Dear Colleagues,

I hope everyone spent high-quality time with nearest and dearest this weekend. We are all becoming accustomed to the new normal of socializing via video calls. I prop a device on the dinner table, plug in a FaceTime call or a Zoom session, and share a meal and a glass of wine with friends or family. I know we all feel how important that contact is now.

I am so grateful for the hard work you’ve undertaken to provide our students with continuity during this crisis, especially for all the extraordinary efforts made to contact students when the crisis hit and working with them to figure out what will best serve their learning. I know quite well what it means to retrofit a course and shift from face-to-face to distance learning under normal circumstances. Doing so under these conditions has been a monumental and heroic task. Just as important, I applaud all your efforts to sustain face-to-face contact for students who need it or ask for it and conduct online office hours. You are helping our students sustain their goals and their dreams through a true crisis. I deeply appreciate what you are doing every day. I know that efforts are already underway to share good experiences and successful practices. Please continue to do this. We’ll figure out a good way to share them widely.

Our OSE colleagues have done similarly heroic work setting up virtual student services in every key area, including academic support, peer mentoring, and wellness. Right now the SSAs and Strategists are doing outreach to each student who received a Starfish attendance flag. The Communications team has designed a true one-stop web page (https://guttman.cuny.edu/news/coronavirus-updates/distance-learning-resources-for-students/). Big kudos to Joanna Wisniewski and colleagues. And finally, John Stroud and the IT team has kept us connected and responded quickly to any glitches. Guttman has a lot to be proud of right now.

We continue to receive directives and guidance from the University. Here are some important updates to note:

**Calendar Dates**
- Verification of Enrollment reporting deadline is this coming Wednesday, April 1.
- Spring Break begins Wednesday, April 8. Classes resume Friday, April 17.

**Tenure Clock Extensions**
The Central Office has advised us of the following policy change regarding the tenure clock. Please read the following guidance carefully:

*We recognize that the transition to distance learning in the Spring 2020 semester as a result of COVID-19 may cause interruption and delay in faculty research and scholarship. This is*
particularly critical for faculty advancing toward tenure. We accordingly are going to permit faculty whose candidacies for tenure are coming up in the fall 2020 semester to receive a one-year extension, if they so desire. **Such faculty must request a tenure clock extension by emailing the request to their college Provost by May 1, 2020.**

Going forward, faculty on the tenure track who subsequently want to request a tenure clock extension based on the circumstances of Spring 2020 must so apply by February 1 in the year immediately preceding their tenure review. Faculty wanting to apply for a tenure clock extension should follow the procedures normally followed at their college for requesting these extensions to tenure review; their request will be subject to fact-specific review, in accordance with past University practice.

Faculty scheduled to apply for tenure in September 2020 should consider this option carefully and contact Dean Blake as soon as possible with any questions about choosing the one-year extension by May 1.

**Credit/No Credit Grading Policy**

Pending approval at the CUNY Board of Trustees meeting on March 30, students will have the option to convert any or all of the letter grades (A-F) they earn during Spring 2020 to Credit/No Credit grading. Here are the policy guidelines:

- Before choosing this grading option for one or more of their classes, students will consult with their academic and financial aid advisors regarding potential impact to their financial aid, licensure requirements, and graduate school admissions.
- Students will be able to make this decision up to 20 business days after the University’s final grade submission deadline or the date of actual grade posting, whichever is later.
- A passing letter grade will convert to ‘CR’ with credit for the class being awarded, while a failing grade will convert to ‘NC’, with no credit awarded. Credit/No Credit grades will not impact the student’s GPA.
- Students with Credit/No Credit grades will be able to transfer those courses across colleges within CUNY, per current policy.
- This policy will override all program-level grading policies currently in effect at CUNY institutions, including those related to courses within the major, pre-requisite courses, honors courses and maximum number of credits that a student can earn with Credit/No Credit grades.
- The grade glossary, attached to each transcript, will be updated to include a notation denoting that Spring 2020 grades, including CR or NC, were earned during a major disruption to instruction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pending approval by the CUNY Board of Trustees, this policy is effective April 1, 2020 and applies to all CUNY institutions except the School of Law and the School of Medicine, which will implement their own Pass/Fail policies to conform to norms in legal and medical education. The University Provost has discretion to extend this policy to future terms if indicated.

I’ll sign off with a link to a timely, pragmatic and empathetic set of observations from a math professor at the University of Richmond: [https://diverseeducation.com/article/170630/](https://diverseeducation.com/article/170630/).
Thank you, again, for your commitment and professionalism. Have a good week, stay safe, and best wishes as always,

Howard

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