

Subject: Monday Update - April 6, 2020

Date: Monday, April 6, 2020 at 10:38:50 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Rai, Sanjay K

To: Rockville Faculty{FT&PT}, Germantown Faculty{FT&PT}, Takoma Park Faculty{FT&PT}, Academic Affairs Staff and Administrators

Colleagues,

As we begin the third week of remote teaching and learning, I want to commend your efforts that have demonstrated to our students your commitment to their uninterrupted success. I have seen so many innovative efforts, problem solving, and gestures of kindness and compassion. As we begin this new week, I am inspired by that, knowing that we will continue in this way, together.

We are all continuing to learn about ourselves and our students through this experience. Many of our students are adapting to remote learning, as much as the rest of us are – sometimes easily, and sometimes with challenges. In meeting these challenges, you are shaping how we - and our students in their future roles - will handle disruptive events – large and small.

I had an opportunity to join MC colleagues in a Zoom forum with students. I was delighted to hear from them and speak directly to them, getting their advice on a number of issues.

Grading Update

I want to encourage all students to complete their coursework by the end of the semester. This is the best outcome as it leaves students ready to graduate, transfer, or proceed to their next semester in line with their academic plan. No do-overs is my hope for our students.

Faculty and students have shared ideas about grading for this unique semester. We have sought guidance from our faculty council, academic regs committee, peer institutions, and from the college's leadership team. Dr. Pollard's [memo last week](#) explained the reasons why we have decided not to award Pass/Fail grades. We considered transferability of courses and impact on student financial aid, among other considerations.

We are working closely with the academic regs committee to extend deadlines to withdraw or change to audit. A new option, "Incomplete in Crisis" grade, could give students up to a year to complete their courses. More information will be shared very soon.

Numbers Tell Part of the Story ([Dashboard](#))

Retention

We are answering the question: *will students withdraw before giving remote learning a chance?* I am very pleased to report that currently, withdrawals are lower than the same period last year. This is so encouraging to me and speaks so highly of your efforts. Take a look:

March 11, 2019 to March 27, 2019: 786 students withdraw from 1,119 CRNs

March 16, 2020 to April 1, 2020: 397 students withdraw from 560 CRNs

We will continue to pay close attention to retention figures. We want to make every effort to reach out to students who are considering withdrawing.

Learning Centers – Virtual Tutoring (906 total)

March 29 - April 4 475 virtual tutoring sessions

March 23 - March 28 431 virtual tutoring sessions

Smarthinking -- Virtual Tutoring (378 total)

March 29 – April 4 (week 2) 237 virtual tutoring sessions

March 22 – March 28 (week 1)

141 virtual tutoring sessions

Many conversations and many decisions are being made. I sincerely thank those who are informing these decisions, with data and with stories from the front lines. We are striving to create options that will address any student's circumstances and will leave them in the best possible situation for moving forward. In some cases, I understand that we will be asking faculty and staff to do more. Your positivity, engagement, and guidance will help students make it through this temporary and unique time - - and leave them well prepared for their next step.

I am also learning of some of the things that you are doing to make this a remarkable teachable moment. This message is getting a bit long, so let us take up this topic next time.

With continued deep gratitude for all that you are doing,

Sanjay