

December 15, 2020
Winter 2021 Instructional Guidance
Sent to Academic Senate and Academic Federation Members

Dear Colleagues,

As we wrap up fall quarter and prepare for winter quarter's remote instruction, I write to share pedagogical guidance from the Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI). This guidance reaffirms and builds upon previous guidance provided by the Academic Senate and administrative partners (see [May 5](#) and [July 17](#) letters).

The Academic Senate continues to urge that instructors practice flexibility and accommodation during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Students continue to experience increased economic and mental health challenges as a result of the pandemic. We do not want students' educational experiences to contribute to these challenges, and we do not want these challenges to adversely affect students' educational outcomes.

COCI recommends the following items:

1. Instructors should make as much of their course available asynchronously as is practicable.
2. Instructors who base assessments on synchronous activities should provide an alternative assessment for students who are unable to participate synchronously. For example, a participation grade based on contribution to class discussion could be evaluated via students' comments in live discussion or via students' comments posted on a discussion board. Similarly, instructors should avoid attendance or participation-based grading that relies on synchronous participation of students.
3. Instructors should plan ahead for student requests for accommodations. For example, if courses have exams that require synchronous completion, instructors should provide students instructions on how to deal with unexpected issues that affect them (internet outages, computer failure, etc.).
4. Instructors who have synchronous content should clearly indicate in their syllabus the grading implications for students who cannot attend some classes synchronously.

For more context on COCI's recommendations, you may wish to review the Academic Senate's [letter to ASUCD and GSA](#) and associated correspondences, which discuss students' current experiences and the Academic Senate's deliberations on how to improve them. Please continue to visit [Keep Teaching](#) for additional remote instruction and assessment resources.

I wish you all a safe and restful winter break. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Take care,
Richard

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