

Dear Colleagues,

As we enter the remaining four weeks of the semester, we write to thank you for your crucial role in academic continuity and envisioning academic futures through advising, teaching, and otherwise supporting our students and each other. We also wish advisors well in your work advising your students these next two weeks—a particularly challenging task in a time of such uncertainty.

Even as this semester continues, we write with plans for the summer and updates for how planning for the fall will ensue. Based on what we are hearing from multiple constituencies, we also continue to shape our response to learning in this new mode. We do both with thanks for the wise counsel of the Academic Continuity team and campus program faculty and staff administrators. And we thank you, as ever, for your communications with us and with your Staff and Executive Council representatives as we all continue to shape and sustain the meaningful work of our community.

### **1) Continuing to Flatten the Curve in Summer 2020**

With many thanks to the group of faculty and staff who met on Friday, April 10 to co-ordinate decisions about the summer, we write to announce that **all summer 2020 programs will be online**. Students, faculty, and staff engaged in MAPs, research, internships, summer travel, and employment will be contacted in the coming days by program administrators with plans for going online or, if those are not available, other options for this summer.

MAPs and summer research faculty and students should expect to hear from Mark Levandoski; Mark Peltz will contact students about internships; Kate Patch will be in touch with students and faculty with OCS summer plans (Off-Campus Study programs are set to make a series of decisions about fall off-campus study programs around May 15, and Kate will follow up with faculty and students shortly thereafter); and Mark Watts will be the contact about summer student employment. International students will be contacted by Karen Edwards to discuss options and circumstances as needed. Students will be receiving a message about summer 2020 this afternoon as well.

Our thanks to all the faculty and staff who will be working with students on summer 2020 plans. Please know that we're thinking about all of our students, faculty, and staff and that you will be hearing from someone soon about your special circumstances. We will also be working with department chairs to create further options for students for this summer.

Restrictions on College-sponsored domestic and international travel will continue until further notice, with periodic re-evaluation based on the latest public health information. We have received questions about the possibility of deferring summer 2020 research, conference, and other professional development funding as well as 2020-21 sabbaticals; these will be taken up by the Committee for the Support of Faculty Scholarship (CSFS). Access to campus buildings for critical operations faculty and staff only will continue, and faculty and staff will continue to work remotely, until further notice, also with periodic re-evaluation. As we are all learning, the coronavirus has its own timeline, and different places around the U.S. and around the world will peak at different times.

With decisions about the summer finalized, our work turns to the fall semester, and campus partners, including the Academic Continuity team, will be engaged in building contingency plans and reviewing multiple options. Our thanks to them as this important work begins; as ever, the communications and ideas that you share with Staff and Executive Council representatives and with us are welcome.

## **2) Equitable Pedagogy and Student/Faculty Workloads**

Throughout our academic continuity work, we have held to principles of access and technological minimalism. We are learning from student experiences that we need to **focus our efforts to address inequitable learning environments**. Many of our students have gone home to challenging circumstances and their learning situations are not equitable. We acknowledge that there are wide differences in teaching environments of faculty as well, and will be working with the Academic Continuity team on a series of specific recommendations for addressing inequitable learning environments – from technological requirements to assignments to pedagogy. If you would like to have an individual or departmental conversation about making changes to your classes that address inequitable learning environments, please contact Lakesia Johnson, AVP for Diversity and Inclusion, for an appointment.

We are hearing several reports from faculty colleagues of how challenging it is to have a sense for the amount of labor that is now required of our students – especially compared to the expertise we have developed for that estimation in on-campus courses. Please consider re-estimating how much time things are taking. We know from conversations with many of you that *your work* is likely taking much more time! We will also be communicating with students about their own requirements of connection and one-on-one meetings with you.

Some ready steps that can be taken to address inequitable learning environments would be: 1) to reassess your goals for the class and the modes that you chose for your online teaching, and consider providing more opportunities for informal discussion-board work vs. formal written assignments, for example; 2) to consider a frank conversation with students about work processes, about how long assignments are taking them, what is useful to their learning, and what is necessary v. unnecessary and 3) to consider benchmarking with your departmental colleagues.

## **3) Final Exams**

With thanks to the Registrar's Office and CAS, we provide the following further information about final exams.

- In keeping with its recommendation regarding regular coursework, and building on the CAS recommendation that final exams be open-book, open-note, and asynchronous, **Executive Council has voted on a policy that, for Spring of 2020, all exams will be open-book and open-note.**
- If a final exam is to be administered synchronously, the exam must open on the day/time scheduled for that exam. Students may begin the exam any time within 24 hours of the exam being opened; however, they will have only 3 hours to complete the exam. For example: If the final exam is scheduled for Wed., May 13 from 9 a.m. to noon, the exam will open at 9 a.m. on May 13 and all work must be submitted by 8:59 a.m. on Thurs., May 14. Because students have only 3 hours to complete the exam, a student who starts the exam at 5 a.m. on Thurs., May 14 must submit their finished exam by 8 a.m. that day.
- Final papers will be due by 11:59 p.m. on the day of the scheduled exam.
- CAS has extended the deadline to submit all coursework from 5 p.m. on Friday, May 15 to 11:59 p.m.
- CAS would like to remind faculty that requiring both a final paper and exam is not recommended.

## **4) Software Clarification**

We have received several questions from you about your being invited by entities outside of the College to participate in Zoom meetings. If you are participating in Zoom meetings that are set up by someone outside the College, that is okay. The concern is with anyone from the College *initiating* work or meetings with one of the software programs that are not supported by the College. WebEx and Blackboard Collaborate are College-supported platforms that offer options for initiating online meetings, are currently the most used, and therefore most familiar to students.

With thanks, dear colleagues, for your sustained presence and the knowledge and continuity of inquiry you are able to provide your students and each other, we wish you the best in the weeks to follow. We look forward to our next communication with you on Thursday.

In admiration,

Anne F. Harris, Dean of the College  
Todd Armstrong, Chair of the Faculty