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Messages from the Provost

Georgia Southern University

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Dear faculty,

Now that we are more than halfway through the fall term, I want to emphasize how proud I am of the work you are doing in service of our students. Working under unprecedented conditions, you continue to rise to the challenge and adapt your pedagogy to ensure continuity of instruction and to provide our students with the world-class education they have come to expect from us. Thank you.

As we move toward the back half of the term, a few questions have come up that can be addressed here. We will continue the semester as originally planned; students will return after Thanksgiving to complete the semester and take final exams. The Faculty Senate SEC has approved my request to suspend Section 209 of the Faculty Handbook (Final Examinations) to allow faculty the latitude to determine the best means to deliver final exams for their classes. The exam schedule will remain the same as posted but faculty may determine the nature of the final assignment and how it is delivered. Many of you were very creative at the end of the spring term and I want you to have the ability to continue that level of creativity in pedagogy and assessment.

We have also made some improvements to scheduling for spring. Building on what we learned during this term, we have made some changes to course scheduling and how classes will be described in Course Search, as we continue to social distance and create a safe learning environment.

We will be returning to a more traditional number of true face-to-face courses in the spring. Students will now have access to courses from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Lengthening our teaching day means that students will be able to take more courses without subsections or groups. We are also adding a few large, non-traditional teaching spaces that allow some large sections to be offered with social distancing. These spaces are currently being added and your chair/dean will reach out to you with more information.

Faculty will continue to offer a wide range of course delivery modes with as much face-to-face engagement as possible (with social distancing). As an institution, we need to maintain our historic institutional average of 85% face-to-face classes as requested by our students and communities.

Finally, I want to mention that while we are working diligently to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for our students, we also need to be looking out for their mental health. This is the time of year when pressure really builds for them. Not only are they dealing with the usual stress caused by exams and papers, developing new relationships, and adjusting to college life on campus, they have the added stress related to the pandemic and the election. As faculty, you know our students better than anyone. If you see a student struggling, you should reach out to the Counseling Center or Student Affairs. Please take a moment to click on this link to review the resources we provide for students in need and how you can assist.

Thank you,

Carl L. Reiber
Provost & Vice President Academic Affairs

Last updated: 8/18/2021