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Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 9:09 AM
To: [otce](#)
Subject: Provost's Notes: Policy and Procedural Changes for Fall 2020

Good morning, Faculty –

Last week, I reviewed safety protocols that are being implemented at OTC campuses and centers; this week, I'm sharing about policy and procedural changes. I know these emails are long, but there is a lot to share! Bear with me, and please review carefully. As a reminder, all of these emails are archived for future review: <https://academics.otc.edu/provosts-notes/>

BUSINESS AS USUAL – MOSTLY

You'll recall that in the spring 2020 semester when we made the sudden shift to online learning, we also made several changes to normal college procedures:

- We waived the requirement for a proctored assignment or exam for online classes ([Policy 2.21](#)).
- We implemented a system by which students could opt for a Pass/Not Pass grade for each class.
- We extended the window for students to complete coursework that resulted in an incomplete grade.
- We encouraged faculty to consider a student's midterm grade as the true indicator of class performance (rather than the final grade).

For the fall semester, *at this point in time*, we are making **no changes to normal instructional procedures, nor are any policies being waived**. We, and our students, have had more time to adapt and plan for an uncertain fall semester. This includes measures put in place to ensure a smoother transition to remote instruction. One such measure is that we are making it easier for students to obtain the technology they need for online instruction. The college has made Technology Grants available, and we're providing laptops for purchase in the OTC Bookstore with financial aid.

PREPARING TO PIVOT

In addition to helping students transition should the need arise, the Center for Academic Innovation has developed a training course to prepare you to effectively pivot your courses to remote instruction. **Preparing to Pivot (P2)** is a voluntary, self-enroll, self-paced virtual course open to all OTC faculty scheduled to teach courses this fall. The course opens today, July 20, and will continue until August 14. Successfully complete the training and all requirements prior to the deadlines, and you'll be eligible for a **\$200 faculty stipend**. You may [enroll now](#). And as always, our rock stars in the [Center for Academic Innovation](#) practically never sleep and are available to help you strategize about your plans for fall.

ATTENDANCE

For those teaching seated classes, recording accurate attendance has always been important, but for the fall semester it takes on a heightened level of urgency. **I cannot emphasize this enough**. While it has been important in the past because of negative financial impacts on the student, for the fall semester, it is not hyperbolic to say it may help save someone's life.

We need accurate attendance records for contact tracing. If a student tests positive for COVID-19, we need to know if the student was present in class and who else was in the room:

- The new Canvas attendance feature allows for seating charts. I encourage you to use this feature. Tell your students on day 1 that the seat they choose will be their seat for the

remainder of the semester. In the event of a positive case, it will help to know who was within 6 feet of the student.

- The expectation is that **every instructor teaching a seated section will record attendance IN CLASS, EVERY DAY**. If you need a rhyme to help you remember, try “DEPENDENCE ON ATTENDANCE.” That is so ingenious it will be hard for you to believe that I just made that up while typing this, but I did. ☺ Hey – if it works, use it!

WHEN STUDENTS MISS CLASS

For the foreseeable future, **instructors cannot penalize students for missing class**. Some of you teach in programs that deduct points for non-attendance or somehow penalize students for not attending. That must temporarily cease. The last thing we want is a sick student dragging themselves to sit in a classroom with others when they have a serious and highly-infectious illness. Keep these things in mind:

- We must allow students to make up work they missed.
- We must not ask for a student to produce a doctor’s note to offer them an “excused” absence. The only time a doctor’s note will be required is if they have exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 or you know that they have tested positive (more about that in a couple of weeks).
- Students will be *encouraged* to stay home if they feel sick, so there must be no penalty when they do. We all need to reinforce the message to our students to stay home when they are sick, and reassure them we’ll work with them to complete missed assignments.

BUT WHAT ABOUT ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL?

The [administrative withdrawal policy](#) is still in effect. We must withdraw a non-participating student after 14 consecutive days of non-attendance. However, for students who are sick, we’ll all need to have content in Canvas so they can continue participation in the course and submit assignments while they are out. If they are participating by submitting assignments or participating in class via Canvas, they should not be withdrawn from class.

THINGS THAT HAVE CHANGED SINCE LAST WEEK:

- I’ve learned that each campus and location now has face shields available. If you are teaching at a non-Springfield location, speak to your campus or center dean or director. Otherwise, email Joanna Kramer (kramerj@otc.edu) to get one.
- We also have a supply of clear face masks available to faculty teaching seated classes. I have tried one out and found it to be much easier to speak and breathe than with a cloth mask. Given that, you can probably guess that they may not be as effective as a cloth mask, but if you’d like to try one, email Joanna to request one.
- Dr. Megan Weaver, dean of academic services, sent the fall syllabus template on Friday. In it, you’ll see new language pertaining to COVID-related circumstances.

I want to end by saying again how much I appreciate you. I’ve heard from so many of you who understand that these decisions are being made only after a lot of careful thought and discussion. We are doing the best we can with very incomplete information. You have an appreciation for the tough spot we’re all in, and I’m grateful. As always, I’m happy to hear any ideas or suggestions you have as we continue to plan for fall.

More next week. Until then, have a great week!

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