

From: [Summers, Greg](#)
Subject: Academic Affairs Update, 04-03-2020
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Colleagues,

I'm writing again with a brief update regarding our COVID-19 related work this semester. You received an update yesterday on the expanded Pass/Fail grading policy just approved by Common Council. In addition, there are three other issues on which I'd like to report.

1. Student Circumstances. At Common Council on Wednesday, SGA Vice President Rayvn Knipple reported on some of the anecdotal comments he is hearing from students. These include lots of folks balancing chaotic circumstances at home with adjusting to classes that are newly online: lost jobs, worries about rent, new expectations to provide childcare for younger siblings, etc. There is nothing surprising in these anecdotes per se, but Rayvn's comments were important to hear and important to reiterate. Students coping with such issues may struggle to participate in synchronous course experiences.
2. Summer Session. Given the likelihood that the COVID-19 disruptions will continue into May and perhaps June, we have made the decision to move all summer courses beginning prior to July 1, 2020 to online/alternative delivery. The CNR's May/June field experience will be moved to later in the summer in the hope that current restrictions will be relaxed by then. However, I want to discourage other departments from relying on this possibility. By all accounts, we should expect some level of disruption to continue for months to come. Most UWs are in the process of making similar decisions as we all wrestle with the uncertainties ahead. We will communicate this news to students next week.
3. Staying at Home. Our colleagues in Facilities have expressed concern about how many employees are still working on campus. I know everyone is doing their best to respect the social distancing guidelines. I also know there are legitimate reasons that faculty and staff members still need to come to their offices. However, in addition to risking further spread of COVID-19, our presence on campus uses critical supplies such as hand sanitizer and personal protective equipment that Facilities staff must prioritize for serving our students still living on campus. So, this morning Chancellor Patterson suggested we follow this rule: "If you can work from home, it's not that you 'should' but rather that you 'must.'" Please make every effort to stay safe by staying at home.

Thanks very much, once more, for all that you're doing in these challenging times. I hope you all find time this weekend to relax, laugh with those you love, and enjoy something fun.

Best,

Greg

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(This message is being sent to the Academic Affairs faculty/staff list, and university and SGA leadership.)