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Academic Affairs Updates

Faye W. Gilbert
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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

Note from the Provost as we Re-engage

1 message

UMaine Provost <umprovost@maine.edu>
Reply-To: UMaine Provost <umprovost@maine.edu>
To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu

Mon, Mar 23, 2020 at 7:57 AM

Dear faculty and staff:

Thank you for your diligence and energy in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. You are working remotely, where possible, maintaining 6 feet of distance from others, and staying home when you feel sick. Wednesday is the official day we re-engage our students for the remainder of this term to help them complete spring 2020. A few thoughts and reminders:

- You are allowed to come to campus to videotape class sessions from a classroom or office. You should work remotely, if you can, to make space for those who must access materials from their offices or classrooms. You may need to contact custodial services (581.2649) to make arrangements to have a building or classroom unlocked at a specific time. On the weekends, you can call UMaine Police Department dispatch, 581.4040, to make arrangements in advance to gain access to buildings or classrooms. If you are on campus, please continue to observe social distancing and have no more than 10 people in a space. Try to develop options that work from remote locations. The University of Maine is not closed at this time.
- If you need assistance, we are here to help. The University of Maine System is engaged in: acquiring laptops; providing access to Labster, which is a wonderful resource and now available to you (ask CITL for assistance if you have interest); arranging for remote access to key software packages; working at the state level for support to complete clinical rotations; and responding to other requests and challenges to ease tasks. Expect to hear about online proctoring for exams through Blackboard in the next few days. Please reach out if you feel you have a roadblock that would prevent students from completing a course this term.
- Please consider with compassion those students who will not have access to the internet. Parking lots for libraries, buildings on campuses and Cooperative Extension locations may provide a way for students to access WiFi, if they have laptops and can sit in their vehicles. If you can tape sessions or provide notes, that could also be helpful. If you can ask them for mailing addresses, you may be able to send them assignments and receive their work back in the mail. Try to assess the extent to which students are engaged with you.
- If you have a means of knowing which students are not engaging at all in your classes, we should be able to help contact them to see what types of assistance they may need to complete the term. Please ask.
- The pass/fail option will be in effect April 10-May1, 2020. Student Records will send an email that students can use to select this option. It will then appear on your final grade roster. Even if a student is failing a class, the pass/fail option would not include that grade in the GPA, so the pass/fail option may help some students complete this term.
- The Faculty Senate is working on extending the deadline for withdraw-passing as well, and that should be announced in a couple weeks. We hope to get students engaged in finishing

the term before emphasizing they can withdraw-passing from the term.

- The Student Crisis Fund is up and active. If you can, consider a donation. More information is available from the Division of Student Life, 581.2681.

Our best estimate is that we are almost ready to go for Wednesday. The creative solutions you have developed in this short time are amazing. Should your plans not work as well as expected, please ask for help in revising those plans. The words for this term must be about flexibility and compassion. Our goal as a community of scholars is to help our students complete this term. If they have a little bit of learning to catch up with in the fall, we will all be able to help them do that.

All of our lives are different now and we must help students cope with the change even though we also face a new set of challenges each day. Please reach out to your students with reassurance and a request for them to focus a bit on the course material as they can. Please send them a revised agenda/syllabus for the remainder of the term so they can adjust. Please ask your chair or dean or me if you need assistance in completing courses this term.

Thank you so much for the extraordinary responses you have created. You are an amazing community.

Faye Gilbert, Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost