

Q&A with Dean Scranton, hosted by ESAC on April 3, 2020 with 50 total participants

NOTE: For the most current information on the COVID situation please check

- UI's COVID website (<https://coronavirus.uiowa.edu>)
- College of Engineering's COVID website (<https://www.engineering.uiowa.edu/engineering-coronavirus-updates>).

Q&A

- 1. What can the college share about work that is being done on the COVID front? I saw an article about BME making face shields, and I've heard one of our CEE labs is working on mask prototypes. We are proud of the college and want to help share these stories if possible.**
 - a. Many activities are in progress: laser cutting to create face shields, machine shop and labs 3D printing face shields, machine shop designing respirator mask, CEE lab prototyping mask/respirator materials, and BME student creating social media site with food sources. There are other opportunities to solve problems created by COVID-19 within the College through our research.
 - b. UI Office of Strategic Communications has taken the lead in writing and sharing these stories, and due to this coordination sometimes there is a short delay in getting them out. College Communications Director Jason Kosovski writes stories as needed and has shared stories and information through various channels. The BME face shield story got quite a bit of visibility on social media. Please contact Jason with any ideas for stories (Jason-kosovski@uiowa.edu). "Regular news" (non-COVID-related news) is also being strategically shared, but media may not pick up on these as they would under normal circumstances, so these stories will be pushed a second time after this crisis is over.
 - c. Big10+ Deans are meeting weekly to share these stories and is working on how they can be promoted as a group.
- 2. What big things that we were working on before the COVID changes are still on deadline, and has anything been postponed (e.g. CoE Strategic Plan, budget, Dean transition)?**
 - a. Dean transition – Dean Alec Scranton and incoming Dean Harriet Nembhard are talking every week. Harriet is getting up to speed on everything happening in our college. She will start June 29th as planned.
 - b. Budget goes on as always. No deadlines changed. FY ends same date.
 - c. Strategic plan – We are on track and have met all deadlines so far. We are coordinating with the rest of campus, and the final May 1 deadline for all colleges to submit their plans to the Provost is expected to be extended but nothing has been announced yet.
- 3. With the UI deciding to offer summer classes online only, but with no information available about when we might be able to return to work on campus, is it a fair mindset to contingency plan for a return no sooner than August 1? Or do we need to have the mindset of taking our work one day at a time when things are changing so rapidly?**

- a. The college is in line with the Governor's recommendation that this will last at least through April 30. Work from home could extend the rest of semester and possibly longer, but it's hard to speculate. Please stay flexible. Events have been postponed or canceled through the rest of semester or moved online. There are still a lot of research activities that can be done from home such as writing papers and proposals, reviewing, and exploring new opportunities for research in this situation (e.g. lung function, automated vehicles, aerosols).
- b. Associate Dean Nicole Grosland is helping get classes online with support from ETC Director Matt McLaughlin. This was several years of effort compressed into about two weeks. The ETC page for instructor and student information, including how to use a smartphone as document camera, can be found at: <https://etc.engineering.uiowa.edu/engineering-resources>. Also on this website, Adobe DC is now available for all faculty and staff at home.

4. Some staff have thrived in the remote working environment. Can we explore continuing this arrangement, at least part time, for some staff after we are back on campus?

- a. This has to be arranged with supervisors within University guidelines after the current work situation returns to normal.

5. What is the college doing to ensure the mental health of students, faculty, and staff during this time? Are all populations being checked in on periodically? (e.g. are faculty/staff/advisors reaching out to students 1:1, are supervisors reaching out to staff 1:1)?

- a. The college is checking student log-ins and trying to identify priority students who need contact ASAP. ESS staff are closely working with first years and also working with career services to get information to seniors. Staff are reaching out to students that are missing class.
- b. Most departments are organizing virtual get-togethers (e.g. coffee hours, happy hours). There's always room for other creative ideas (more discussion on this is below).
- c. Staff who feel disconnected should please reach out to your supervisor, anyone in the HR team, or any ESAC councilor.

6. Is there yet a sense of how the move to online classes may affect fall enrollment (and therefore our budget)? If classes are online only through summer or if fall classes are also online?

- a. It is uncertain but we are planning for normal classes in the fall. A big impact is not expected at this time. Budget estimates still need to be submitted. Everything we have learned through putting courses online now is going to benefit us in the fall.

7. Has the college successfully reassigned staff to other work who can't easily work from home, and are there staff who have asked for reassignment but haven't been accommodated?

- a. There is a hold on most staff hiring unless the hiring process was nearly complete.
- b. A few staff from the college volunteered for temporary reassignment, but we are not aware of any staff in engineering that have been reassigned yet. A few staff from outside the College were reassigned here to assist in face shield production.

8. How is the transition to new Dean going? Is there anything staff can do to help the process?

- a. Harriet is engaged and looking forward to starting her new position. She has been in touch with many people already, including Alec.

9. Is a send-off being planned for Dean Scranton?

- a. Yes, but can't share specifics in front of Alec! The original plan is not possible due to COVID but something is being planned and we will let everyone know. (This question was answered by Finance and Operations Director April Tippett)

Other discussion in town hall format

Engineering Technology Center has resources for your technology needs ranging from instructions on document cameras, VPNs, software, and more: <https://etc.engineering.uiowa.edu/engineering-resources>

What have people been using to collaborate with work colleagues?

- Zoom
- Skype
- Email
- Microsoft teams – resource guide <https://its.uiowa.edu/teams>

Virtual ways to keep social connections:

- 9 am coffee calls
- Weekly lunch meetings including showing off pets and kids
- Happy hours – can include dropping off food or drinks at someone else's house and then enjoying together on FaceTime
- "Talent show" – musical instruments, dancing
- "Food show" – demonstrating how to make a food dish with focus on regional/international cuisines
- Step challenge
- Yoga
- Show and tell about hobbies and interests
- Diversity Book club – Contact Dina Blanc (dina-blanc@uiowa.edu) if interested

ESAC related:

- Virtual happy hour being planned for April, can host more if good turnout
- Nomination period for ESAC will be at the beginning of May
- ESAC elections will occur at the end of May
- Staff Council elections start Monday – run by UI Staff Council and HR Director Cathy Koebrick
- Staff appreciation items purchased – will distribute when it is safe to do so