



## Online Class FAQ with Provost Ralph Wilcox

### 1.) What exactly is the emergency plan put together where USF students could access their classes completely online if needed?

The plan is developed and implemented by USF EPACT (Emergency Preparedness for Academic Continuity Team) consisting of most of the Colleges' Associate Deans and other academic representatives from all USF campuses. They have been meeting for the past 3 months to develop strategies to ensure continuity of our academic operations in the event of a prolonged campus closure due to a pandemic outbreak or other emergency. The primary focus of EPACT, at present, has been on coursework and laboratory instruction continuity. It works in close collaboration with Student Health Services (on public health education, prevention and treatment, see <http://www.usf.edu/h1n1/index.asp>)

Among the issues that the EPACT has considered so far are:

- . Communicating with the students and faculty
- . Identifying alternative modes of instruction continuity
- . Surge capacity needs for hardware and software
- . Technology support (helpline) for Faculty and student
- . Immediate training of instructors on two primary online delivery platforms: Blackboard and Elluminate through the Center for 21st Century Teaching Excellence.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.usf.edu/h1n1/emergency-preparedness-for-academic-continuity.asp>

### 2.) What kind of emergencies fall under this plan?

Campus closure(s), either partially or complete (short-term and longer term), due to natural and or man-made disasters. These may include public health issues/pandemics (such as H1N1 or SARS), or hurricanes for instance.

Of course, the focus is also on sporadic absence from class (by student and/or faculty member - and not just due to H1N1), so allowing academic continuity while patients are recovering in isolation.

### 3.) Do you anticipate H1N1 falling under this emergency plan for students?

Yes, indeed.

**4.) What is USF's projected number of students who will contract the virus?**

That is altogether unclear at this moment in time. While USF, like most other universities in Florida, has been registering sporadic outbreaks since early Summer, we anticipate those numbers to grow as we move into the Fall/Winter months. We are carefully tracking outbreaks locally and in institutions to our north, e.g. The University of Kansas and Washington State University.

Federal (CDC) and State/County Health Departments are suggesting that 20-40% of targeted (i.e. the most susceptible) populations may contract H1N1 (though not necessarily at the same time). Rates may also vary between students living on campus, and off-campus. With approximately 40,000 students (most falling into the most susceptible population) enrolled at USF's Main Campus, it is possible that 8,000 students could contract a flu-like virus during the upcoming season. However, it appears that the virus is generally mild at this time, and there is no certainty that large numbers of students will be affected.

**5.) What do you think other Universities should do? Do you think a similar plan for all Universities is vital?**

Each university community is quite different (size, location, student demographics, % residence etc) and will address this challenge in their own distinctive fashion. Generally, however, I believe that it is prudent to plan for such emergencies, and this has provided the USF academic community with the impetus to develop strategies to address academic continuity that can only serve to the benefit of students now and in the future.