

Dear Faculty,

As we come to the close of the Fall term, we want to express our sincere gratitude for the remarkable ways in which you have been supporting your students. Throughout 2020 we have all faced challenges we could have never previously imagined. We have grieved together, toiled together, and we have dug deeply into our reserves to be resilient in our perseverance. Now, as we look ahead to the Spring term, we hope this memo offers continued clarity about our course offerings in spring. Although it feels as if we have been doing remote instruction forever, Spring 2021 will be the first term in which we have had the opportunity to build the schedule, from the outset, with this modality in mind.

Three Options for Spring 2021 Classes

During the Spring, we will continue to offer three types of class modalities described below. Please note that once students are enrolled in a section, we will not make changes to the section.

Online

In the schedule, these classes have a room location listed as “Online.” These classes are fully online and all instructional time is asynchronous. They must be completely flexible and not require students to meet at specific times for synchronous meetings. If synchronous class activities are desired, they should be scheduled such that students are provided options for attending, or recorded for students to access asynchronously. It is certainly possible to require a points-based assignment connected to such a session, but again, students need to be provided flexibility regarding when they are available to engage in the session (whether they do so synchronously or post-session via a recording). While it may not be optimal to hold synchronous exams in an online class, under the circumstances, doing so may be necessary. If you need to hold synchronous midterm and/or final exams, the dates and times of those exams must be included in the syllabus at the outset of the class, with multiple exam date/time options provided to students.

Scheduled Online (Zoom)

These classes are fully online, but in the schedule, they have a room location listed as “Zoom” with specific meeting days/times. During the schedule development process, faculty had input over the instructional days/times that would be held synchronously, with any remaining instructional minutes held in an asynchronous format (Title 5 § 55204). These meeting days/times are now published in the schedule, and must remain fixed. Students may be held accountable for their participation in learning activities during those designated synchronous class sessions. The final exam schedule allows for synchronous exam sessions and is posted [online](#).

Hybrid

For the purposes of the Spring 2021 semester, hybrid classes include *Online* or even *Scheduled Online (Zoom)* portions, but the key difference here is that they include some scheduled in-person meetings with on campus locations at designated days/times. Hybrid classes have primarily been reserved for those hard-to-convert or impossible to convert courses. The Chancellor's Office has suggested the following guidelines for determining hard-to-convert courses:

- Impact to students' ability to graduate or complete a certificate
- Student accessibility to required materials or equipment
- Relationship or contributions to state's essential infrastructure sectors
- Immediate and near-term impact to the local community needs
- Viability of employment post course or program completion in light of the current economic context.

These are courses which require students to perform a skill or exhibit competency in some hands-on activity in a clinical or lab setting. Scheduling a hybrid class requires extensive planning and collaboration between faculty, department chairs, the appropriate dean, and the facilities department. Please keep in mind that onground portions of these classes will require the wearing of face coverings, social distancing, and regular taking of temperatures. Given the uncertainties and complexities, including the needs for sanitizing between classes and limiting the number of students in a room at a time, it was impossible to offer these widely.

The final exam schedule allows for synchronous exam sessions for hybrid courses and is posted [online](#).

Academic Proctoring Center Online Proctoring Services for Spring 2021

The Academic Proctoring Center will continue to offer remote proctoring via Zoom as an accommodation for students who cannot test within the parameters/dates set by their instructor. This makeup exam service is intended to be used to guarantee access for students who cannot test with the rest of the class due to extenuating circumstances. For students in asynchronous courses, this service is only available to those who are not able to make one of their instructor scheduled/offered exam times. We are happy to offer this service to students and instructors but must note that due to capacity, it is a first-come, first-serve availability and we are unable to proctor for entire course sections.

The Academic Proctoring Center is open Mondays-Saturdays while classes are in session and offer extended evening hours on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

For more information on this service, please visit: www.miracosta.edu/apc or email at proctoringcenter@miracosta.edu.

Attendance Nuts & Bolts

Attendance accounting in on-ground as well as distance education courses is important for many reasons, including compliance with state and federal regulations. It is important to remember that Title 5 specifies that students may be involuntarily removed from a class for excessive absences. Excessive absence can be defined based on the needs of a course, as long as the instructor can defend their policy as necessary for the course.

It is important to note, however, that dropping a student is different than grading a student. Education Code does not allow instructors to use simple attendance as part of the grading criteria used in a class. *Faculty may not lower the course grade because of absences since grades need to be based upon performance measures—not attendance (Title 5 §55002).*

In response to some questions that have arisen about attendance and performance measures in online classes, below is an excerpt from our *MiraCosta Distance Education Handbook*, as well as a link with further information providing guidance about attendance in online classes.

<https://miracosta.instructure.com/courses/19220/pages/3-dot-3-federal-de-related-regulations-privacy-slash-ferpa-copyright-tracking-attendance>

In a distance education context, documenting that a student has logged into an online class is not sufficient, by itself, to demonstrate academic attendance by the student. A school must demonstrate that a student participated in class or was otherwise engaged in an academically related activity, such as by contributing to an online discussion or initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question.

Examples of acceptable evidence of academic attendance and attendance at an academically-related activity in a distance education program include:

- *student submission of an academic assignment,*
- *student submission of an exam,*
- *documented student participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction,*
- *a posting by the student showing the student's participation in an online study group that is assigned by the institution,*
- *a posting by the student in a discussion forum showing the student's participation in an online discussion about academic matters, and*
- *an email from the student or other documentation showing that the student initiated contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.*

To establish attendance early in the semester, many instructors require participation in an introductory discussion forum or completion of a syllabus quiz within the first few days of class, and drop students who do not participate.

Upon withdrawal of a student, you'll likely use Canvas to determine the last time a student completed an activity such as those listed above - NOT the last time the student simply logged into Canvas and accessed your class. You'll report this information in SURF.

Professional Development

Thoughtfully planned professional learning opportunities have been offered extensively since last March. We plan to continue to support faculty in all stages of online instructional expertise, as well as ensuring a continued commitment to centering equity in online instruction. Professional development opportunities will also be occurring throughout the spring semester.

A host of resources continue to be offered to support students in the way of technology resources, academic support services, mental health services, virtual student life opportunities, and other student services. Our newly launched ACP Student Success Teams were also formed to specifically support disproportionately impacted student populations. These success teams are coming alongside students and faculty to provide a new layer of encouragement, connection to resources, and overall support.

We realize that this new “normal” has challenged all of us in new ways, and we have had to persevere for our students, our families, and our colleagues. We also want to acknowledge that we do not have all the answers you may need, but we are committed to working together with you to find them.

An African proverb states, *“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”* Let’s commit to going forward *together*.” If you have questions or feel frustrated because you do not understand a decision or a policy, please reach out to your department chairs, your deans, and/or us so that we can continue the conversation.

Below are additional online resources provided by Jim Julius, MOE, and Sean Davis. Please note that these are all currently under revision, and updated versions will be forthcoming.

[Guidelines for Departments: Preparations of Online faculty](#)

[MiraCosta Online Class Quality Guidelines](#)

[AP 4105](#)

[DE Handbook](#)

[PROJECT Online Teaching Foundations](#)

With Appreciation,



Diane Dieckmeyer
Vice President, Instructional Services



Luke Lara
Academic Senate President