them prepare for several modalities of teaching, including face-to-face, online, or a hybrid of the two.

They are creating a robust platform for faculty professional development if instruction must be offered online. This will make for better instruction across the board, as faculty innovate new ways to connect students to the materials.

“The switch to online this semester compelled me to videotape my art course lectures and demonstrations--course content I've developed over 30 years of teaching,” said art professor Cindy Hooper. “Students can now make up missed lectures and demos if needed and stay on track with course content. “This resource will supplement my future face-to-face instruction in very positive ways and has been a totally worthwhile effort this semester.”

To assist faculty with the transition, biology professor Wendy Riggs, who has served on the Distance Education Planning Committee since well before the COVID pandemic forced the college to take the remainder of the spring semester online, has been working daily on a professional development platform for faculty. It offers tips, templates, technology and peer-to-peer support that is aimed at getting faculty accustomed to teaching effectively online. The site also ensures faculty are aware of and following all regulations regarding distance education.

Although it has meant a lot of work, Riggs sees it as a labor of love.

“CR professors are an inspiring crew of talented and generous humans. It has been fantastic to watch people work together and rise to this occasion. Faculty have continued providing an excellent education for our students, despite the many challenges of moving to online delivery. Because of this hard work, whatever happens in the future, we'll be ready,” Riggs said.

Dr. Angelina Hill Vice President of Instruction and Student Services has been spearheading the institutional planning efforts among all of the interest groups and foremost in her mind is to ensure the integrity of CR's academic offerings to students.

“Despite the challenges our students and our community have and will face, as the semester is wrapping up, we have evidence that most students will end successfully,” Hill said. “Faculty and staff have learned a tremendous amount during the transition to remote instruction. Foundational policies and procedures are being re-evaluated with a keen awareness that quality instruction in transfer education, career education, and adult education is the central mission of the college.”

CR President Dr. Keith Flamer agrees.

“We have had to be nimble in a way that is not easy for large institutions, however, this emergency has required that we examine all areas of the institution for ways to improve efficiency and more easily assist students,” Flamer said. “I think we will find that all of this careful and deliberate planning will be beneficial for the long-term health of the institution.”

Registration for the summer and fall semesters started May 4. See www.redwoods.edu/schedule, for more information.