

Subject: Monday Update - April 27, 2020

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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 you know, we redefined the last two weeks of the semester as time for *assistance and assessment*. For some of you, this will be the final week of instruction in this very unusual spring semester. I am hearing of some innovative plans for how the *assistance and assessment* weeks will be used. I have learned of faculty who are incorporating lessons from the pandemic into the final course assignment/project. For example, pairs of students are giving presentations on such topics as the history and components of vaccines, biochemistry of antioxidants, and biochemical aspects of immunotherapy. I know that the faculty member is very impressed with the depth of research and the quality of presentations. Think of what these students have learned. We have faculty who have given students extra time for the final to take advantage of a software feature that lets students have an opportunity to rework a problem if the answer is incorrect. This gives the students opportunities to truly master the material. We have a chemistry lab final that isn't using the usual written exam, instead having the last experiment serve as a capstone assignment that addresses many of the key outcomes of the laboratory component (Scientific Method inquiry-based lab). This will give students the opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking and apply analysis and technical skills learned throughout the course. In an upper level chemistry course, students will answer guided reflection questions on laboratory and lecture course components as part of their e-portfolio project which will supplement the final exam. In some classes, a series of questions have been posed throughout these past weeks of remote instruction. These compose the serial, cumulative final.

As technology has played a greater role in teaching and learning for many years, I know that many of you have been challenging traditional ideas of what to teach and how to teach it. While our phones are smart and allow us to access information, they are not wise phones. They do not think critically. They do not analyze and draw conclusions. Add the challenge, today, that proctoring is not practical or possible, in some cases, and I am seeing your critical thinking applied to this problem. I am impressed and inspired to learn how some of you are modifying assignments and assessments in ways that do not compromise your ability to measure learning, do not decrease rigor, but take advantage of the current environment to see how we can achieve the same learning outcomes in a different way. I've seen true innovation and leadership in this area. Multiple reflections are replacing multiple choice. I am very impressed with the quality of our revised assessments.

I am so pleased to see that our [withdrawal](#) figures have remained lower than the same time period last year: 1,143 students compared with 1,916 and 1,764 CRNs compared with 2,963. This speaks to the relationship faculty have with their students, the connections you forged in the early part of the semester that have been sustained through extremely trying circumstances. Beginning next week, we may see our first Withdrawal in Crisis (WC) figures, and I will share that information. [Virtual tutoring](#) participation continues to grow (709 sessions) and our [embedded coaches](#) are providing continued outreach (259 sessions) on top of their study sessions (116). Seeing increasing numbers of students take advantage of these support services tells me that awareness is growing, and that is because what is being done is working. I am certain that there will be even more activity in the next three weeks, so bookmark the [Dashboard](#) for future reference. Your work to make this kind of support accessible is so impressive, and very much appreciated.

The fall schedule, originally planned to be available today, will instead be available May 4, 2020. In the coming days, decisions will be made by College leadership regarding the fall semester. All decisions that the

College makes regarding reopening will follow the requirements and guidelines of the State and County public health departments. Our top priorities are to assure the safety of all of our faculty, staff and students, as well as academic excellence – our hallmark.

Please keep the health and safety of your families and our community as a top priority.

I remain so grateful and proud of the MC community. Thank you for all that you continue to do.

Sanjay