

TEACHING ELEMENTS

CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION

VERSION 1.0 | JULY 2014

RIT IS COMMITTED TO THE CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION (ALSO CALLED ACADEMIC CONTINUITY) IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY DISRUPTION THAT MAY RESULT IN THE LONG-TERM SUSPENSION OF ALL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES ON RIT CAMPUSES.

To prepare for a short- or long-term disruption in classes, ranging from closure due to weather or a family emergency, to a campus evacuation, all RIT faculty should have a plan in place to :

- Consider and prepare for disruptions
- Conduct classes during a disruption by using online communication technologies
- Organize your course materials and communicate with students during normal operations

For official information about RIT's policies and processes for continuity of instruction, see the Provost Haefner's [2013 memo](#) to faculty and staff.

WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE A CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION PLAN

The best-known continuation of instruction initiative in modern times is the Sloan Semester, which was a coordinated response to the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 when numerous Gulf Coast colleges and universities were closed and thousands of students were left without a means to continue their education (Douglas 2011).

Supported by the Sloan Foundation and lead by the Sloan Consortium and the Southern Regional Education Board, the initiative requested assistance from higher education institutions nationwide to make online courses available to displaced students. A total of 153 institutions volunteered to offer 1,345 online courses, which led to more than 9,000 enrollments from Sloan Semester students in fall 2005. Participating institutions forgave more than \$3.1 million in tuition and fees to assist these students (Myers & Wilson, 2011).

WHAT CAN I DO?

Post Essential Course Information on myCourses

Through an online course space or "course shell" through myCourses, faculty can use the [Content](#) tool as a central location for posting syllabi, course schedules, assignments, lecture notes, presentations, lab activities, and links to external web resources. Each course shell is automatically generated each semester and is restricted to students enrolled in the course.

Leverage RIT Libraries' Online, Discipline-specific Resources

Faculty can request to have a wide-range of copyrighted, print and/or video-based materials made electronically accessible to students via the online course reserve process. Journal or newspaper articles, chapter readings, and/or instructor-generated resources such as lecture notes are just some examples of what can be put on

reserve for a course. Faculty and students can also access a wide range of discipline-specific databases, which offer free, copyright-cleared access to thousands of peer-reviewed research publications. The [subject-specialist librarians](#), assigned to each RIT college, can also work with you and your students to find resources and provide instruction on how to do research through these resources.

Consider Alternate Ways to Communicate with Students and Conduct Class Online

There are a variety of methods for interacting with students and delivering instruction online in the event that regularly scheduled class time is disrupted. For more information on strategies and tools to help you develop a continuity of instruction plan, go to see [Conducting Your Class Online](#).

Communicate Your “Continuity” Plan Through the Course Syllabus

Once you have determined the best continuity of instruction methods for your course, incorporate this information into your course syllabi.

WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

Who?	What?	Where?
Teaching and Learning Services	Consultation and support for putting course materials online and conducting online classes	http://rit.edu/tls/contact
RIT Libraries	Assistance with identifying online curriculum resources, using research databases, and putting course materials on reserve	http://library.rit.edu
RIT Emergency Information	RIT's online resource for emergency preparedness and response on campus including RIT Alert communication options	http://emergency.rit.edu/
Business Continuity	Oversees development of campus-wide programs and plans that enable RIT to respond to incidents and return to normal operations quickly	https://www.rit.edu/fa/buscont/

REFERENCES

Douglas, C. (2011). Preparing for the unexpected: Ensuring academic continuity. **Desire2Learn Whitepaper**, January 2011.

Myers, K. A., and Wilson, J. L. (2011). **The Role of Online Learning in the Emergency Plans of Flagship Institutions**. Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, IV(1). Retrieved http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojda/spring141/meyer_wilson141.html April 2014.

Sloan-C (n.d.). The Sloan Semester. Retrieved from <http://sloanconsortium.org/sloansemerster> April 2014

University of Washington (n.d.). Prepare for when classes can't meet. Retrieved <https://www.washington.edu/itconnect/learn/prepare/> April 2014.