January 23, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Faculty, Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Directors

FROM: Joseph B. Berger, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Minimum Faculty Responsibilities & Recommended Syllabus Language

As we embark on the Spring semester of AY 22-23, I take this opportunity to join you in anticipating the upcoming semester and continuing to move forward our Strategic Plan, For The Times, by capturing bold aspirations for our campus, community, and city.

Throughout the pandemic, UMass Boston has been a demonstrated leader in promoting health and well-being, and we remain dedicated to these commitments. We must remain mindful that each of us has important individual and collective responsibilities to protect the physical, mental, emotional, and social health and well-being of our community. Thus, I wish to remind you that every faculty member is responsible for contributing to the health and well-being of our students in addition to fulfilling our mission through basic and best practices that promote meaningful educational experiences. To help us all have up-to-date information about these practices and our shared commitments to them, I am providing a summary here to reaffirm their importance to our students, the faculty, and the university.

OFFICE HOURS
All full-time faculty members must schedule, post, and keep regular office hours. A minimum of three hours per week is required, with additional hours offered during peak advising times. I urge faculty to be especially generous of their time, as students may be especially in need of advice and counsel about how to succeed and with the chance that we may need to shift for short periods to the remote modality of instruction should the public health or any other circumstances require we do so. Part-time faculty members should schedule office hours in proportion to the number of courses taught (e.g., one hour per week for those teaching one course). Additional office hours may be scheduled by appointment. Faculty may hold virtual office hours for the 2022-23 academic year as long as the students have written instructions that are available throughout the semester about scheduling and attending virtual scheduled office hours.

COURSE SYLLABI
Faculty members are required to provide their department chairs, during the first week of classes, with a syllabus for each course that they are teaching this semester.

CLASS INSTRUCTIONAL MODE
All class sections for the Spring 2023 semester have been scheduled, approved, and listed on WISER to be offered via the most appropriate instructional mode – in-person, hybrid, BeaconFlex, remote, or online. The instructional mode of a class section may not be changed without the approval of the department chair, dean, and provost.

MISSED CLASSES
Planned Absences: All planned absences by instructors for professional or personal reasons must be approved in
advance by the department chair (or dean or designee in schools and colleges without a departmental structure). In such cases, the instructor is responsible for arranging make-up classes or providing alternative instructional activities.

**Unplanned Absences:** Unplanned absences happen in the normal cycle of balancing education as well as personal lives (e.g., medical procedures, travel challenges, unexpected family events). In addition, there continues to be emerging public health circumstances that require prompt response so that we holistically promote health and safety for all. For example, anticipated events may include an instructor not being able to teach a class, or students needing to miss class or not attending a face-to-face class meeting for a particular reason. However, in these situations, we must be equally vigilant about our students’ learning. Based on consultative work with deans, department chairs, and graduate program directors, the following framework guides how we will be advocates for both community health and quality learning when such situations inevitably arise.

As a matter of practice, we expect that the following will be attended to diligently when in-person learning cannot safely proceed for a short period of time:

- The instructor communicates the potential impact to students and informs them that a careful plan to continue instruction will be implemented to minimize disruption to students’ learning;
- The instructor arranges for a contingent learning path – a well-defined plan is needed that identifies how the contact hours will be covered for the impacted class session(s), including identifying an alternate instructor when necessary;
- The instructor coordinates implementation of the plan in consultation with the department chair – for the majority of classes which are face-to-face (F2F), this includes identifying a point person who goes to the assigned F2F classroom as a resource to help ensure that students who do show up have all the information they need. If the class is proceeding remotely, students who are in the F2F classroom can join remotely while they are in the classroom.

Departments and faculty are strongly advised to consider in advance how to enact a contingent learning plan that is most appropriate for their courses when such situations arise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period of absence from teaching a particular course/section **</th>
<th>Decision-making authority</th>
<th>Required Sequence of Reporting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A week or less</td>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Instructor makes a request to Department Chair. Department Chair conveys details of the request to Dean and plans for ensuing communication to students about the instructor’s absence. Instructor or Department Chair (with CC to the other) informs students of continued learning plans that have been provided by the instructor. Dean’s Office tracks approved requests with weekly reporting to the Provost’s Office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Up to two weeks</td>
<td>Dean’s Office</td>
<td>Same as above, except that Provost’s Office should be informed as soon as such a request is approved in order to coordinate with the Registrar’s Office, who will place information about the temporary change in WISER for students. A contingency plan must be developed and provided to the Provost’s Office in the event that the instructor does not return to F2F at the end of the two-week period.</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than two weeks</td>
<td>Provost’s Office</td>
<td>Dean’s Office provides the Provost’s Office with the anticipated dates of absence, the learning plan, and contingency arrangements if the instructor’s absence extends for longer than the anticipated absence. Dean and Department Chair ensure that students’ pedagogical needs are being met. Department Chair informs students of continued learning plans (with CC to instructor and forward afterward to Dean and Provost). Provost’s Office will coordinate with the Registrar’s Office.</td>
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* *While each request will be reviewed on its own merits, if an instructor seeks approval for a 2nd week during the same semester (i.e. weeks are viewed as cumulative, not necessarily consecutive), the decision-making authority becomes the Dean; if more than two weeks, the decision-making authority becomes the Provost’s Office.

**Student Absences:** We anticipate that the Spring 2023 semester, whether students attend classes in-person or remotely, will continue to have many uncertainties. We know that unavoidable student absences occur for a variety of reasons, and they are often amplified by the ongoing pandemic, emerging public health crises, and systemic racism.

In general, when students are absent for extended periods, including when they are directed by University Health Services to isolate or quarantine, they should confer directly with their instructors to inform them of the absence and to determine the best course of action, which may include working out arrangements for missed classes and making up coursework, and in some cases might necessitate withdrawing from a course. Staff in the Dean of Students Office and professional advisors in college advising centers and the University Advising Center can help students who have multiple sequential absences work with their instructors and make plans to complete their courses.

Title IX specifically prohibits discrimination against a student based on pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions. Students with pregnancy related conditions shall be provided academic accommodations in line with the accommodations provided for short-term disabilities including excused absences for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student’s physician. Students seeking pregnancy accommodation should be referred to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Civil Rights. Faculty collaboration with the Title IX Coordinator is strongly encouraged. If questions or concerns arise about the implementation of pregnancy reasonable accommodations, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at CivilRights.TitleIX@umb.edu. More information about pregnancy accommodation is available on the CRIIX website (https://www.umb.edu/titleix/pregnant_and_parenting_rights).

The excused absence policy and recent amendments to the policy may be viewed here: https://www.umb.edu/registrar/policies/attendance. Nonetheless, I bring to your attention the following brief synopsis: When a student has excused absences that involve external documentation and/or when students are very ill and would like assistance in communicating the absence and guidance on working with their instructors on making arrangements, there is a mechanism for students to provide a notification of the absence (Notice of Absence Form), following which all of the student’s instructors are notified of the student’s absence by staff in the Dean of Students office.

As part of our commitment to becoming a health-promoting and student-centered university, instructors should accommodate students with excused absences to the greatest extent possible, particularly given the circumstances and the inevitable increase in absences. Instructors can support students by the following actions:

- Plan for student success in courses given the inevitability of student absences.
- Communicate in syllabi what students should do when they are absent (see recommended syllabus sections that are attached as a Word document with this letter).
- When students have multiple sequential absences, instructors are asked to report concerns via the “Student Referral Program” (umb.edu/life_on_campus/dean_of_students/maxientreportingforms) so that Dean of Students staff and professional advisors can follow up with students.

**FINAL EXAMINATIONS AND SUBMISSION OF GRADES**

Faculty members are obligated to restrict the administration of final examinations to the official examination period, which for the Spring 2023 semester is Monday, May 15 through Friday, May 19, 2023. The final examination period for the Spring 2023 semester is posted on the academic calendar website and exam dates and times will also be posted in WISER for faculty and students. Faculty members may not, therefore, administer final examinations during the last week of classes or during the study period. Please be reminded, also, that a timely submission of grades is required. For the Spring 2023 semester, the deadline is May 26, 2023. Timeliness of grades submission is particularly essential for students who are graduating, continuing their education at another institution, or updating academic progress status for financial aid eligibility.
ATTENDANCE AT COMMENCEMENT
Attendance at Commencement by faculty on active appointments is defined as a minimum faculty responsibility by the FSU collective bargaining agreement, article 15.13. Please arrange summer travel and research plans to accommodate this responsibility and to allow you to celebrate your students fully at this culminating moment in their educational paths. They and their families and friends will appreciate your attendance deeply.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students with disabilities must be afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, all postsecondary education programs and activities (including any course, program of study, or activity offered). Rules or policies that would limit students with disabilities from participating fully in a program or activity may not be imposed. Academic standards should not be compromised, but accommodations must be provided to afford qualified students with disabilities an equal-education opportunity. The Ross Center for Disability Services determines accommodations by reviewing of pertinent documentation from qualified medical care providers and consultation with the student. Faculty members should not, however, provide any form of academic accommodations for students with disabilities without approval from the Ross Center for Disability Services. Instead, faculty members should refer students who seek accommodations due to a disability to the Ross Center. Faculty collaboration with the Ross Center is strongly encouraged. If questions or concerns arise about the implementation of reasonable accommodations, please contact the Ross Center at 617-287-7430. Information on faculty responsibilities and rights is available on the Ross Center website (www.rosscenter.umb.edu).

STUDENT-ATHLETES
As a result of competition schedules, it may be necessary for student-athletes to miss an occasional (or partial) day of class. Faculty are expected to be sensitive to the pressures on students created by competition schedules and to accommodate them in ways that do not disadvantage student-athletes vis-à-vis others in their classes. Aside from absences due to competition, student-athletes are expected to attend all classes. They are also expected to make appropriate arrangements with instructors to make up tests and other assignments missed due to travel.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND BEST WISHES FOR A PRODUCTIVE SEMESTER
Thank you for your cooperation in supporting and adhering to these practices. I know that, collectively, the faculty takes its responsibilities very seriously. I view the requirements for holding office hours, distributing course syllabi, meeting all classes, notifying chairs of planned or unplanned absences, making arrangements for missed classes, administering final examinations during the designated examination period only, and attending Commencement as falling under the “minimum assigned duties” referenced in the faculty collective bargaining agreement. I seek the cooperation of department chairs and deans in ensuring that these duties are fulfilled in all instances.
Syllabi provide important information to students about their courses, our expectations for members of the campus community, and the resources and support services that are available. We ask that faculty provide syllabi to students that are inclusive and accessible. The Health, Wellbeing, and Success section has been updated since August 2021 to bring it up to date with the current COVID-19 situation and guidance. Please update the language in your syllabi.

Below you will find recommended language for two sections of syllabi, accommodations and academic integrity, which are provided to faculty each year by Provost’s and Deans’ offices. Based on the recommendation of faculty, you will find an additional recommended section focused on health-promoting resources and online resources that were expanded during remote operation and that continue to be relevant.

A central focus for our campus is becoming a leading anti-racist and health promoting institution that especially welcomes immigrant-origin students. In this spirit, the recommended template language below includes collaboration with the Restorative Justice Commission and the Immigrant Student Success Initiative.

This document is being provided in Word document format to facilitate copy-pasting the information below into syllabi.

Accommodations
UMass Boston is committed to creating learning environments that are inclusive and accessible. If you have a personal circumstance that will impact your learning and performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible, so we can discuss the best ways to meet your needs and the requirements of the course. If you have a documented disability, or would like guidance about navigating support services, contact the Ross Center for Disability Services by email (ross.center@umb.edu), phone (617-287-7430), or in person (Campus Center, UL Room 211). To receive accommodations, students must be registered with the Ross Center and must request accommodations each semester that they are in attendance at UMass Boston. For more information visit: www.rosscenter.umb.edu. Please note that the Ross Center will provide a letter for your instructor with information about your accommodation only and not about your specific disability.

Academic Integrity and Student Code of Conduct
Education at UMass Boston is sustained by academic integrity. Academic integrity requires that all members of the campus community are honest, trustworthy, responsible, respectful, and fair in academic work at the university. As part of being educated here, students learn, exercise, increase, and uphold academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential within all classrooms, in the many spaces where academic work is carried out by all members of the UMass Boston community, and in our local and global communities where the value of this education fulfills its role as a public good. Students are expected to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, including policies about academic integrity, delineated in the University of Massachusetts Boston Graduate Studies Bulletin, Undergraduate Catalog, and relevant program student handbook(s), linked at www.umb.edu/academics/academic_integrity.
Health, Wellbeing, and Success

The COVID-19 pandemic continues, and all students, faculty, and staff are required to be vaccinated, with limited exceptions. Those who have been granted an exemption to the vaccination requirement must continue to mask indoors on campus. Masks are still required inside University Health Services. Please note that UMass Boston will continue to follow CDC guidelines as they apply to local conditions and our vaccination, booster, and masking policy may change accordingly.

Medical guidance suggests that surgical masks, KN95-type masks, and other multi-layer filtered masks offer more protection against COVID-19 particles than cloth masks. If available to you, you are strongly recommended to use medical-grade masks to better protect yourself, your family, and others from virus particles. Double masking with one of these higher quality masks also provides increased protection. Surgical masks are also available at various campus locations.

To safeguard your own health and safety as well as that of all students, staff, and faculty, you are reminded to follow the campus policies regarding masking, vaccination, daily self-checks, isolation and quarantine guidelines, and other relevant rules regarding public health and safety. The campus policies and the most updated guidelines can be found at https://www.umb.edu/coronavirus/covid_19_university_policy.

Based on the best available data, research, and health guidelines, we believe our safeguards all contribute to reducing the spread of COVID-19 on campus and minimizing the chance of severe symptomatology and hospitalizations. If you test positive for COVID-19, or if you are exposed to COVID-19 and are unvaccinated, you are expected to follow the university’s isolation and quarantine guidelines, and I expect you to inform me if you will be absent for this reason. If you are absent or unable to complete coursework due to following the university’s guidelines, I will provide flexibility to the greatest extent possible. Details are provided for students in such situations and are addressed in this syllabus.

UMass Boston is a vibrant, multi-cultural, and inclusive institution committed to ensuring that all members of our diverse campus community are able to thrive and succeed. The university provides a wide variety of resources to support students’ overall success. As we continue to deal with the evolving impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, these resources are more important than ever.

- Are you in emotional distress? Call 617.287.5690 to speak with a licensed clinician 24/7 who can offer support, crisis recommendations, and assistance with finding resources.
- Have a campus question or issue? Use Here4U in the UMass Boston app or via www.umb.edu/here4U.
- Want advice in navigating a university or life situation? Contact the Dean of Students Office at www.umb.edu/deanofstudents.
- Want to connect with housing and food insecurity support, student life groups and events, or recreation activities? Visit www.umb.edu/life.
- Want to access resources specifically for immigrant-origin, DACA, TPS, and undocumented students? Visit www.umb.edu/immigrant.
- Looking for additional identity-based community support? Find more resources at https://www.umb.edu/all-of-us
- Want to make the most of your academic experience? Visit www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/academic_support.
Unable to attend class on a specific date or participate in an exam or class requirement due to a religious observance? Fill out the excused absence form (requires 2-weeks’ notice) to request religious accommodation at www.umb.edu/religiousabsence.