Dear Faculty,

Testing amidst COVID-19

We are fielding many questions about how to deal with the final exams as we can see the end of this disrupted semester drawing closer. We remain committed to assessing student achievement of learning outcomes, but we remain equally committed to equity and compassion. We've been consulting with our faculty colleagues, and with a number of professional organizations. What follows are the best practices we have been able to derive, as well as some examples from our own faculty.

Principles

- Err on the side of compassion; allow a little extra time; provide make-ups for a missed exams/time slots
- Focus more on learning and less on duplicating past testing practices
- Consider alternative ways that students can demonstrate achievement of their learning outcomes
- Keep your tests transparent and accessible to those with poor internet access

Two articles about assessment:

- https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/03/17/shifting-unexpectedly-remote-instruction-requires-many-human-solutions-tech
- http://sites.ischool.berkeley.edu/remote-teaching/2020/03/14/teaching-during-covid-19-how-to-help-students-cope-with-stress-under-uncertainty-and-make-room-for-compassion-in-the-classroom/

  Dan Ariely did extensive research on why students cheat and he found that reminding students of their ethical commitments before they take a test actually reduced cheating significantly. Here is a link to his Ted Talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_our_buggy_moral_code?language=en

UToledo Faculty Insights:

- Kathy Fisher, who teaches in our math department, says that the first question on her tests asks students to agree to the statement that "I affirm that I am the student named above and that all the work on this test and on the printed pages I submit is my work and my work alone." Others post a code of conduct. Any reminder of their ethical obligation to honesty works.

- Kristi Mock, who teaches Chemistry, is experimenting with a test that focuses on encouraging learning. Here is her explanation: "I am offering 2 days to take a 1-hour timed exam an unlimited number of times. I will take the best score earned. I used Bb to create

multiple instances of questions and I pooled some questions together so they won't always get the exact same question (with a different set of numbers or structure). It was time-consuming to write a test with 300+ questions, but I am hoping that as they retake it, they learn the material." Now that the test has closed, Mock reports that 147 students have taken the test for a total of 1,163 attempts. The scores are averaging about 85 percent, with a range of 56 to 100 percent. This average, she reports, is higher than the usual of about 75 percent. She received an unsolicited email where the student reported that being able to retake the test really helped her learn the material.

- Ali Kilpatrick, who teaches Economics, was relying on the already familiar for her students: "I set it up through the McGraw Hill Connect interface. Students have been using this all semester for their homework. My thoughts are that since they have been using this software all semester for their homework, they should be familiar with it and have access. The exam was originally scheduled for Wednesday. I opened the exam on Wednesday and students have through Saturday to complete it. From the scores I've gotten so far, the distribution seems to be in line with previous exams, although the scores are about half a grade higher."

  Now that the test has closed, however, Kilpatrick has discovered that students who downloaded all of the work during the two-week free trial period at the beginning of the term no longer have access, so she is devising an alternative.

- Jillian Bornak, who teaches Astrophysics, allows extra time and then allows student to earn back a percentage of the points they missed by sending an explanation of how they got the answer wrong and what is the right answer.

Tools for Testing
- Blackboard Learning has a number of tools to assist with creating, administering, tracking, and scoring tests.
- See the links below in Bb Learn to think about which might be most useful for you.
    These two links will help you set up a test in **Respondus** and create study materials for your students:
    - http://utlv.screenstepslive.com/s/faculty/m/Respondus
    - http://utlv.screenstepslive.com/s/faculty/m/55760

And here is an invitation to anyone who wants to participate in some out-of-the box thinking about alternative ways of assessing student learning:

Upcoming Webinar: How can students generate evidence of their learning in a remote world?
For many higher ed teachers and students, remote teaching and learning is a new experience. Even some veterans of hybrid or online course formats struggle with how to switch to remote for specific scenarios. In this online event, *the Association of Authentic, Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEEBL) will discuss how students can generate and show evidence of learning through ePortfolio approaches--even if you don't use an ePortfolio tool*.

Based on some "lightning round" thought prompt presentations to get us started, help us co-

construct a collection of strategies we can use right now:

- How to help students document and reflect on their learning in disciplines that are challenging to accomplish remotely, such as STEM, the arts, or hands-on skills courses

- How to maintain learning equity in a world where some students and even some faculty do not have access to adequate devices, Internet, software or training for successful remote learning

- How to create Universal Design for Learning pathways for students to create and demonstrate evidence of learning in remote settings

Join us on April 16th at 4:00 pm Eastern/1:00 pm Pacific (April 17 at 7 am Eastern Australia). [Register for the AAEEBL Online Event, "How can students generate evidence of their learning in a remote world?"](#)