This message contains important information regarding ME 482 for the week of 3/23 particularly and the immediate future in general, we know the message is long, but please read the full message carefully. Please also share this message with the VIP students on your teams.

Safety

Your safety, the safety of your family and friends, and the safety of our community is the first concern. Take care of these priorities first. This includes the current mandates for “social distancing.” Safety is the first and fundamental principle of these changes and where there is conflict safety is the overriding authority.

If you are feeling any kind of sickness, please let your section instructor know immediately and stay at home. If you are high risk (e.g. have traveled recently, have had contact with someone who is feeling sickness of any kind, have an at-risk medical condition, or have elderly in the home) stay at home.

Overview

In light of the concerns due to COVID-19, the ME design instructors, our Department Chairs, and supporting staff have had several discussions over this past week to work out a plan to deliver the design courses remotely.

First, the University is still OPEN to all students as of the time of writing. The current mandate is for remote instruction not for the cancellation of instruction. Remote learning does not equal class cancellation. You are expected to proceed with your projects at your highest capacity while following all the safety procedures and exercising precaution for COVID-19.

Each project will require a different approach and you should work with me during this week’s team meeting to determine a plan to proceed.

This is an opportunity to get used to remote learning and working and familiarize yourself with tools available:

- Meetings: Zoom, Google hangout, Skype, etc.
- Messaging: Email, Slack, Discord, Band, etc.
- Collaborative Software Development: GitHub, etc.
- Writing: Google Docs, Overleaf (for LaTeX), etc.

Currently we expect the changes to last through the end of the semester, but it is likely more changes are coming. If things change for the positive, we will adapt again to give you the best possible ability to close your projects. If things change for the negative and more changes are necessary, we will adapt further. Due to the fast-evolving situation and the intricacies of design courses, it takes time, and maybe several iterations, to finalize a plan that is to the best
interest of all of us and is consistent with the Federal, State, and University policies currently in place.

Meetings

We will hold lectures as usual at 1:30 on Tuesday and Thursday via Zoom (links will be provided via calendar invites). There will NOT be a parallel face-to-face meeting in Holmes Hall 309. Do not come to the classroom at that time.

All in-person lab sessions are cancelled - only remote virtual sessions are allowed. Weekly team meetings with your instructor and TA will still be held. Your instructor and TA will send you invites in the tool of their choosing. Similarly, you still need to hold team meetings. Per the current guidance those meetings should be virtual whenever possible. Beyond the weekly team meetings, I will hold virtual office hours via Zoom or Google as requested by email if necessary.

Updated Schedule and Deliverables

Monitor the website, email, and laulima regularly for updated schedule information. Currently there are no changes to the ME 481 calendar. Our next deliverable is still a website and sales pitch on 21 April and you should be working to correct any shortcomings to pass the PDR gate and then be working on the detailed design of your modules and components. Unfortunately, this will be much more virtual than it should be. The changes will almost certainly require the adaptation of the content. For instance all presentations will be held virtually through Zoom.

Facilities Usage

Ideally, in this phase of the design you should be doing some rough prototyping, but in light of the current situation I do not recommend you do so. There will be some direction about potentially ordering 3D printed parts in the future as the dust settles. However, the below information was developed for all design courses and I think it is important for you to have.

Since the UHM campus currently remains open to students and faculty, you do have access to the facilities. However, the university requirements to keep all gatherings to less than 10 attendees will restrict your usage. To meet these requirements Lewis is rolling out an access calendar for shop usage and each team will receive a maximum weekly allocation of hours. If your team does not need its hours please let your section instructor know so those hours can be apportioned to other teams in need. The shop is closed until these measures can be implemented. For your safety you should sanitize before you utilize any equipment and are required to sanitize as part of your clean-up process. Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap per the COVID-19 instructions often. “Facilities usage” applies to shops that contain the tools you otherwise do not have access to; only spend time in shops for this purpose - actively using the equipment. Meetings and other planning and preparation should be held remotely.

Please note that the easiest way to transfer the virus is through the mouth, nose, and eyes, usually by touching with your hands. While working on your project in a university facility, you should wear latex gloves, eye protection, and if possible, a mask (note the University
cannot at this time provide these items for you). However, you are NOT allowed to wear gloves of any type while operating equipment or machinery in the shops (other than heavy gloves normally used for welding, torch cutting, etc.). This is per your equipment specific training and an OSHA safety rule.

Holmes 348: I encourage you to avoid any unnecessary in-person contact during the near future. This includes the VIP students on your teams. Follow the 10-people policy published by the CDC and ensure that all the graduate students can use the lab at the same time. Do not use the lab to congregate or meet. Use the lab only because you need the tools and physical hardware. At this time you should not be taking lab property out of the lab. Wash your hands upon entering the lab and often during your session.

Conclusion

Please stay healthy and let us know if you have any questions or concerns. Remember to err on the side of safety. Don’t endanger yourself or others. Closely monitor the updates from the University about COVID-19: https://www.hawaii.edu/emergency/important-health-information-novel-coronavirus/.