

# Maverick Minute

## Jaci Lindburg | June 3, 2020

### Episode Description:

In this Maverick Minute, Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D., chats with Jaci Lindburg, Director of Digital Learning and IT Academic Technology, about the shift to online learning mode in the spring semester and the technological possibilities for hybrid learning in the fall.

### Transcript:

Hello. I'm Jeff Gold and thank you so much for joining us today on this Maverick Minute. I have a very special guest, and that's Jaci Lindburg. Jaci, of course, is the director of all of our digital learning programs here at UNO. Jaci, thanks so much for being with us today.

Absolutely. Thanks for the invitation.

Well, what I'm interested in talking about with you today is your impressions of the end of the spring semester when we shifted to a remote learning model and your experiences of working with faculty and staff during this transition and what kind of feedback you've had from our students.

Yeah, great question, and what a semester it was, right? I think the first thing I want to say is just how impressed I was with the faculty's willingness to lean in and try new things and I told many of them throughout the process just how in awe of them I was with how quickly they were able to make that transition, learn new technology, and really connect with their students. I think that was at the core of what we heard from so many faculty in the spring is they wanted to maintain that engagement with their faculty and their students together. And so we were so proud to be able to support that type of great work. And we heard, for the most part, really really good feedback. You know, it was a critical period of time, and we were all just really happy to be a part of supporting that and being able to continue on with great instruction at UNO.

You know, you may have seen this, but we just did a very large survey of our students following the spring semester. We had over two thousand students respond, most of whom were actually rising seniors, so these are students that know UNO pretty well. And they were just astoundingly and in a very clear way very positive about their experiences, about the connection they had with the faculty, and, of course, their strong desire to come back to campus, which we all feel a burning desire to do. So, what were some of the important lessons learned, do you think? Because we're just looking at the fall enrollment trend numbers and they are all looking very favorable, but the number of students that are interested in maintaining some remote learning is way over where we were last year and two years ago. So are there lessons learned that we would want to build into the fall that would be important?

Yeah, I think absolutely there are, and, you know, there's waves with so much of this as you know and I'm sure experienced in a number of ways. The first wave was to continue the

instruction we had in the spring. And now as we prepare for the second and third wave of this type of instruction, I do think we'll see a lot of this come together in more of a continuum. And that's really exciting to think through and talk about ways we can bring together sort of the best of online teaching, the best of campus teaching, keep people safe, but also keep people engaged with what they love about being a Maverick. And so that's been a lot of the really exciting work we've done over the summer is to think about how are we equipping spaces in new ways that we can both de-densify, have students who want to join remotely be able to do so, but also welcome students back to campus in a really safe way.

You know, it gives me an opportunity to say, the single highest priority – these two thousand and more students had who responded to this survey – number one was safety. That is the university going to do everything that we can do to maintain a safe environment. Whether it's our mask policy, whether it's what we do to de-densify the classrooms and, as you know, we're making a major investment – almost three quarters of a million dollars, I think – in new technology in our classrooms to make sure that we can have optimal technical connection. Everything from personal screening and on and on and on, just to make sure we have a safe environment.

Yeah, and I think this is mission critical work and mission centric work for UNO. When I think about what's on the side of the library, "Access to Exceptional," I think this work just extends our access mission. Is it on a different time frame than maybe we would have chosen? Absolutely. And is it a little bit quicker than we maybe would have chosen? Absolutely. But at the end of the day, it adds flexibility, it adds accessibility, and I think it's really exciting work we're doing over the summer in preparation for fall. You know, I might also note for students who have disabilities and need to have an accessible learning environment, that's also been absolutely at the forefront of our work in partnership with Student Success and that's been something I think we factored in every step of the way, too, and that we'll see some exciting additions on in the fall.

Very important. So I would like to take this opportunity to not only thank you for being here today, but to thank you and your team for everything you're doing and Access to Exceptional defines the Maverick Spirit these days, and I would say that this experience has been exceptional and our students are telling us that, our faculty are telling us that, and we just need to continue to move forward.

Yeah, well, thank you.

Thanks for being with us.

Thanks, Chancellor.

And thank you so much for being with us today on this Maverick Minute.