

## Updates Regarding Key Academic Decisions for the Spring 2020 Semester

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Wed 3/18/2020 7:06 PM

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

First, I want to thank those of you working so hard to pivot your courses to a distance delivery format for the remainder of the semester. I know it has not been easy. Many of you have had to make abrupt changes to your course designs, pedagogies, and syllabi – all while trying to adopt and adapt to technologies that might be very new to you.

Please know your efforts are recognized, and they are appreciated – by your students.

I also recognize that you might be worried that your teaching for the rest of the term might not meet your typical standards of excellence. And that all your efforts to transform your courses have taken you away from other scholarly and service work. Your chairs, your deans, President Pestello, and I understand that.

We are heartened by your professional pride – but we also know that this is not business as usual.

In support of your work and the success of our students, your deans and associate deans, as well as staff in my office, from ITS, and the Reinert Center, have been meeting regularly to modify policies and practices as needed during this unprecedented time.

I write today to share some of our most critical and timely decisions, and identify a few issues on which we continue to work, but have not yet arrived at a resolution.

1. **Asynchronous Coursework.** You are strongly encouraged to engage in asynchronous instruction to the extent that you find it educationally appropriate.

In courses delivered asynchronously (either fully or in part), the instructor and the students do not meet simultaneously; however, students and instructors continue to interact regularly, and students are required to complete coursework at set intervals, including participating in class activities, online discussions/chats, group projects, quizzes, exams, etc.

For students who struggle to connect remotely from home, or whose technology fails them intermittently, or who are now back in a time zone that makes synchronous work difficult, asynchronous work can be most effective.

Reinert Center staff are ready to assist you in this transition; please visit their [webpage](#) for additional information.

2. **Synchronous Coursework.** If you are engaging your students in synchronous work at any point in the term, you must do so during your regularly-scheduled class meeting time.

In other words, if you taught face-to-face from 8:00am-8:50am MWF before the break, any synchronous work you do with your class going forward **must** be conducted in that same time slot.

There are no exceptions to this.

Asking students to meet at any other specified time will likely result in conflicts with other courses. We must “stick to the schedule” for synchronous work.

Please ensure that you are recording all your lectures using either Zoom or Panopto – for easy and available access by students. You should use the option to record to your computer (**not** to the cloud) so that you can more easily share it with your students.

3. **Copyright Flexibility.** SLU’s Office of the General Counsel has determined that all SLU faculty may, for the remainder of the term, interpret the “fair use” and “single use” provisions of federal copyright regulations such that they may provide photocopied/scanned versions of textbook portions and other materials via Blackboard, e-mail, or a similar electronic mechanism.

In keeping with the spirit of those regulations, faculty should restrict their electronic distribution solely to students for course purposes, and should distribute only what is absolutely necessary at a given time. For example, distribution of a scanned chapter or selection of pages (vs. an entire book/article) is prudent when only that portion of a full work is assigned.

Questions regarding the use of films in remote teaching, or library acquisition of streaming licenses, should be directed to your department’s subject librarian as usual.

- Pius Library: <http://lib.slu.edu/about/directory/pius-research-librarians.php>
- Medical Center Library: <http://lib.slu.edu/mcl/about/mcl-liaison-librarians.php>
- Law Library: <https://www.slu.edu/law/library/faculty-staff.php>

4. **Exam Proctoring.** We are actively exploring solutions for tools or services that enable the proctoring of exams administered in a distance format.

Several of our colleges/schools already have such tools, and they are being supported in the expansion of their use, as needed.

For other units, we are working on it as quickly as we can.

However, we also know that our colleagues in the Reinert Center can help faculty modify their exams and other assessments in ways that mitigate concerns about academic honesty without software or external service agreements.

Many options are on the table, and we hope to have more answers for you soon.

5. **Course Withdrawal Deadline Extended.** The deadline by which students may [withdraw](#) from a Spring 2020 course, in the main semester, with a “W” on their transcripts, has been extended to **May 15**. This is just after the end of the final exam period, but before students’ final grades will be published by the University Registrar.

In light of the significant changes to our instructional model, and in recognition of the difficulties both students and faculty will have in adjusting so quickly, this type of change is one that many of our peer institutions are now making -- and rightfully so, we believe.

*Note: This does not apply to the School of Medicine, School of Law, School for Professional Studies, or any other SLU courses originally established as fully online.*

The University will adhere to all other published policies related to withdrawal and enrollment changes listed on our [website](#).

6. **Repeating Courses.** SLU's policies governing [repeating courses](#) have **not** been changed.
7. **Grading Policies.** SLU's [grading system](#) has **not** been changed.
8. **Academic Support for Students.** Academic support will continue for the rest of the semester.

Students will be able to use EAB Navigate to schedule online or telephone appointments with Academic Advising, Career Services, Disability Services, the English Language Center, Student Success Coaching, Tutoring, and University Writing Services. Students can also contact specific offices directly via email.

All academic support offices stand ready to meet student needs and provide expertise during this time of transition. Please see the attached document for detailed information.

I assure you that all involved in our discussions are supportive of these decisions. We are working with urgency and strong collaboration, and are soliciting input from every academic unit.

I am so proud of everyone's willingness to put students first, and to do so in a manner that respects faculty expertise and the challenging situation we all face.

I will continue to hold regular meetings with all Deans, Associate Deans, Provost Office staff, Faculty Senate representatives, SGA representatives, and key representatives of the Reinert Center, ITS, Student Development, and other units. The information provided here and going forward will be made available on the Provost's and Registrar's websites where necessary, and communicated to faculty, staff and students in a timely manner.

I appreciate everyone's flexibility, trust, and understanding as we navigate this unprecedented time. Again, please know that your work and dedication to your students has not gone unnoticed, both by me as well as the President.

I will keep in touch in the coming days and weeks.

Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones and stay safe,

Chet

See also: [Academic-Impacts Summary-of-Decisions March-18-2020](#)