Emergency Grading Policy for VCCS Spring 2020 Classes

Dear Students, Faculty, Staff, and Supporters of Virginia’s Community Colleges:

With an eye toward equity and fairness, I am changing the way that we will be grading students who are taking Spring 2020 community college classes that have yet to conclude. This is among many steps we are taking in response to these extraordinary times.

For students of the affected classes, we are instituting a pass/no-pass policy that will allow individual students to seek from their instructors their traditional earned letter grade should they choose. I made this decision after consulting with the presidents of our community colleges and hearing from faculty members and students.

My hope in taking this step is that students will not be disadvantaged on their transcripts by a global pandemic that is beyond their control. Some will face additional challenges in having their courses moved from the classroom to the keyboard. Others will encounter the COVID-19 virus itself, afflicting them, a family member they care for, or even their instructor. This new, flexible policy allows us to respond sensibly as we continue forward through this crisis. In fact, we have even extended the withdraw date to the end of the semester to maximize that flexibility too.

Similarly, by leaving open the option to receive one’s earned letter grade, we are tending to those students who want or need that letter grade for a myriad of reasons. We are sensitive to the many motivations and needs that go into such a decision and want to be helpful to those students as well.

In working with SCHEV, we have come to understand that these grades will not disadvantage any student seeking to transfer to a public university in Virginia and we know that it will not hamper one’s progress in their community college pursuit, or affect one’s financial aid eligibility.

Please note that this emergency grading policy applies only to Spring 2020 courses that have not finished by April 6, 2020. This policy does not apply to spring classes that have already concluded, nor those being offered in future semesters.

There are nuances at each of our 23 institutions in how exactly this policy change will be implemented. I would encourage students to direct questions about it to their college, beginning with their course instructor.

I hope that you are following the social distancing advice and other guidance being offered by public health officials, and that you remain safe and healthy through this pandemic. Our community colleges are dedicated to helping you achieve your academic goals and will continue to find ways to help you do that safely as we all get through this historic moment.

Sincerely,

Glenn DuBois