

## Updates

Special NDSU Announcement to all Staff <NDSU-STAFF@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU>

on behalf of

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To: NDSU-STAFF@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU <NDSU-STAFF@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU>

Dear Colleagues,

First, thank you for your flexibility as we've started working remotely and adjusting to these challenging and uncertain times. Your adaptability and patience as we are working through these changes has been astounding!

I'm sharing a message that I sent to faculty to "keep you in the loop" on some of the things that are happening on the academic side in case you are getting questions or hearing concerns. This is what I shared with faculty.....

*First, the dean of students and the academic deans have been monitoring student issues through multiple feedback sources. There are some common themes to report.*

*We're hearing from students that flexibility in timing of learning is key. A number of students are finding it difficult to "attend" synchronous lectures or complete testing in a very limited window of time due to technical capabilities. Recording lectures and posting for later viewing is essential for these students. Many of them are now sharing devices and internet bandwidth with a full household of family members. Rural Minnesota, and possibly North Dakota, students in particular are having difficulty securing adequate internet coverage. Please provide as much flexibility and understanding as possible, and continue adjusting as needed.*

*We're also hearing that students are worried about the impact this change to remote learning may ultimately have on their grades and GPA. To that end, we've drafted an extension of the pass/fail grading option for undergraduate students that has been vetted by several areas for its impact on financial aid, academic standards, registration and records, student athletes etc. The next step is to take it to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee on Monday, 4/6 for faculty input and direction on how to proceed with the approval process. The draft is currently written so that students have the option of receiving letter grades, P/F grades, or a combination thereof, but departments and programs do retain the ability to require letter grades as needed to advance in course sequences or academic or professional programs. Let me reiterate, this is still in draft form, so please do not advise students on this potential option—wait until it is approved and the information is distributed to students, faculty and professional advisors. Sadly, the Office of Registration and Records has already had to send a student away due to premature advising. Several institutions have already announced alternative grading options for their students.*

*Some of you may also be wondering about summer session and on-line instruction. We plan to make decisions on summer session in the very near future so please stay-tuned.*

*Vice Provost Bilen-Green has been working with several faculty representatives and administrative groups such as the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee on Policy 352, the Commission on the Status of Women Faculty, the Promotion to Professor Task Force, FORWARD, Department Chairs/Heads and the Deans for suggestions on how NDSU can support faculty in the Promotion, Tenure and Evaluation process in light of the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope to announce the adoption of these recommendations soon.*

*Again, thank you for your patience and flexibility in this very trying time. We will continue to work hard to both meet the needs of our learners and to uphold our academic standards.*

To close, I imagine that you are dealing with challenges like trying to manage multiple demands at home while getting your work done, figuring out new ways to connect socially at a distance, instituting methods of self-care

while being bombarded with news updates on the virus, etc. We are all in this together and probably need each other more than ever.

Thank you for your dedication to NDSU!

*Margaret*

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