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EDUCAUSE
ELI Webinar - Transformation in a Time of Crisis:
Changing Course Venues in Midstream
Thursday, March 26, 2020
1:00PM – 2:00PM Eastern
Welcome, everyone, to today's ELI webinar. Webinar, Transformation in a Time of Crisis: Changing Course Venues in Midstream. This is Malcolm Brown, Director of Learning Initiatives at EDUCAUSE, and I'll be your moderator for today's event. First just a smidge of housekeeping. You are probably familiar with the interface for our webinar, but here are just a few reminders. We hope you'll join us in making this session interactive. Use the chat window on the left side of the screen to submit questions and to share resources and comments. We will hold Q&A until later in the presentation, but we encourage you to type your questions into the chat throughout the webinar. If you're tweeting, please use the tag #ELIWEB. If you have any audio issues, click on the link in the lower left-hand corner of the screen. And, at any time you can direct a private message to “Technical Help” by clicking in the top-right corner of the Chat window. A drop-down menu will appear where you can select “Start Chat With” and “Hosts.”

The session recording and slides will be archived later today on the event site. Now, it may be understating things to say that we are in an unprecedented situation. It is very much Abraham Lincoln's expression about changing courses midstream. He made this remark, if I'm not mistaken, during his re-election campaign. He at the time was advising against it. Today, however, we have no choice but to do it. I'm very delighted to be able to welcome our guests for today's session. Bryan Alexander, President of Bryan Alexander Consulting; Amy Collier, Associate Provost for Digital Learning at Middlebury College; Jory Hadsell, Executive Director of the California Virtual Campus an Online Education Initiative for the Community Colleges; Beth McMurtrie, Senior Writer at The Chronicle of Higher Education, Renee Pfeifer-Luckett, Director of Learning Technology Development for the University of Wisconsin System Administration, and Matthew Rascoff, Associate Vice Provost for Digital Education and Innovation at Duke University. Welcome to you all. Our plan for this session is to proceed in three steps, outlined on this slide. First, we'll be taking a look at the big picture, looking across higher education generally. Next, we'll hear from our campus practitioners, hearing from them what their most significant challenges have been and how they have addressed them. The third step is discussion. We'll be scooping up your questions in the chat space and share them with our webinar guests when we get to Q&A and discussion. But throughout the session, you'll have an opportunity to interact with our guests and other participants in the chat. I invite you to make the most of this opportunity. Now we're going to go to a poll just to get a sense of who's in the audience here. So Jamie is going to pull a polling pod in the screen. Please respond by identifying which of these institutional types most closely corresponds to the one you work at.
Just grab the pointing device of your preference and click on the one you think is closest to where you actually hang your hat. Seems like we have a nice spread so far. Indeed, this is good. So I'm looking forward to the chat discussion because we'll have a very diverse discussion there with multiple points of view. All right. So Jamie, let's close this poll. We'll go on to the next one. This is poll two of three. So again, characterizing your particular institution, which one of these would you say most closely fits the institution where you work? So these results are also not terribly surprising. Pretty much to be expected from an audience for a webinar like this. The publics have the majority with over a third from the private/nonprofit sector. Okay, so Jamie will go on now to our final poll. So here we're interested in what type of work you do at your institution. Again, these aren't exact terms, but if you could pick the one that comes closest to describing the nature of your work at your campus. A good spread. We have some faculty here in the room. That's terrific, welcome. So again, I'm detecting a lot of diversity across the participants in today's webinar, which is great. It will lay the basis for a rich discussion when we get to the discussion and chat through the rest of the session. Okay. Let's wrap up and go on to the final slide in the intro. So this is a graph. I'm sure many have seen it. It was posted by Phil Hill on his website, I believe, on the 22nd, so just a few days ago. I'm showing this graph, first, to illustrate the scale as well as the speed of what is going on right now in higher education. It is head spinning. I'm also showing this slide to take a moment to acknowledge and commend the work and dedication of all of you here today who have been working so hard and so long in service to your learners and your instructors. It's not uncommon to see posts talking about one or two instructional technologists or designers supporting hundreds of class sections, hundreds of instructors, and thousands of learners or about working 15-hour days, straight through the week. And on top of all that, there's the stress of working from home, perhaps with kids out of school, and all the other uncertainties of our current situation. So if this were a face-to-face venue, I'd have us all stand up and applaud this unprecedented work and dedication, and you certainly have my applause. In a word, this community rocks. Alright, so let's now turn to the matter at hand. I'm going to ask two of our guests to begin to summarize what they're seeing from their more global perspective. Beth, we'll start with you, as senior writer from "The Chronicle." What are you seeing as you look across higher ed?

>> Hi, Malcolm. Hi, everybody. I normally cover teaching and learning at "The Chronicle," so I have been talking to a lot of folks on the front lines, professors and instructors who have to move their courses remotely very quickly, tech specialists. I'm trying to reach out to a range of institutions. I talked to Penn State. They have 140 instructional designers helping 8,000 faculty move remotely. Last night I talked to somebody at a community college in Mississippi. She's one of two people helping 800 faculty, most of whom are adjuncts, move remotely. There's a wide variety of challenges there. It's fair to say that most faculty members and the folks supporting them feel unprepared or underprepared in this environment, and they're really stressed out. We know a few things. We know that most courses these days do use an LMS, but many professors only know the basics, like how to post an assignment, how to take attendance, how to post grades. Now they're having to learn how to create videos and find online content for students who don't have their textbooks with them. They have to create discussions or find out how to
proctor exams securely and figure out how to grade their students. I know EDUCAUSE has a lot of data on this, and I've also -- I saw one survey that showed only about 15% of courses used video or audio files as is. So there's a really steep learning curve. Instructors have to do all of these things while they're managing childcare on their own or family issues and things like that. They're also learning on the fly about the challenges that their students are facing. Low-income students or students in remote areas may not have access to reliable Wi-Fi. They may have to do their schoolwork on their phones. There are some students who don't even have phones, and they're having to have their schoolwork mailed to them. They may be sharing living spaces with family members or sharing laptops with siblings having to do their work. They may be in different time zones. So one basic thing, everyone is trying to figure out, when do they teach their students and how? I'm hearing a lot of instructors are opting for asynchronous to deal with access challenges, but in the last couple day, I've been seeing on places like Facebook that students are craving real face-to-face time online, of course, with their classmates and instructors. I think that's a balance that people are working out now. And teaching and learning experts, which you'll hear from in a minute, are talking about not forgetting students with learning disabilities. One piece of advice I heard a lot is to offer instructional materials in a lot of formats to help in that regard. People are also not sure yet what to do about trickier challenges. How do you teach a lab or a performing arts class? How do you teach a class in which students rely on equipment they get from the college? Maybe like a film class. How do you provide academic supports like tutoring? This will come up more and more as the weeks progress, how do you give exams securely? On a positive note, I get the sense that people are really coming together over this. Sometimes across campuses and across disciplines. I've been following a couple Facebook groups, including one "the Chronicle" runs. It's impressive how quickly and widely people are sharing ideas and resources on things that are really technical or tricky. They're also providing emotional support as well, which seems crucial both for faculty members and students. Finally, I want top say the predominant message I'm hearing is keep it simple. I don't know if that's what administrators are saying to you on your campuses. I'd be curious to hear that from listeners. The message I'm getting from a lot of online education experts about this is don't try too much, don't ask too much of your students. Let's just try to get through this together and do the best that we can. Thank you.

>> All right, Beth. Thank you very much for sharing that. Next, I will ask Bryan Alexander to come to the mic. Bryan, who is President of Bryan Alexander Consulting. Bryan, what do you see transpiring?

>> Great. First, can everyone hear me?

>> You're good.

>> Let me take a step back and say where we are now in the pandemic crisis is very important in
the global context. As of the latest data I have, there's more than half a million people worldwide infected, more than 22,000 are dead. Although, the pandemic began in Hubei Province, China, it's now moved to Italy and Spain. In the United States, we have more than 68,000 infections. The total deaths have passed 1,000 according to "The New York Times" just now. After an initial cluster in Seattle, New York City is now the hub. We're seeing widespread social transformation as we move to social distancing, and we're also seeing an enormous economic hit. This morning, the jobless claims shot up to 3.3 million. It's dealt with much higher than that. That number doesn't include the gig workers, and it also doesn't include job loss in the past five days. Within academia, we've helped make a rapid race online. The process has involved colleges shutting down for a couple days or weeks in order to give people a chance to ramp up and get online. As Malcolm noted, this has put enormous, unprecedented pressure on support staff. Once online, I've been seeing a two-prong basic approach. On the one hand, people have moved for synchronous communication, primarily through live video. On the other hand, asynchronous technology, primarily through LMS. The technology actually spread in some interesting ways. We're seeing some push for higher interaction technology that's more demanding, more challenging. Technology like virtual reality and more use of video. There's also a push for asynchronous technology due to faculty with limited experience, equity issues, and a digital divide. We're also seeing a push for policy changes. There's a lot of controversy right now about how to grade. Should we give students pass/fail or make it mandatory pass-fail? Should there be the AA grading, which is A or A-minus. We're also seeing calls for a change in timelines so we may extend semesters in order to give students who are suffering from undue time pressures a chance to really finish. Looking ahead, we can anticipate a few different things. One is at the very least a major financial hit to institutions worldwide. In the United States, we anticipate state governments spending much less on public institutions. On a positive side, we're seeing the biggest boom in online teaching experience. So we're learning rapidly how to teach effectively online. Parallel to that, I think we may experience a possible backlash to online learning, driven by stories of bad experiences, as well as by some faculty who didn't want to do this, confirming their ideas in practice. On the positive side, we may see a boom in creativity as people scramble to find ways to connect more effectively with students. What I'm not hearing is much talk of students as makers. I expect to see more of that as students make more audio, more visual, and more video content. Much depends on just how long coronavirus continues its work. If it burns through in two months or so, or if it makes much longer than that. Over to you, Malcolm.

>> Thanks very much, Bryan. All right. So, let's now change our point of view from the global to the specific. I'm going to ask our four other colleagues here to tell us a little bit about their particular challenges and what they're doing at their institutions. So, I'm going to start by asking Amy Collier from Middlebury to tell us what's going on there.

>> Hi, everyone. So our story at Middlebury probably has some similarities to your story at your institutions. One of the highlights there is just that decision making has been very rapid. Things have had to move very quickly, much more quickly than I think many of us are customed to
working. So I want to highlight as we develop that path forward through quick decision making what were some of the important decisions we made. I think one of those that the academic administration made was to stagger the starts of our graduate programs going into remote teaching and learning and our undergraduate college going into remote teaching and learning. That gave us a chance to kind of buildup preparation for one part of the institution and then the other as well. So that staggered start was really helpful. I want to mention, too, that one decision we made very early on was to not call what we were doing remote -- sorry, online learning. But instead to use the phrase, very intentionally, remote teaching and remote learning. I write a little bit on our blog about why we did this. The primary reason is we say, you know, while online learning and remote learning are often used interchangeably and often use the same tools, we're using remote learning to indicate these are learning experiences that were not designed to be online from the outset. But rather pushed into using online or digital tools to continue to reach students who are separated geographically from campus and faculty. That's an important distinction because we are an institution that has some nascent online programs. It was important for us to make sure that there was a distinction between the development of those online programs and courses, which was very intentional. It takes a long time. As opposed to this push to remote teaching and learning, which is very quick and maybe doesn't take advantage of our instructional design resources in the same way. We also, as Beth and Bryan both mentioned, have had an asynchronous emphasis, recognizing a lot of our students are going to places all over the world and having different kinds of connectivity issues. So we have really been pushing for asynchronous modes of learning in response to this, which is a lot of work. It takes a lot of work to prepare that. When this whole thing started, we developed a range of support opportunities for faculty. We did this -- my group, the digital learning and inquiry group, provided this, coordinated it with our friends in ITS and library and the teaching and learning center. Those opportunities included creating a website that had lots of information on it, face-to-face, and Zoom drop-ins until we were no longer able to do face to face when the different closures and suspensions happened. Consultations and workshops. Highly, highly attended workshops. I believe the first week we had 13 workshops. Over 240 RSVPs across those workshops. That's pretty high for us with a small campus. We also have relied more and more on faculty to faculty work, departmental meetings, and things like that. Another thing I wanted to mention was that we recognize as an institution the need for faculty governance to continue. Faculty governance is an important part of our institutional makeup. But we also had to recognize the quick nature of decision making in this moment. Minute by minute, things were changing. So we established an ad hoc academic continuity committee is made up of faculty from key governance committees and several administrators, including me. In that very first meeting, the group made very important decisions like the move to an optional pass/fail, decisions about what a synchronous schedule would look like, course response forms. The decision there was to have those forms at the end of the semester but allow faculty to make them optional in terms of inclusion in their tenure and promotion portfolios. So that's been a really, really important committee for moving forward and getting faculty input and perspective and feedback throughout this process. The last thing I'll point to that both Beth and Bryan highlighted was we are very aware of the challenges that our students are facing in this new mode of trying to teach and learn. We have students
spread across 43 countries and 50 states. We have heard from students who don't have electricity, who don't have internet, who are housing insecure, who are couch surfing, who are care taking for family members. So we have really wanted to be prepared to respond in coordinated ways to what our students need. So we have established a student support team. It began with a student readiness survey for both of our campuses. We have an undergraduate college. Both sets of students received the student readiness survey. That's allowed us to coordinate support with colleagues and the ADA office, ITS, our student support services, and we're working on things like how to get students internet access, how to get them hardware, how to communicate effectively with them when they're dispersed, how to help them address financial issues, and how to continue to train and prepare students for these modes of learning. So those are three areas, the faculty preparation, faculty governance, and the student readiness and support that I think we've tried to emphasize these last three weeks.

>> Great, Amy. Thank you so much. That was a very clear and concise depiction of what's going on. Thank you for that. Let's turn to the associate college perspective. Jory, do you want to come to the mic and tell us what you're seeing from where you sit?

>> Yes, absolutely. Thank you, Malcolm. For some context from the California community colleges, our system is comprised of 115 colleges located in very diverse communities across our state. We have colleges ranging from large, urban institutions to small, rural and remote colleges. These colleges are organized into 72 districts and serve 2.1 million students. Each district has a locally elected board, and we have a statewide system office. So that sometimes impacts decision making as well. I'll try to talk to some of the challenges at the broader state level but also some of the more local challenges as best I can here in the next couple minutes. So since our statewide stay-at-home order turned into shelter in place on march 19th, we actually had a few areas in our state that engaged in that earlier, a couple days earlier. So we've been working to provide support to the colleges as they transition to remote teaching. We've had all but three colleges go in that direction. Three were closed based on a local county order. So it's been a heavy lift. We've really tried to keep at the forefront recognizing the importance of keeping students enrolled wherever it's possible. So fortunately, California began as a state to invest in our online infrastructure and professional development for faculty a few years ago when the online education initiative started, but colleges to date have varied in how they've participated in the initiative, which resources they've adopted or funded locally. Frankly, the rapid transition to remote teaching, even with some of those pieces in place, has just provided us with challenges, really based on just how quickly things have had to adapt. I hear some parallels in what Beth and Amy were sharing as well in terms of keeping things simple, focusing on what's synchronous, what's asynchronous, how do we communicate. I'll talk a little bit more about a few of those pieces. The first issue that comes to mind is just the rapid upscaling and familiarizing faculty to teach remotely. As was mentioned before, we found that really for the faculty that have been most impacted, we can't be too basic in some of the training that's required. So those of us, I think, who are used to teaching and providing special development for faculty who are already teaching online, we've had to really step back and be more explanatory about what resources are available, why a particular
resource would be helpful, and just provide that guidance. We've been providing a slew of ongoing webinar trainings and also curating on-demand resources to help faculty and others find the information and any job aids they might need in the most efficient way possible. Same as what was said before, we're seeing our webinars fill to capacity, even when we're repeating them, posting recordings. There's still a craving for some real-time support. In terms of communication, as a system we've implemented some very clear lines of communication to the colleges. We have a COVID-19 site at the state level that points colleges, faculty, staff, administrators to various resources. There's a daily brief that comes out of the system office as well that provides updates and also provides some highlights and points people to new resources that have been added. We've also centralized our instructional services, continuity resources into one place that's curated. That was one of the struggles we've heard over and over, that local college staff are just inundated, as are we all, with different articles, different resources, different offers from vendors. So, we're trying to provide that curation resource so those at the local level can focus on what's important and really get easy access to those pieces. We've also recognized that in terms of technology, we're trying to focus on common tools rather than introduce a lot of new technologies right now. We're trying to leverage the social infrastructure and relationships between faculty, staff, and institutions to have that peer-to-peer support as well as support we're providing centrally. So, for us, this is within the context of all of our colleges moving all of their operations, not just instruction, off campus. So, in the past when we've seen natural disasters, fires, earthquakes, floods in different regions of California, we've always been able to rely on support assistance from other colleges or from our state office. All of those colleges and the state office are now remote. So that's just brought its own slew of challenge, although I'd say people are adjusting quite quickly. Two other quick areas I'd highlight. One is in terms of student services, there's a lot out there for supporting instruction that's remote. We found that keeping student services intact, even when they're being provided from people's homes, leveraging some common platforms to do that and just being very clear about communication, both out to colleges but then from colleges to their students about how to access those resources. A key strategy for that has been wherever possible, as much as possible, to integrate those services into the LMS so that we're not sending students to various URLs and different places to try to access those services. I'd also touch on student equity. That's been a big concern for us with students in different communities with different levels of access to internet connectivity, different socioeconomic factors as well. So we've been working diligently to try to provide information to colleges and students on, for example, which telecom providers might be providing free or local-cost internet access, any programs that provide hot spots or hot spot connectivity, and also we have many colleges that have begun cranking up their Wi-Fi signals so that students can access Wi-Fi from the parking lot. It's possible to socially distance from within your car, parked next to someone else. So we're seeing more of that as well. The last area I'd mention before I turn it over here is just the area of online labs and simulations. These really fall into two different categories that are important. One is, you know, supporting academic labs, your chemistry, physics, biology, those types of students and faculty who need to now be able to take that lab into an online environment. But the second is really around programs that require licensure, in particular for California, our community colleges are the main provider of training for first responders and
front-line medical personnel in our state. So we're really working with the state boards, for example the nursing board, and others to understand what can be done to maintain continuity. We know we're going to need to continue training medical professionals, for example. So how can we do that in a way that meets their needs and also outside of the first responder and health professions, how do we support career technical programs where the lab requirements are somewhat different than the academic ones. So those are the areas I'd highlight. I'll pause there for the next presenter.

>> Great. Thank you, Jory, very much. Our next presenter is Renee. She works at the system office for the University of Wisconsin. We'll bring that perspective to our comments. Renee, over to you.

>> Thank you very much. Hello, everyone. Yes, I will have a bit of a different perspective since I am at a large system office. Our primary challenge, I would say, is we're at the tail end of an implementation of our digital learning environment, which includes LMS and web conferencing tool that we use system wide for teaching and learning. So in that space, we've really enjoyed the fruits of our efforts in the sense we've been able to scale pretty quickly. We've been able to move online rather seamlessly in a lot of cases due to the fact that we've implemented a fairly standard way of using our technologies, which has proven to really have taken a lot of the burden off of support folks who don't have to deal with all the special nuances that might be particular to different ways that technologies can be implemented. So I think that challenge is not only, you know, getting into that space where we're really impacting all of our students and trying to make sure the decisions we make and the things we're doing will actually help students move online in an easier fashion, if you will. To that end, we did a lot of work. And I will say we're really reaping the benefits of taking the time and investing in producing a solid strategy for our digital learning environment. That, too, was a process that took several years to do analysis and requirements gathering. Malcolm and his colleagues at EDUCAUSE also put together that next-generation digital learning environment paper where we really saw what was important, accessibility, collaboration, the interactivity, and the ability for technologies to actually talk to each other. We took that information to heart and married it with what we were learning from our own campuses when we put our strategy together. That strategy included being closely aligned with our vendors and the standards bodies, especially MS Global, which because we have really enforced our third-party tools to be compliant with standards, has really been great because now we can bring on new tools really fast, much quicker than we've been able to do before. So we can rapidly deploy these things, especially in this highly charged and highly pressurized environment we're in right now. So having a solid integration with the tools, we also managed to break the barrier of student information systems data. We've got that actually integrated near real-time with Canvas, our LMS. That's allowed us to have automatic enrollments, and when changes in enrollments happen, those are flowing through automatically as well. So it takes that whole pressure off our support staff and those managing the technologies to have to do all those types of enrollment, changes and such by hand or even a batch kind of processing mode. So that's been really successful, and we're happy about that for sure. One of the
major challenges from my perspective, and that's not a surprise, is communication is always the issue that we need to try and get over that barrier of trying to get the messaging where it needs to go, especially from a system office. How we've actually approached that is to have a really strict sort of project management style of rolling out our communications where we have a central point within system and then we have contact points at each of our institutions. We can easily flow that information out to the institutions. That respects the institution's own culture and sort of operational differences and how they communicate with their constituents. So that's been a challenge, but I think, you know, after a couple of issues with that communication, I think we got that nicely ironed out, and the messages are flowing very well now. So I'm really happy to see that. In Beth's point in her opening remarks, we're seeing new channels of communication opening up between different communities within our institution. So that's been really refreshing. I think, you know, at the end of the day, this has been, for all of us, an all-hands-on-deck experience. I'm really interested to see what the other side looks like and how much of the good work that we're doing now will continue on. With that, I'll turn it over to the next speaker. Thank you.

>> Thank you very much, Renee. And our last speaker is Matthew Rascoff from Duke University. Matthew, over to you.

>> Thank you, Malcolm. And thank you to all the participants for being here today. I'm amazed to see there are 563 people logged in from across the country. So it's a pretty remarkable turnout. My experience is shaped by working on the transitions at two institutions, actually. Duke has a sister campus in China, which was kind of a month ahead of Duke itself in making this remote teaching pivot. So we had the chance to take two bites at this apple and learn some of the lessons of having done this in China and then bring some of those back to the U.S., not just through our own team's effort but also through a case study we worked with Ithica to quickly publish on their website. I'll put a link to that in the chat. We've put together some of these lessons learned. I would say we're trying to be very agile and responsive to the needs of our community. So I think that's a really important principle, in fact, just to maintain that level of responsiveness and agility in any crisis response and to design for that up front. We've kind of got a set of recommendations for colleagues and other institutions based on that experience of Duke. The first one echoes what Amy said, which is that we're not calling this online learning. We're calling this remote teaching. Our metaphor is first-aid. We're applying kind of an emergency solution in a context where there's an urgent need for digital delivery, but when we do online learning at Duke, we do it in a much more deliberate way. We do it in a backwards design way. We do it in a collaborative team effort with faculty, subject matter experts, and instructional designers. That's not what's happening here on every dimension. I think it's important in the way we describe this work to distinguish what we're doing now from online learning as we know it should be. And that's going to help us in the future. It's going to help reduce some of that backlash, I think, that Bryan was concerned about, that I'm concerned about as well. The second piece of advice I have for you is to build websites where your community can come together to
share information together. We have built three. One of them is called keepeteaching.duke.edu. The other is keepworking.duke.edu. I think it originated with Indiana University, which put a license on its fantastic emergency response website and became the basis for many institutions sharing. It's wonderful to see that collaborative culture. But these websites have been very heavily trafficked. I think it's just a way of maintaining that agility and getting information out quickly. You know, we had some requests for building a booklet, a print guide, a PDF. When you do that, you build brittleness into your system. Once something is downloaded into a PDF, you don't have the ability to adapt and respond. An FAQ on a website you can always revise it as you need to. So our keep teaching site, which my team has led, has been really heavily trafficked. It's had, I think, 10,000 unique visitors in its first couple weeks of existence. We've collaborated with our colleagues and student affairs and undergraduate education elsewhere in the university to build those sister sites. I think that's been pretty effective for us. The third point is about communication. It relates to those websites, but it's to me not just about quantity but also about an omni channel approach. So what we've done is built a daily newsletter that goes to every faculty member across the university, 6,000 people get our daily newsletter. We've got webinars. We've got office hours that we're running every day, including weekends for two hours. We're doing email support with a four-hour turnaround time that we're staffing from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. And we're doing practice Zoom sessions for faculty to try out if they haven't done it before. They can come and practice and experiment with it. We're kind of not assuming faculty are in anyone. They certainly don't have to be in all of these, but we want to give them opportunities to engage with us, to get support in whatever format they want. Bombarding them with email is not a great solution. I'm not terribly concerned about that right now, but I think it's just important to reach them in all these different modes. I should add social media to that as well because that's been an important one, especially for reaching students. The related next point is about triage. I think this is really important in managing the load on your own teams. There's an enormous support challenge in thinking like the ratios that Malcolm said, few instructional designers supporting hundreds of thousands of faculty members. You have to be careful to not burn out your own team in this process. I'm very concerned about that, honestly, at the rate at which our folks are working. It's very much the 15 hours a day that Malcolm mentioned, including weekends as well. So I think triage is necessary. I think it's important to have one primary means by which tickets come in. So we've been using a CMS system. Whatever it is you use, I think it's important to be deliberate about that, to track it, to make sure you're spreading the work across your team fairly and evenly. We're doing shift work, which we had never done before, to get that coverage. The triage basically will allow you to escalate tickets to senior leadership where necessary. We've had a few policy issues that have come in. We have got a mechanism for escalation and for triage. I think it's really important in just making this possible. Our fifth recommendation is developing a back channel, if you don't already have one. For us, it's Slack and Microsoft Teams. This is important for getting that collaborative team approach. We often have questions that have implications for colleagues in IT. Having some mechanism, not just e-mail, but having a group mechanism to respond quickly to gather information and feedback has been really powerful in being able to solve those hundreds of thousands of tickets coming in, in a reasonable way. Whatever technology it is at your institution, whatever chat, use
that and I think rely on that. To me, email is too slow and too brittle in responding to a situation that's so fast moving, fast changing. My next point is about the team. I mentioned the concern about burnout, but I think it's really important to think about how to motivate your team and support them and make sure their own well-being is taken care of. This is a complicated time for people. I mean, I know with myself, I have two little kids at home, and I'm trying to do this webinar while I'm worried about them napping and waking up. That's true of a lot of our colleagues. I think it's important to keep in context that we're focusing on these academic continuity questions, but this is a very complicated life situation change for many of us. It's important to keep that first and foremost in our minds, keep the empathy, keep the humanity. This is not fundamentally about technology. I think it's really about, you know, a collaborative resilience strategy that we can develop together. And the last point I would make to that effort, to that end, is that I think we should emphasize recovery, we should emphasize resilience, emphasize community, these bigger principles that go beyond can you figure out a continuity strategy for your course. We've already convened a recovery team to start thinking, whenever it is that classes come back to classes. How are they going to plan for that? What's the mechanism? No matter what they come up with, it's important to have that eye on the future, to keep people motivated, to keep that optimistic spirit going. So I think we're going to do something similar here. I really respect that mode of thinking. I think it's important within our team and across our teams to think in that way. So I'll pause there. I look forward to your Q&A. I'll put some of the links in the chat to the documents I mentioned.

>> Matthew, thank you. And thank you to all of our guests here for updating us and providing a lot of useful information and suggestions about how to proceed through all this. We have been getting questions from the participants. There was one I wanted to pose to all of you. This is from George. He wrote, I hope the presenters will discuss accessibility. He means ADA, not just the digital divide. So let me first call on Amy. Do you want to talk about what your considerations have been about accessibility in this shift to online?

>> Yeah, I did mention that we have a person from our ADA office on our student support team helping us to respond to students who are coming to us with questions or concerns about the modalities they're encountering for teaching and learning. The idea there is just to really make sure we're in coordination with them and make sure that everyone's on the same page about what kinds of resources are available for ADA support and certainly one of the reasons why we've been emphasizing asynchronous videos and asynchronous no dalasynchronous modalities of learning is because that does create a better situation for being able to create multiple forms of files, multiple forms of content that students can access, captioning and transcription, things like that. So all of that has been part of the approach and emphasizing for faculty that asynchronous can provide more options for students who need accommodations and help them access the things they need to access. I'm going to put in the chat and hand it over to somebody else on the group a couple of links. We did a post called continuity with care that's based on the conversation on twitter that folks have been having. So we kind of collected some of those resources and focus on recognition of accessibility issues. Then also the -- we wrote a post about
why we're recommending asynchronous learning to folks. That also has comments about the ADA. So I'll stop there.

>> Thanks, Amy. To the rest of the group, any comments you have? What do you see going on in what you're doing at your institution on this issue?

>> This is Renee. All the tools that we integrate into our digital learning environment go through an accessibility check. So nothing gets integrated unless it's accessible, and it's really one of the five tenants of our philosophy around the digital environment.

>> Okay. Any other comments from the others? Jory, go ahead.

>> Yeah, we go through the same types of checks for our resources we provide. We've also implemented some accessibility software. Folks might recognize the name, but realizing that, you know, any way we can help automate where possible, even though it's not perfect, helps to move the bar. The other thing is working on strategies with colleges for how to accommodate students given the unique remote nature of everything, that there's not somewhere for them to go and trying to work on solutions for that as well.

>> Thanks, Jory. Anyone else? Okay. Just a note for everybody. I see some people have raised their hands. We're not set up to allow folks in the audience to come to the mic. If you have a question you would like to pose, please do so in the chat in the middle. Okay. The next question is from Chrissy. She has this question. I'm wondering how some colleges have balanced managed communications, that is not wanting faculty and students to be overburdened by communication, but also there's this need they get timely and complete communication. What has been your guiding principles for trying to strike a balance there? Let's see, Matthew, do you want to jump in on that one first, perhaps?

>> I don't think this is the time to worry about too much communication, honestly. I think that is generally a concern, and I think email fatigue is genuine in most of our lives. Right now there's such an enormous need for information and support from our colleagues. Don't stress that too much. I mentioned we're trying to work with faculty in all of our channels. I think the daily newsletter has been very effective. That builds in kind of a point person. If people want to get some resource into that newsletter, they know who to contact. It's our communications person. But if people end up getting something in duplicate, I would worry much more about people not getting the information at all than double copies of some information.

>> Thank you. Anyone else want to jump in on that one? How do you balance communications?

>> Yeah, this is Bryan. I've heard from several different universities that they fear that their students aren't taking this too seriously. I mean, we've seen some extreme examples of that with the spring breakers, for example. The sense was that students thought this was some kind of
boring medical thing that wasn't really a matter of life and death. So they were asking how to shape communications to get the urgency of the matter across. What I've seen are a lot of answers referring either to data or to personal story telling to try to make this seem like the real pandemic threat it is.

>> Okay. Thanks, Bryan. Any other comments on this one? Okay, I'd like to turn now to the issue of assessments. An attendee in the chat asked, what about assessment/testing at a time of crisis? How are you managing the assessment component? I've seen in the community group here at EDUCAUSE a variety of approaches, anywhere from saying we're not going to worry too much, to pass/fail, and other sorts of things. So for the campus practitioners, what's been your approach to this? And for Beth and Bryan, perhaps, what have you seen globally looking across institutions? Jory, do you want to take a first crack at this one?

>> Sure, no problem. For us, I think there are kind of two threads that run through. One is, you know, the colleges, one of the earliest resources they asked for, if they weren't already using some kind of a proctoring solution, that rose to the top of the list pretty quickly. So we've moved to an automated machine-based proctoring solution, which for us is more of a scalability issue than anything. So we're providing support and access to that resource to colleges. The other thing is, you know, during, I would say normal times or when we were focusing more on our regular online training, we would be focusing more on assessment and ways to lower the stakes. So we're communicating about that but trying to be sensitive to the fact that, you know, this is a quick conversion. A lot of these faculty are, you know, migrating content in a matter of days. So trying to keep things accessible at their level given everything that they're dealing with.

>> Good. Thanks, Jory. Anyone else want to weigh in on that, what's going on at your school in terms of assessments?

>> Yeah, this is Bryan. Just on the flip side of that, there's been a lot of questions about faculty evaluations. So how do we continue these or how do we change these? For example, I've seen some schools are urging that faculty evaluations basically be anonymous and used en masse so a university could analyze how all their faculty did at once without penalizing any individual. There have been calls for having the default be no evaluations, but a faculty member could ask for one if they wanted, for tenure or promotion review purposes. There have also been calls for changing the reviews to have more questions about this matter. I think it's important to keep in mind the assessment and evaluation are two sides of the same coin.

>> Good point, Bryan. Anyone else want to weigh in here? Amy, then Matthew.

>> I was going to say, I think I mentioned in my section that the academic continuity ad hoc committee made a decision about this early on, about the faculty course evaluations piece. Course evaluations would proceed the way they have in previous years in the sense they would be offered, that they would be done, but that the results would come back only to the faculty
member. The faculty member could decide whether or not they wanted to include those results as part of their portfolio of things that go into tenure and promotion packages or not. So they could decide just to keep those. So I think that option is a really helpful thing for faculty, recognizing that, you know, the kinds of assessments we can make about this moment in time are, I think, limited by the speed in which things are happening and the bigger, broader health and sociopolitical context. I would say the same thing for student evaluation as well. We've definitely left that up to faculty discretion, but I have also been encouraging faculty to re-evaluate how they think about the evaluations in their courses.

>> Great. Matthew?

>> I would say for Duke, we've guided faculty to move away from high-stakes testing and to think about a strategy that involves open-book, open notes. I used to run the proctoring network for the UNC system in my previous job. We did tens of thousands of proctored exams every year. It's a pretty heavy lift to implement that, and I don't recommend that for institutions that have not done it before. It's complicated. There's a lot of moving pieces. It involves a lot of management by staff. If you don't have that infrastructure in place, now is not the time to start. I feel pretty strongly about that, and I also think taking that human approach, if we're trying to take some of the pressure off our students and faculty, saying we have this remote teaching plan, we know it's haphazard, but we're going to attach this high-stakes testing system at the end with a proctored exam, it just doesn't sit right with me. I think our assessment strategy should reflect our teaching and learning strategy overall. We should figure out ways to guide faculty to do open-book exams. We've implemented pass/fail as the default. Students can uncover their grades if they want to. I think that's another way of taking the pressure off. For faculty, we're going to do course evaluations, but we're not going to include them in promotion and tenure. It's going to be strictly for research purposes. So I think keeping that humanity and sensitivity and empathy at the forefront should guide us away from that high-stakes proctoring and testing system and just think about the human-first approach. That's my guidance.

>> In addition to proctoring and online course evaluations, I think we're seeing the next need that's coming up is online tutoring. So if folks haven't been thinking about that, that's the next sort of chapter, I think, that we're going to need to address.

>> Good point, Renee. Thank you. Well, we're getting close to time here, but I want to slip in one last question and maybe just a quick answer. There have been questions about the load on our technology resources. Obviously, we're using Zoom in an unprecedented level and probably other systems on campus as well. How are things holding up? Anyone want to take this one? It's open mic.

>> I can tell you I've seen some of the stats from our campus. On Monday, we had 24,000 people log into Zoom and 523 meetings going on simultaneously at peak for a total of I think 2,400. There were no technical issues on Monday. This morning I logged in, and I couldn't see or hear
people. We did a little troubleshooting and figured it out. Honestly, I think it's day by day, but I've been generally very impressed by them and by other cloud vendors that we rely on that they've been able to scale up to what I understand is 7X typical traffic on Zoom and have not really missed a beat. It's not just academia. It's the whole U.S. and global economy relying on these cloud tools. Slack is the same. They've seen enormous uptick in demand, thousands more customers adding week by week. And there have been no significant issues in their performance. So knock on wood, it continues this way, and I'm amazed about the system operations and engineering that these companies have been able to keep up with unprecedented demand.

>> We can go over a few minutes. Why don't we go to Jory, then I think Renee next.

>> Yes, thanks.

>> Sure. I was just going to say we typically are dealing with large-scale anyway, just given the size of our system. We've not seen any problems. I think Zoom was our biggest concern, just because we do have a lot of institutions where faculty wanted to continue with synchronous communication. What we found is problems that seem to be Zoom related sometimes are more localized issues and not necessarily challenges with the platform. But obviously, you know, employing cloud-based, scalable solutions is important. So far the infrastructure has held up well.

>> And Renee?

>> The one thing I'd like to add about the technologies is I can't encourage you enough to have a really open dialogue with your vendor partners. We are updating them weekly on our stats so they know as courses go online what to expect on their end. They've been very appreciative of that, and it helps their planning as well. I would encourage everyone to do that as well.

>> All right. Well, the hour has struck, so we're out of time here. First of all, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to our guests today for taking time from your extraordinarily busy schedules to share with us your experience and the advice and information you've been able to share with us. Thank you so much for joining us. For our participants, thank you also for taking time from your very busy schedules to join and participate in the chat. But before you sign off today, please click on the session evaluation link. You'll see it there in the left-hand corner. Your comments are very important. Please do it now. It's only a minute or two. Do so while the webinar is fresh in your mind. This session's recording and presentation slides will be posted to the event site later today. Feel free to share these resources with your colleagues. As always, huge kudos to the production team. Adam, heather, Jamie, and Jody. You did a splendid job. Also thanks to Veronica for helping to manage the questions that came into the chat. So thank you, all, for making this a great webinar experience. And on behalf of EDUCAUSE, this is Malcolm Brown. Thank you for joining us for today's ELI webinar.
End of Webinar