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April 7, 2020

Dear Faculty,

I am aware that the past few weeks have been filled with learning *Canvas* and other technology tools as well as collaborating with colleagues to share tips and tricks for teaching online. Additionally, learning in an online environment is a first for a significant number of our students, many of whom will need time to adjust.

The College has been closely monitoring guidance from the California Community College Chancellor's Office with respect to student progress and support. As the College continues to mitigate exposure to COVID-19 in our community, we have determined that it is in the best interest of all to extend online instruction through the end of the Spring 2020 term as well as the Summer 2020 term. The Distance Education Committee and Curriculum Committee are working on recommendations for a distance education approval process for summer courses. Additional information regarding this process will be communicated promptly. Moreover, our traditional commencement activities scheduled for May 21, 2020 are postponed, however may be rescheduled for a later date or alternate format.

Please find below information related to Spring 2020 grades as well as professional development activities for Spring and Summer 2020.

Professional Development

The Office of Distance Education will continue to provide support for transitioning courses to the online modality. Furthermore, in an effort to meet guidelines for ensuring regular and effective contact and robust online learning, the College will extend our current practice of providing any non-certified faculty with a \$300 stipend or 20 hours of FLEX credit for completion of the distance education certification course. Please visit the Distance Education [website](#) for additional information.

Grades and Withdrawals

The following guidelines are based on changes to policies related to grades and student progress for the California Community College System as well as changes formally announced by the California State University and University of California systems. Information pertaining to the CSU system can be found [here](#). Information pertaining to the UC system can be found [here](#).

Excused Withdrawal (EW)

A faculty may grant an EW for a student who has not engaged in class during the Spring 2020 term.

Extenuating circumstances for purposes of an excused withdrawal (EW) shall include a student's withdrawal due to the COVID-19 crisis and such withdrawal shall not be counted in progress probation or dismissal calculations, towards the permitted number of withdrawals.



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Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Grade Option

The requirement that students must elect to be evaluated in a course on a letter grade or on a Pass/No Pass (P/NP) basis either upon enrollment or no later than the end of the first 30 percent of the term is suspended.

In addition, an NP symbol shall not be considered for probation or dismissal procedures.

A student may request a P/NP for any course that was in progress on March 4, 2020, when the Governor declared a state of emergency.

Admissions and Records is developing a process for students to request to change the grading of a course from standard to P/NP. Once the student has chosen to receive a grade of P/NP and the grade has been submitted, the student cannot reverse their request back to a standard grade.

In Progress (IP)

For the duration of the COVID-19 crisis, the “IP” symbol should be used when a course has been temporarily suspended and is expected to reconvene and complete instruction at some point beyond the end of the established term. Please communicate this clearly to your students in impacted courses and proactively plan for when courses may reasonably be continued and completed.

Incomplete (I)

For the duration of the COVID-19 crisis, faculty should assess on a student-by-student basis when the use of an “I” symbol would be appropriate for a student impacted by COVID-19, and whether the student’s individual circumstances constitute an “unforeseeable, emergency, and justifiable reason” for needing additional time. The “I” may be made up no later than one year following the end of the term in which it was assigned.

Further details regarding grading option deadlines and criteria will be forthcoming after consultation with Academic Senate.

Please emphasize to students the importance of seeking guidance from their counselor. In every instance, it is critical that students understand the impact of any option to their academic progress. We hope you understand that remote learning is an additional barrier for many of our students and ask that you are flexible and patient with them during this transition.

Counseling Center Phone: (562) 908-3410

Email: counselingcenter@riohondo.edu

In Gratitude,

Laura M. Ramirez, Ed.D.
Vice President, Academic Affairs