



**Office of the Provost**

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Colleagues,

I've heard the term *triage* used to describe how we should think about our current situation. The word comes from the French, *trier*, meaning to sort. It commonly refers to grouping patients based on their need for immediate medical attention and the likelihood they'll benefit from treatment. It applies to us in so far as we ought to prioritize what we can accomplish and realize that, for the rest of this semester, we may not achieve all we'd hoped.

On Friday, Joe, Greg, and John from the University Committee and Gary, Tammy, DeAnn, and I met by conference call to discuss temporarily altering the grading scale at UW-Parkside to a pass/fail system. (It's a strength of our campus community that you know these people by their first names only!) Similar discussions are happening across the UW System and beyond as a means to assure anxious students that their professors and institutions empathize with the challenges of shifting from face-to-face to online and alternative instructional modes with only a few days to prepare.

A clear consensus was reached that we should:

1. not change the grading scale;
2. not reduce quality expectations for student work, and;
3. consider, as appropriate, reducing the *quantity* of what is covered and what students are expected to produce.

These recommendations reflect the group's balancing of priorities; that wholesale changes in the way we grade halfway into a course will be too disruptive of expectations; that instructors must signal their expectations that, in spite of the situation, students' best efforts to produce quality work are required; and that reducing the amount of material covered, given the shortened semester, change in modality, and limited time to plan is appropriate.

As always, your expertise and judgement to engage your students, communicate regularly with them, and support their individual needs are critical. They will be even more important and challenging in the coming weeks. Based on what I'm hearing about your efforts and the efforts of staff across UW-Parkside, I believe you're as ready as any faculty and instructional staff in the UW to maintain the quality of our curriculum.

As in any triage situation, let's focus on what is most important. We must engage our students and we need to support you. I hope you'll continue to communicate with any of us in the Provost's Office, and with your deans and department chairs, on whatever you need.

I am so appreciative of your efforts and know we will emerge from this a stronger university.

- Rob

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