



# **ACADEMIC CONTINUATION PLAN**

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Elements of the Plan .....	2
Instruction .....	3
Table 1: Possible Alternative Methods for Course Delivery (Internet Available) .....	5
Assignment Examples (with Internet Service) .....	6
Table 2: Possible Alternative Methods for Course Delivery (Internet Unavailable) .....	7
Items for Consideration at the University, College/School Level .....	8
Appendix A: <u>General Discussion Items for Academic Departments</u> .....	11
Appendix B: <u>Items for Faculty Consideration in Emergency Plan Development</u> .....	12
Appendix C: <u>Academic Continuation Decision Tree</u> .....	14
Appendix D: <u>Student Contact Information Questionnaire</u> .....	15

## **Introduction**

A catastrophic event may result in the official suspension of face-to-face classes at one or all of the Pace University campuses. The nature of the events/disruptions will determine the conditions under which instruction may be impacted. While the specifics of the conditions may vary, one or more of the following general conditions may be the impetus for enacting the plan:

1. Loss of teaching and learning facilities including loss of public infrastructure or access to our facilities. Classes may need to be held at alternative locations or online.
2. Significant reduction in faculty, staff and student attendance related to illness, natural disasters, or other events.
3. Need for “social distancing” to provide instruction without face-to-face contact (Pandemic).

The following recommendations should serve as guidelines to continue instruction both when Internet and/or computer access will be accessible and when Internet and/or a computer will not be available. When distance education is not a viable option, our multi-campus environment may also allow for the use of facilities on an alternate campus or require identification of suitable off-campus space to continue academic programs.

It is important to note that Pace University’s Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) has a Disaster Recovery Plan in place which provides backup servers. This plan should ensure a conversion to online instructions via Blackboard. This Academic Continuation Plan (Plan) also addresses conditions when the online solution is not viable.

## **Elements of the Plan**

1. An action plan has been developed to address continuation of student learning during a catastrophic event to minimize student confusion, list expectations and facilitate continued instruction.
2. The Plan suggests that an emergency readiness statement be included in each course syllabus with clear instruction to be followed if a disruption occurs.
3. All faculty should be prepared to utilize Blackboard and alternate methods for delivery of course material.
4. Team teaching and course sharing methods should be developed to address faculty shortage and overload situations.
5. Departmental plans should be developed to deal with courses that present challenges during a catastrophic event such as labs and clinical components.

6. Existing departmental plans, such as the University Library's Business Continuity Plan, will be put into action, observing the protocols and procedures, as established and defined by said respective departments.
7. The Plan will assist students to continue work toward timely matriculation and graduation.

### **Instruction**

This Plan anticipates the use of alternate methods for delivery of course material and for student-faculty communication. At the beginning of each semester, faculty should solicit students for alternative means of communication (see [Appendix D: Student Contact Information Questionnaire](#)). The catastrophic readiness statement outlined in each course syllabus should proactively instruct students on how course specific changes in delivery format and/or venue can be accessed in the event of an emergency situation. The statement should include specific actions and timelines and include instructions to access online course material that can be utilized until normal operating procedures resume and facility access has been restored. Students should be advised to go to the [www.Pace.edu](http://www.Pace.edu) to view emergency instructions.

### **Example of Syllabus Statement**

*In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to change when necessitated by revised course delivery, semester calendar or other circumstances. Information about changes in this course can be obtained at the Blackboard course web page or be contacting my email address: [xxxx@pace.edu](mailto:xxxx@pace.edu) or my office phone/cell xxx-xxx-xxxx. If the course is not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Blackboard and read any announcements and/or alternative assignment. Students are also encouraged to continue the readings and other assignments as outlined on this syllabus or subsequent syllabi.*

Again, faculty should become familiar with Blackboard and other Internet based technologies prior to a catastrophic event. Faculty should contact the Office of Academic Technologies for assistance on how to use Blackboard and get their course material uploaded. Faculty and students are encouraged to use Academic Technologies' [Blackboard Support Page](#) as a key resource to expand their Blackboard knowledge base.

## Faculty and Students with Internet Access

In the event of a suspension of all face-to-face classes (lasting more than a week), course instruction will resume and be facilitated through the use of the [Blackboard](#) learning management system. All active courses at the university have an automatically created respective Blackboard course shell. In addition, faculty and student access to these courses is automated through Banner. It is recommended that faculty have a copy of their syllabus uploaded and accessible to students prior to the start of the semester in order to develop a virtual presence for their course. The following [Virtual Presence Checklist](#) has been designed to assist faculty in monitoring their progress as they develop a virtual presence.

### VIRTUAL PRESENCE CHECKLIST

#### BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER

- Course information: Add syllabus with course schedule
- Grades: Set up the grade book in Blackboard
- Content: Brief video (instructor intro, YouTube video, current events video, screen recording)
- Resources: Upload learning materials (readings, documents, presentations)
- Backup Plan: Have at least two prerecorded lectures prepared

#### THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER

- Grades: Record progress and grades in the grade center
- Communication: Post regular announcements
- Use discussion boards

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Create at least one assignment in Blackboard
- Have you tried Poll Everywhere?
- Create a Lynda.com video playlist for students
- Use Skype for Virtual Office Hours
- Try a Blackboard Collaborate practice session
- Practice recording a backup mini-lecture in Echo360

#### WHY HAVE A VIRTUAL PRESENCE?

- Engage students
- Promote academic continuity
- Save time
- Enhance communication

In the case of a catastrophic event, faculty can use the Virtual Presence Checklist as a guide for maintaining the progress of their course. The announcement and email tools in particular should be used to establish communication with your students quickly and to provide instructions on how the course work should be facilitated within Blackboard.

The following table outlines possible solutions for a scenario in which face-to-face courses have been suspended, but students and faculty have access to Internet service. It is strongly recommended that faculty explore various options and resources while attempting to have contingency plans in place prior to a catastrophic event. Some options can still be employed during a suspension of face-to-face courses.

**Table 1: Possible Alternative Methods for Course Delivery (Internet Available)**

Topics	Platform Delivery
<b>Course Content/ Information / Syllabus</b>	<b>Add content to Blackboard</b> - Course Syllabus / Course Documents / Course Information in digital format can be uploaded to your respective Blackboard courses. Please see the <a href="#">Blackboard Help</a> site for tutorials on how to upload content to Blackboard.
<b>Course Lectures</b>	<p><b>Blackboard Collaborate</b> – Both synchronous and asynchronous lectures can be facilitated through the use of Collaborate, a web conferencing platform integrated into each Blackboard course shell. Sessions can be recorded and accessed from the course shell for later viewing. For more information and tutorials on Collaborate, visit the ITS <a href="#">Digital Toolkit</a> page.</p> <p><b>Echo 360 and Video Recordings</b> – Faculty can create a lecture using their webcam and/or microphone. Faculty can upload these videos and make the link made available in their Blackboard course shell. Faculty can also record themselves with a webcam and microphone through the Kaltura video management platform. Please <a href="#">click here</a> to visit the Video Tools page in the Digital Toolkit to learn about your options. Contact Academic Technologies at <a href="mailto:acadtech@pace.edu">acadtech@pace.edu</a> for more information on this.</p> <p><b>Narrate PowerPoint files</b> - Faculty can add audio to PowerPoint Presentations and have these files uploaded to the course shell. Please be aware that some of these files tend to be large in size and each Blackboard course shell has a 1Gigabyte quota limit. Visit the <a href="#">Blackboard</a> page in the Digital Toolkit for options uploading files of this type.</p>
<b>Text Book Course Cartridges</b>	In addition to textbooks, some publishing companies offer access to a course cartridge that can be uploaded to your Blackboard

	course shell. Course Cartridges enable Instructors to gain access to pre-packaged customizable module materials. Once these materials are uploaded to your course shell in Blackboard, you are free to customize the content by adding and deleting materials, as needed, to correlate with specific topics covered in the classroom. Consult with your publisher to see if course cartridges are available for your course and what content is provided within the cartridge.
<b>Individual &amp; Group Assignments</b>	Faculty can use Blackboard's assignment tool feature to create assignments within their course shell. Please consult the <a href="#">Blackboard Help</a> page for tutorials on assignments.
<b>Exams or Quizzes</b>	Exams and quizzes can be created and deployed within your Blackboard courses. This is one of Blackboard's more robust tools and may require some level of training in order to use effectively. Please consult the <a href="#">Blackboard Help</a> page for instruction on this tool.
<b>Communication</b>	The Discussion Board area can be an effective means to facilitate online discourse with your students. Discussion forums can be created by instructors and grading enabled within them if faculty wish. The Announcements tool, as well as the email function within your Blackboard course shell, can be an effective way for maintaining constant communication with your students. Blogs, Wikis, and Journals are also available tools within your course shell. Please consult the <a href="#">Blackboard Help</a> page for instruction on the use of these tools.
<b>Faculty / Student Assistance</b>	Faculty and students who require assistance with any technical difficulties within Blackboard, should contact the ITS Helpdesk via the website – <a href="http://help.pace.edu/">http://help.pace.edu/</a> . Faculty who require instruction on how to use Blackboard, should contact Academic Technologies by emailing <a href="mailto:acadtech@pace.edu">acadtech@pace.edu</a> .

### Assignment Examples (with Internet Service)

1. Create an item in Blackboard with various instructional resources. Have students respond to assignments connecting information in course content. Students could submit assignments via Blackboard or email.
2. Post an assessment of the item added and prepare a 10 question quiz or an essay question.
3. Post discussion questions in the Blackboard Discussion Board, or to facilitate online discussion. Creating groups is a valuable resource and assists with assessment.
4. Assign end-of-chapter materials for group project, individual questions and answer sessions, or paired discussion. Students can post in the Discussion

Board with supporting documentation for peers or instructor. Use end-of-Chapter assignments offered in your textbook.

5. Provide an "Alternative" assignment in your syllabus to be used only in the event that face-to-face classes are suspended, including a rubric for assessment. Assign paired groups at the beginning of the semester. Then have paired groups work during the duration of the implemented plan.

### Faculty and Students without Internet Access

A great deal of pre-planning must go into creating syllabi and instructional materials to make certain that there is a detailed study/work plan that students can continue in lieu of face-to-face or online classes. Assignments from the textbook or other readings outlined on the syllabus which students can complete and then submit when face-to-face classes resume are an option. Communication options for those without Internet and/or computer access would include text messaging and the phone.

The following table outlines possible solutions for a scenario in which face-to-face courses have been suspended and students and faculty DO NOT have access to Internet service. Again, it is strongly recommended that faculty explore various options and resources while attempting to have contingency plans in place prior to a catastrophic event. Some options can still be employed during a suspension of face-to-face courses.

**Table 2: Possible Alternative Methods for Course Delivery (Internet Unavailable)**

Topics	Manual Delivery
Course Content/ Information / Syllabus	If possible, students can download or print content made available from the instructor or from the Blackboard course shell in advance. If applicable, course content can be accessed via the web or the Blackboard Mobile App (downloadable via the <a href="#">Blackboard Help</a> page) using a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) or faxed from an agreed upon location.
Course Lectures (In most cases the delivery of course material needs to be created and downloaded before a catastrophic event occurs)	<b>ECHO360</b> – Students have the ability to download a copy of an ECHO360 lecture to their personal computer to view offline.  <b>Narrate PowerPoint files</b> – If available, these file types can also be downloaded locally to a computer for offline viewing.  <b>Word or PDF version of Lectures</b> – If available in print, students can download copies of lectures for access offline.
Text Book Readings	Prepare and place readings in the Syllabus



<b>/ Assignments</b>	
<b>Exams or Quizzes</b>	Alternate methods of assessment can be facilitated when Internet is unavailable. Essays and/or group discussion can also be considered.
<b>Communication</b>	Student / faculty phone numbers can be recorded and exchanged at the beginning of the semester. Free conference calling platforms such as <a href="http://FreeConferenceCall.com">FreeConferenceCall.com</a> can be utilized. Mobile texting can also be used as an additional means of communication. Pace students and faculty also have access to <a href="http://Skype.com">Skype for Business</a> accounts which can be used for phone or web-conferencing sessions via mobile phones.

### **Assignment Examples (without Internet Service)**

1. Provide subject content (in syllabus, text message etc.) and ask students to prepare a paper on the subject.
2. Post a subject content link and prepare a 10 question quiz, or have students discuss content using text messaging or phone.
3. Post discussion questions (2-4) in syllabus to facilitate discussion. Have students discuss through text messaging or phone.
4. Assign end-of-chapter materials for group projects, individual question and answer sessions. Students can then discuss and write an overview for discussion.
5. Provide an "Alternative" assignment in the syllabus to be used only in the event that face-to-face classes are suspended, including a rubric for assessment. Assign paired groups at the beginning of the semester. Then have paired groups work during the duration of the implemented plan.

### **Items for Consideration at the University, College/School Level**

- Develop and recommend guidelines noting the minimum standard for the course in relation to course content and aligned with assessment and accreditation for the course should be provided by each faculty member for each of their courses.
- Develop and recommend a university standard for delivery that designates the type, scope, and kinds of course content which must be available online if a catastrophic event is declared.
- Handling course extensions and incompletes will be discouraged. Upon the Dean's recommendation, courses that have both face-to-face and online delivery should consider moving fully online upon declaration of such an event (and if there is Internet service).

- Faculty that are teaching face-to-face and online sections of the same course can copy content from an existing online course and use it in their face-to-face section.
- The Deans should take appropriate action to support the academic continuity for students.
- Create a Pace University Bank of Lectures and courses that are online across the system. If the University is closed longer than one week due to a catastrophic event, an instructor can go online and conduct lectures and quizzes using modules that are available for use at the system bank.

### **Items for Consideration at the Department Level**

1. Designate Lead Instructors:  
Faculty members teaching sections of the same course can meet and prepare course content modules to provide students with continuous learning opportunities and lessen faculty loads during a catastrophic event. A team of faculty can create a master course shell in Blackboard with assignments and common readings. There may be approximately 10 prepared modules. Classes can then immediately switch to the master course shell on the Blackboard site. Depending on the software selected to create the modules, the content can also be copied to a CD in order that the CD be mailed to those students without Internet access. This would require a list of students and student addresses to be readily available at all times, unit support, and faculty participation.
2. Encourage Faculty Platform Training:  
This committee strongly suggests that all faculty members be encouraged to become familiar with the current learning platform (Blackboard) through formal training in order to provide students with the necessary teaching/learning materials (syllabi and other course documents) for meeting the needs of students during a catastrophic event. This would require direct University and school/college support as well as mandates from the Provost and Deans.
3. Preparation:  
Encourage faculty to record a face-to-face lecture using Blackboard Collaborate, Skype for Business or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party alternative coordinated through ITS, then save the file for use as needed.
4. Team Teaching:  
It is also suggested that team-teaching be investigated and staged in order to alleviate faculty overload and prepare for the possibility of faculty illness during the declaration of an event. This would require support from the Schools and faculty participation.
5. Business Continuity Planning:

Every department is required to develop a Business Continuity Plan. If a Plan relies on the services of another department, ensure your needs are being covered by their Plans. Departmental Plans should be regularly reviewed, updated, disseminated by the Department's Business Continuity Team.

## Appendix A: General Discussion Items for Academic Departments

- What would you do if your department were unable to have your class meet face-to-face for an extended period of time beginning tomorrow?
- How would face-to-face syllabi change if you had to suddenly begin teaching at a distance?
- If servers and communication were down for a long period of time, how would you communicate with students?
- How might the content materials of your current course be changed to reflect emergency conditions (web available or web unavailable)?
- Is your course currently being taught online by anyone? If so, can you obtain a copy of the course content for use during an event?
- What are your department and program standards for consistent, high quality course instruction?
- How might a course provide value and meet program standards during a large scale emergency or catastrophic event?
- How would it be possible for students who anticipate graduating at the end of the semester to meet program standards during a large scale emergency or catastrophic event?
- What would an outline for distance learning materials look like if the web were available or unavailable? What would be included? What would be excluded?
- What distance education materials are essential for optimal web available and web unavailable learning?
- *Reinventing the wheel* is time-consuming and difficult. How can you provide the minimum requirements without *reinventing the wheel*?
- When should you share your web available and web unavailable materials with students?

## **Appendix B: Items for Faculty Consideration in Emergency Plan Development**

- Determine if your students will have Internet access in the event of a large emergency or catastrophic event.
- Establish teaching objectives for this time period (material covered, explore new topics).
- Communicate with students
  - How? (snail mail, email, telephone, Facebook, Blackboard)
  - What? (course work, updates, questions)
- Develop and/or make your content available (unit assignments, homework).
  - Utilization of texts, other reading materials or online resources
  - Determine if distance learning will affect access to software, for example, lab-based software or science laboratories only available on site.
- Access and communicate with students during emergency.
- Distribute plan.

### **In the event of a large emergency and Internet is available, are you prepared to....**

#### 1. Put your course materials online

Yes

No

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My Blackboard courses contain the most current course information.                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a way to distribute assignments to my students online.                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I use audio or video materials in class and can share these with my students.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I use the Pace Library services to make materials available to my students online. |

#### 2. Establish channels of communication with your students and colleagues

Yes

No

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My students know how to contact me if they have a question.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a way to facilitate discussion with groups of students remotely. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Students have a way to contact each other and collaborate online.       |

#### 3. Establish ways to conduct your class at a distance

Yes

No

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My students can read, listen to, and/or watch my lectures online.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My students can turn in homework and take exams online.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a way to respond to student work and securely publish scores online. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I know how to submit final grades to the Registrar online.                  |

#### 4. Set up remote access to important resources

Yes

No

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a computer or laptop at home that has the software and Internet connectivity I need to work remotely. |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|

- My TAs have the knowledge and capability to remotely conduct quiz sessions (if applicable).

**In the event of a large emergency and the Internet is unavailable, are you prepared to...**

1. Provide academic continuity

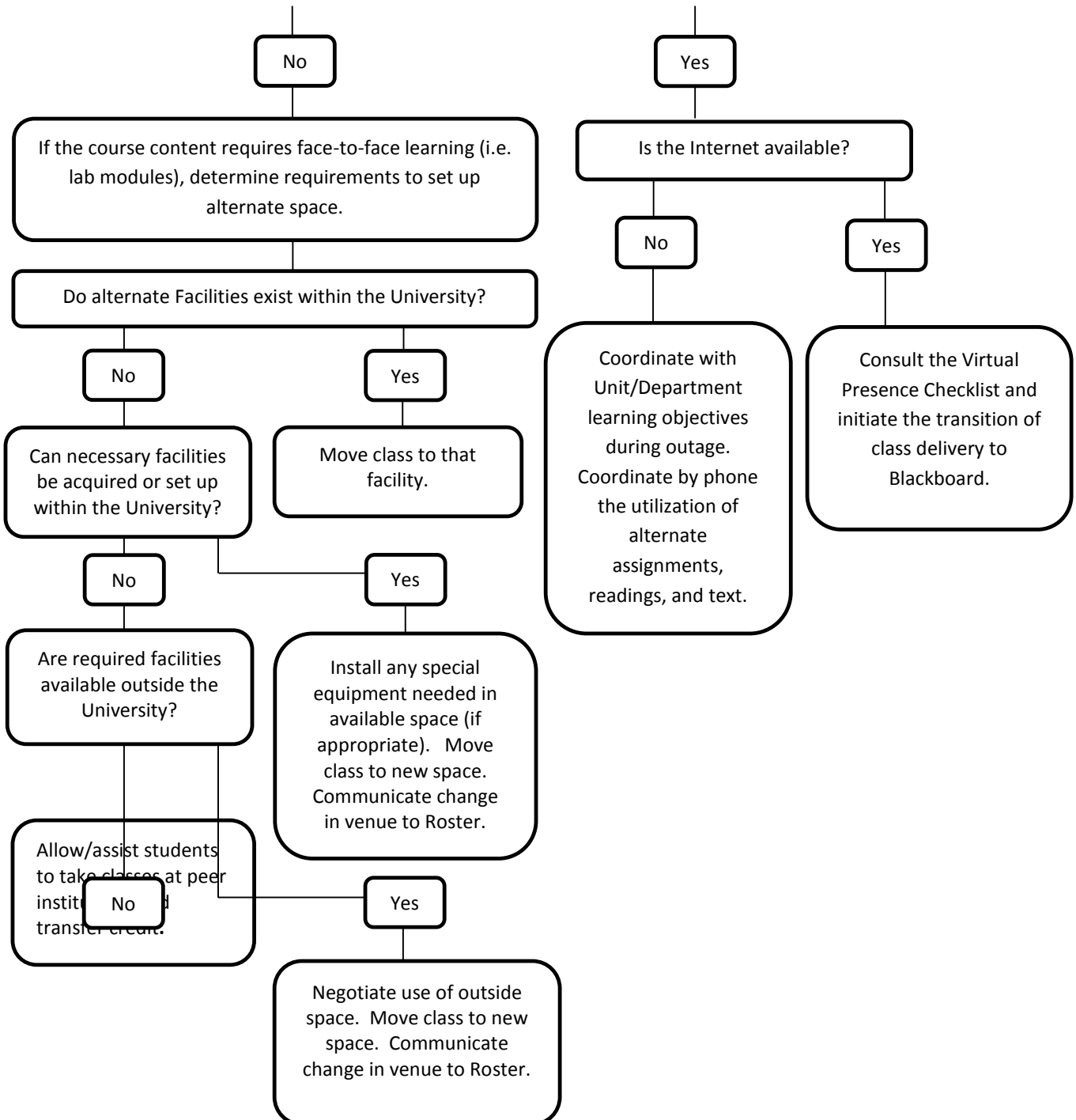
Yes      No

- I have a class roster and grade information available offline
- I have a way to distribute assignments to my students by phone or text.
- I have updated my syllabus to include an alternate assignment(s).
- These may include discussion projects items, readings, end of chapter materials, and student questions.

**Appendix C:**  
**Continuation**

In the event of loss of use/availability of normal classroom space, can class be conducted at a distance?

**Academic**  
**Decision Tree**



**Appendix D: Student Contact Information Questionnaire**

**Pace University Student Information**

U#: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*First* *Last*

Home Phone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address* *Apartment/Unit#*

\_\_\_\_\_

*City* *State* *ZIP Code*

Cell Phone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Primary E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a resident student or live in temporary housing off campus, please fill out the following section:

Campus or Local Phone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Campus or Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address* *Apartment/Unit#*

\_\_\_\_\_

*City* *State* *ZIP Code*