

From: [Summers, Greg](#)
Subject: Academic Affairs Update, 10-23-20
Date: Friday, October 23, 2020 10:15:44 AM
Attachments: [Amended Pass Fail Proposal Fall Revised and approved at AAC 10-05-2020.docx](#)

Colleagues,

In my house, we've started calling 2020 "the year when everything breaks." It's not just the pandemic, the American system of government, or the global economy we mean. It's felt like everything: both my twelve-year-old cars have been in the garage; both my kids needed care in the local emergency room (thankfully, they are fine); the ice-maker in our fridge stopped working; and last week, the spring on our garage door snapped. I could go on. Amid this list of calamities, big and small, we frequently tell ourselves to take one day at a time, and that if we all get through the year still healthy and upright, we'll be doing great! Maybe 2020 has prompted us to lower our family bar, but I'd prefer to think that it's just reminded us of what's important in life.

This past week, amid the frustrations and fatigue of our fall semester, it's felt like the pandemic has taken a similar toll on the university. Nerves are frayed, many students report they are struggling, and no one is entirely happy with the learning environment that current circumstances have wrought. And yet, I've been heartened to see how hard everyone is working to assume the best intentions of others and to work together to solve problems as they arise. By most accounts, we're entering a period in the pandemic that will be as challenging as any we've experienced thus far. It will be crucial for all of us to stay focused on what's truly important in the months ahead.

There are several policy reminders that I would like to share this week, each related to the extenuating circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Common Council has recommended that faculty be allowed to suspend their tenure and promotion clocks for one year, one time only. The suspension is the option of the faculty member only. Faculty members who do not exercise this option may not be denied retention, tenure, or promotion solely on the grounds of a decline in scholarly activity or in teaching effectiveness that occurs during the COVID pandemic.
- The Council also recommended that faculty be allowed to suspend their post-tenure review clock for one year, one time only. The suspension is the option of the faculty member only.
- Finally, the Common Council has again recommended extending the regular deadline for students to request P/F grading in their fall semester classes, this time until November 20. Please see the attached document for details and important notes.

As a final point, I want to remind everyone that on November 4, UW-Stevens Point will suspend regular teaching activities. This is not a day off for anyone, but rather a chance for students, faculty, and staff to catch up in their work and to check in regarding course expectations as we approach the final third of the semester.

Enjoy the weekend, everyone. I'll be doing some home repair, replacing a broken doorknob mechanism and an outdoor security light that's been flashing randomly for months. 2020....

Greg

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