

Update for BrCCC members

As we enter our third week of Fall 2020, we hope things are settling down after the usual rush just prior to and at the beginning of the semester. Your union leadership team has been working on many fronts to uphold our contract and protect all of our members' rights so you can focus on your work in support of Bristol students.

As things seem to move at two speeds these days — turtle and hare — we'd like to provide an update on three areas that have generated a lot of chatter, some confusion and even some misinformation. Remember, if at any time you have concerns or questions about what the union leadership is doing or why, please email any of us at our personal email addresses (see your Executive Committee list at end of this email) to discuss it directly. **We represent you and want to hear from you.**

There are three areas we'd like to update you on:

1. Syllabi and Dynamic Forms
2. NUPs Teaching
3. Course Modalities

Protecting your Syllabi after Submission through Dynamic Forms

The submission and review of syllabi is the latest process to be put into the college's dynamic forms system. When the administration discussed this change with the union, we immediately raised concerns about ensuring the syllabi were not retained. **To be clear, we did not agree to changing anything.** Attaching syllabi to a Dynamic Form is not significantly different than submitting via email, as many faculty members have done for years.

The contract specifically states that the syllabi will be returned to the faculty. In this digital age, what does that mean? We are working to make sure the intent of the contract is honored in this digital world.

We are working with IT to make sure the syllabi attachments are automatically deleted in the dynamic form system when the approval process has been completed. This will ensure your syllabi are at least as secure, if not more secure, than they were when they were emailed to the Deans where the attachments could remain indefinitely unless they were manually deleted. **Only the finalized checklist will be forwarded to Human Resources, just like in the past.**

NUPs (non-unit professionals) Teaching

NUPs teaching has come up for discussion in MACER multiple times over the years but no agreements have been written or signed by both parties. Earlier this semester, Gary Convertino, Director of Human Resources, approached the union leadership to open this discussion again. We informed him that we wanted to survey our membership, to get a sense of where they stand on this question. The survey results strongly indicated there is little support for NUPs teaching at Bristol Community College.

It is important to note that a policy approved by the President's Leadership Team in March 2019 calls for the phasing out of any teaching by NUPs by **July 1, 2021**. While this seems to support the desires of the union membership, the issue isn't quite as simple as it may appear at first glance. A small number of NUPs are on the seniority list and thus have contractual reappointment rights. We are working to get a list of the NUPs with

seniority as this discussion continues. Remember, the union is required to protect the rights of *all* our members. **We have no intention of supporting any expansion of NUPs teaching.** We are looking to protect the rights of everyone on the seniority list.

We will keep you updated.

Course Modalities

The chapter grievance concerning the lack of choice in modality given to adjunct faculty for Fall 2020 courses continues to make its way through the process and is heading into Step 2 — mediation. This is not likely to be resolved in time to help with Spring 2021 scheduling.

Work has already begun on the Spring schedule. **September 30th** is the deadline for both full-time faculty course preferences and for adjunct faculty to submit their availability forms.

Last week, the college announced plans to remain virtual for Spring 2021 due to the pandemic. As with the Fall term, there will be a very limited number of hybrid courses on campus. So, what does this mean for faculty teaching courses and for faculty and staff advising students? It is clear that there is still a lot of confusion about the modalities and academic freedom.

It is important to understand that ***synchronous live* and *online synchronous* are not the same.**

Synchronous live was a **temporary** remote learning option that allowed faculty to meet students at specific days and times in a virtual environment. However, faculty were not required to use the college's learning management system (Blackboard), and thus did not receive the same compensation as faculty who were developing asynchronous fully on-line courses.

Synchronous live will no longer be available for upcoming semesters. This modality is problematic as it is considered a type of correspondence course and is not consistent with the requirements for distance education accreditation. This has serious implications for our ability to offer financial aid for students.

We strongly encourage our members who are currently teaching a synchronous Live course to apply to convert their course to a recognized distance education online class. The deadline to apply to convert courses is September 25th. See excerpt from the September 3rd email message from Suzanne Buglione below, which includes a link to the Conversion Opt In Form:

*You would still teach your fall course as Synchronous Live but have until November to develop the course as an online course for future terms. You will also complete the 5 hours of required training workshops: Blackboard Basics, Equity in Online Learning, Zoom Training (if you took them for an online or hybrid course development this summer, you do not need to repeat them). Please add your information to this link by the new deadline [Conversion Opt In Form](#) if you **want to convert** your Synchronous Live course(s) to online courses.*

Moving Forward to Spring 2021: Course Modalities

There are options available through the Distance Education Agreement. All of these options require that the course be fully developed with the CITE lab staff and accessed through the college's learning management system, Blackboard. Faculty are paid a stipend of \$500/credit to develop an online course.

1. **Asynchronous online** - There are no set meeting times and students do the assigned work independently but must submit by due dates.
2. **Synchronous online** - Regular virtual meeting days/times established and posted in course listings before students register for advising and scheduling purposes. Faculty and students meet in Zoom or other videoconferencing application for meetings.
3. **Hybrid** – The course meets asynchronously except for designated meeting days/times (eg. once every four weeks as determined by faculty.) Since classes are virtual now due to the pandemic the meetings would have to be virtual, not in person, but would still be synchronous. The meeting days/times are posted in course listings before students register for advising and scheduling purposes. Faculty and students meet in Zoom or other videoconferencing application for meetings.

Per the DE agreement, faculty have the academic freedom to determine the modality within the online environment. In choosing modality, there are several issues to consider:

1. Timing – the DE-2 form which is included with the syllabus and shared with students in Blackboard is the contractual way to specify asynchronous, synchronous or hybrid. **However, this information is not always made available to students ahead of registration.** This makes it difficult for students and academic advisors!
2. To record or not to record classes? There are legal and privacy concerns (FERPA) that should be taken into account when making the decision to record a class. Also, you might not be able to protect your intellectual property if your lectures are easily disseminated.

Union Recommendations:

1. Faculty should use the Day faculty preference form and/or DCE teaching availability form to convey preference on online modality. If you want to teach online synchronous or have some synchronous component of your class, state the preferred days/times for virtual meetings.

For adjunct faculty, you can modify your adjunct availability prior to closing on **September 30th** if you've already submitted it. You can use the notes field to indicate day/time if you are interested in something synchronous. You might want to modify it anyway since we are all virtual now for spring so your preferences in campus won't apply.

2. If you are considering synchronous meetings, research considerations about whether or not to record virtual meetings and how this might impact any attendance policy you may have. There are pros and cons and you should be prepared to make an informed decision and exercise your academic freedom accordingly.

A Final Note: Based on a survey of Bristol Students in Spring 2020, administration believes that asynchronous online courses are the most preferred modality. They argue that students need as much flexibility as possible during the pandemic. There is anecdotal evidence that this is not the case for all students. The Faculty/Staff Senate and the BrCCC union are asking the Administration to redo the student preference survey to inform Spring 2021 semester course schedules.

Thank you for reading this far! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact any of the following BrCCC Executive Committee members:

Emily Brown, President, 3asybee@gmail.com

Colleen Avedikian, Vice President, colleenmavedikian@gmail.com

Carol Martin, Secretary, carolrosemartin@gmail.com

Amy Marden, Treasurer, mardenamy3@gmail.com

Shelly Murphy, Chapter Director, shelly.home@cox.net

Paulette Howarth, DCE Member At-Large, pbazel@comcast.net

Sept 3 email from Suzanne:

Extended Synchronous Live Conversion Date

In discussion with our MCCC union leaders, we have agreed to extend the Synchronous Live Conversion deadline to September 25. As you know, Synchronous Live courses are a temporary COVID-19 -related modality as noted in the statewide impact-bargaining agreement. This will allow more time for you to consider converting your fall Synchronous Live course(s) to Online courses with \$500 per credit stipend for development and associated trainings.

- You would still teach your fall course as Synchronous Live but have until November to develop the course as an online course for future terms. You will also complete the 5 hours of required training workshops: Blackboard Basics, Equity in Online Learning, Zoom Training (if you took them for an online or hybrid course development this summer, you do not need to repeat them)*

*Please add your information to this link by the new deadline [Conversion Opt In Form](#) if you **want to convert** your Synchronous Live course(s) to online courses.*

*If you opt **not to convert** your Synchronous Live course:*

*Please note that the college is **not planning to offer Synchronous Live courses** after the fall semester. Those who have developed these courses for Online learning will be prepared to teach them in that format for the future. As each area reviews their needs for online courses, they may determine that there is no need to have additional sections developed going forward. Please consider taking advantage of this opportunity to convert your Synchronous Live course(s) as this opportunity will end on this new, extended date.*