



Dear Faculty Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 academic year! Welcome back to our returning faculty and thank you for continuing to make this a great place to learn, work and live. And a special welcome to our new faculty. You are joining the Kent State academic family, a community that demonstrates respect, kindness and purpose as we strive to achieve a genuine sense of place and well-being for all our students, as well as our faculty and staff colleagues; it's a community of people who create, innovate and engage in knowledge generation and translation every day.

Each semester, the Office of the Provost sends a *Beginning of the Semester* message to keep you informed of new academic policies and procedures, as well as to remind you of ways to enhance our students' success. Not only will this *Fall 2020 Beginning of the Semester* message do that, it will also provide information about changes to our semester in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I will not go over all changes here, but I encourage you to review all of the information on the [Academic Affairs Response to COVID-19](#) and the [KSU Coronavirus Updates](#) websites now, and to frequently check back throughout the semester so that you are informed of changes that may occur.

On Aug. 14 I sent you an email about [Fall 2020 Faculty Updates and Reminders](#). Please review this email for information about **what to do if you develop symptoms** of, or test positive for the coronavirus, as well as information about **what is expected of faculty** teaching remotely, in person or through hybrid formats. This email also provides links to the policy modifications, recommendations and guidelines developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Please review this [important email](#).**

I also want to remind you of the [Keep on Teaching website](#), a **complete resource for all of your instructional needs**, whether you are teaching in person, online, remotely or in a hybrid

fashion. The [Center for Teaching and Learning](https://www.kent.edu/keeponteaching) has compiled information for you in one place, at <https://www.kent.edu/keeponteaching>. It also includes links to getting technology, updates on Kent State's coronavirus response, and messages that have been sent out through Academic Affairs.

Fall Calendar

As planned, Fall 2020 classes will begin this week, Thursday, Aug. 27.

To minimize student travel away from and back to campus in order to reduce the potential spread of the coronavirus, **Fall Break is canceled**. Fall Break was created to provide an opportunity for students to catch up and take care of themselves, as the stress of the semester tends to peak around midterm time. We know these stresses will still be present, and for many they will be heightened, so we will enhance our student mental health services during this time (see the Step Up and Speak Out Initiative for resources — feel free to include this resource in your syllabus) and throughout the fall semester. Psychological Services counselors and psychologists are offering telepsychology services via phone or video. **If you are concerned about a student, please contact Psychological Services at 330-672-2487** so they can address those concerns. University Health Services' 24-hour Nurse Line is also available outside of business hours at 330-672-2326.

Also to minimize student travel away from and back to campus, thereby reducing the likelihood of spread of the virus, we will **extend the Thanksgiving Break to include the entire week of Nov. 23**. Students who are able will leave campus the weekend prior and not return for the rest of the semester. ***The remaining two weeks of instruction after the Thanksgiving Break will be conducted remotely. Final exams (beginning Dec. 14) will also be conducted remotely. For more dates and deadlines, see the [Academic Calendar](#) and the [University Registrar List of Important Dates](#).***

Be Remote Ready

As mentioned above, all instruction and exams after Thanksgiving will be delivered remotely. Yet, ***all faculty must be prepared to go fully remote at any time***. There may be times throughout the semester when you have to move to remote instruction. For example, your classroom or hallway may need to be closed for a short period of time for cleaning, or you may need to quarantine at home. At any time, the university may need to go to fully remote instruction and services, so we need to be prepared. Also, if you are teaching in person, ***you should be ready to simultaneously deliver instruction remotely***, as there may be times

when some of your students will not be able to attend face-to-face classes. They may be required to quarantine, may be ill or may be uneasy with public spaces.

One Stop for Student Services

Please direct all students with questions regarding financial aid, billing and payment, registration and records (transcripts) to [One Stop for Student Services](#), located on the first floor of University Library (Kent Campus).

Late Course Adds

The [deadline](#) for students to **self-add** into courses is the end (11:59 p.m.) of the seventh calendar day of the semester (prorated deadline for summer or flexibly scheduled courses). For Fall 2020 15-week courses, this deadline is Wednesday, Sept. 2. After the self-add period, the deadline for students to request admission into classes by submitting **a late registration request with instructor approval** is by the end (11:59 p.m.) of the 14th calendar day of the semester (prorated deadline for summer or flexibly scheduled sections). For Fall 2020 15-week courses, this deadline is Wednesday, Sept. 9. ***Please respond immediately to students' requests so they can finalize their schedules.***

Academic Presence Verification (APV) Roster

Faculty are required to indicate whether students have been "academically present" **at least once** for financial aid to be disbursed. Students who have not been verified to be "academically present" are not eligible for financial aid, so this process is critical to our students. "Academically present" means the student has either attended the class or has participated in some form of academic activity **at least once**.

When you record that a student has "Not Started" your course, the NF administrative mark populates on the final grade roster and the student's access to your course through Blackboard is terminated. If you want a student to be able to enter your class after you select "Not Started," you must go back into the APV and select "Not Reported" so that access to Blackboard can be restored. Once the student is academically present at least once, you must change his or her APV status to "Started." Also, please note that the APV roster will include students who have subsequently dropped or withdrawn, even as of the first day of the class. **All students** on the roster must be updated to either "Started" or "Not Started" regardless of their registration status because we have to be accurate about whether the student was academically present at least once, even if the student later drops or withdraws from the course.

Remember, **students will be eligible to receive aid for only those classes in which their academic presence has been verified** so this is a very, very important process. Full instructions on how this works and answers to FAQs are located on the [registrar's website](#).

Midterm Reports

Midterm reports are required for all students in every 15-week 00-, 10- and 20-thousand-level course. The midterm grade roster [opens Week 4 \(Sept. 17\) and closes Week 7 \(Oct. 14\)](#) of the standard term. We know that the earlier you provide feedback to students, the quicker they can adjust their study behavior and attendance so they are successful in your classes. As always, the registrar's office will send notification of the midterm report rosters being open, and our hope is that you will provide students information on their progress as early as possible so our students can be as successful as possible.

For Your Syllabus

As you prepare your syllabi and get ready for your classes to begin, please ensure that your **course materials are accessible and usable for all students**. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (SAS) provides support and recommendations for creating accessible course materials on the [SAS website](#) and in person. Each campus has an SAS office with dedicated professionals who can assist you in making your instruction and materials accessible so that our students receive the resources and support they need to succeed. SAS strongly recommends that all faculty members place the approved accommodation statement on each syllabus:

Kent State University is committed to inclusive and accessible education experiences for all students. University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. Students with disabilities are encouraged to connect with Student Accessibility Services as early as possible to establish accommodations. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic medical conditions, or injuries), please let me know immediately. Student Accessibility Services (SAS) Contact Information: sas@kent.edu, www.kent.edu/sas; phone 330-672-3391; VP 330-968-0490.

Given the unique challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impact on instruction, the Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Committee (ACC) recommends that all instructors include language in their syllabi that clarifies student and instructor expectations concerning the impact of COVID-19 on the instructional process. In particular, the ACC recommends that you address expectations for communication and staying informed; health and safety; intellectual

property and privacy; and absence, illness and remote instruction. Below I provide examples of language suggested by the ACC, but other examples are also provided [here](#).

- **Communication and Staying Informed.**
 - For example, [Sign up for FlashAlerts](#). *Check email and Blackboard announcements daily.*
- **Health and Safety.**
 - For example, [The Flashes Safe Seven Principles](#) have been implemented to protect your health as well as the entire Kent State community. When you are on campus you must follow the [Flashes Safe Seven](#). As your instructor, I am committed to assuring a safe environment for all students. Noncompliance by any student may result in cancellation of the class session for the day and referral to the Office of Student Conduct.
- **Intellectual Property and Privacy**
 - For example, *Intellectual property displayed or distributed to students during this course (including but not limited to PowerPoint presentations, notes, quizzes, examinations) by the professor/lecturer/instructor remains the intellectual property of the professor/lecturer/instructor. This means the student may not distribute, publish or provide such intellectual property to any other person or entity for any reason, commercial or otherwise, without the express written permission of the professor/lecturer/instructor. Additionally, students may not distribute or publish recordings and/or links to live classroom presentations, lectures, and/or class discussions.*
- **Absence, Illness and Remote Instruction**
 - For example, *Class sessions will transition to remote instruction after the Thanksgiving Break. If a temporary or continuing need to transition to remote instruction at any other time in the semester is needed, I will communicate instructions concerning this transition to remote instruction to you via email.*

Please check the [Final Exam Schedule](#) and include accurate information about the **date and time of final exams** in your syllabus. Remember that final exams for Fall 2020 will be delivered remotely. *If you require students to access your exam at a specific time, **it must be during the time that is assigned for your course** to avoid conflicts for students.* Having the dates and times included in the syllabus helps students plan for their final exams schedule.

Student Support

Whenever students are **struggling academically** and need assistance that you are not able to provide, please direct them to the [Academic Success Center](#). The Academic Success Center continues to offer scheduled tutoring, drop-in tutoring, e-tutoring and supplemental instruction

sessions online this semester. Please let your students know they can access support at asc@kent.edu or call 330-672-3190. Feel free to mention this resource on your syllabus.

We know that students may also struggle in nonacademic ways. There are many resources on campus and in the local community to assist and support students who may be in **emotional distress or exhibiting disruptive behavior**. The [Step Up and Speak Out website](#) and mobile app provide helpful information on do's and don'ts of dealing with distressed and disruptive individuals and lists resources that are available 24 hours a day. If you are concerned about a student who you believe may pose a potential threat to self, others or the university, please consult with the Care Team. The Care Team is a cross-divisional crisis management committee that collaboratively assesses and coordinates responses in these situations. Referrals to the **Care Team** may be made by contacting Dr. Amy Quillin (aquillin@kent.edu; 330-672-9494), Student Ombuds. Of course, if a student appears to be an **imminent threat** to self, others or the university, **please call 911**.

During these difficult times, students and their families may also be struggling with access to adequate food and housing. Any students having trouble affording groceries, accessing sufficient amounts of food, or those who do not have safe and reliable places to sleep, should contact the Office of the Dean of Students (330-672-8003) or visit the Kent Cares website www.kent.edu/kent-cares. There might also be a food pantry in the student's local community to help. To find food pantries and shelters, students can search <http://www.feedingamerica.org> and <https://www.shelterlistings.org/>. Feel free to note these resources on your syllabus.

FERPA

[FERPA](#) is a federal law designed, among other things, to protect the privacy of educational records. In light of the provisions of FERPA, please preserve and maintain the privacy of your students and their records. Do not ask students to submit assignments in open mailboxes or in unattended, publicly accessible places (e.g., boxes in hallways, envelopes taped to a door), and do not provide graded assignments for student pickup in public venues. Similarly, do not post grades publicly and do not link students' names and/or ID numbers in conjunction with grades.

Textbook Orders

The Higher Education Opportunity Act requires that course book information be made available to students before they enroll in a course. This means that faculty are required to submit textbook orders to the Kent State University Bookstore prior to the date that students register for courses. If you are NOT requiring a textbook for your course, the bookstore needs to know

that as well. All faculty, therefore, must provide an order, even if it is "no textbook required."
The university bookstore will publish the textbook requirements with the course offerings so that students can plan their finances accordingly.

The date textbook orders are due to the Kent State University Bookstore are as follows:

- For a summer semester course (any part of term) - on or before March 1.
- For a fall semester course (any part of term) - on or before April 1.
- For a spring semester course (any part of term) - on or before Oct. 1.

If you need assistance in ordering your textbooks, see the [FacultyEnlight website](#) or contact Lisa Albers (Kent campus; lalbers1@kent.edu) and Patrick Duff (Regional campuses; pduff@kent.edu). This is also a gentle reminder that you must place your order with the bookstore. Failing to do so can jeopardize some students' abilities to pay for their textbooks with book scholarships which can only be used at the bookstore.

Also, if you are interested in exploring Flash Books (textbook and course materials fee model where students have access to electronic materials on Day 1 of your course) please contact Lisa Albers and Patrick Duff, as noted above. The Flash Books fee model has now saved students \$4,452,810 in the less than two years we have had it available. This is up to \$180 per student per course. If you would like to explore the model further and see how it helps our students, please visit the [Flash Books website](#). All Flash Book adoptions must be finalized by the same textbook adoption dates as above. If you are interested in other resources on alternative low-cost textbook solutions for our students, please visit <https://www.kent.edu/provost/textbook-affordability>.

Here we go! This will be a semester like no other, but I am so confident in our plans, our faculty and students, and in our community that I know we will not simply get through this time, but we will excel during this time. I am confident because of the work you have done to get ready, your commitment to your programs and students, and your generosity in supporting one another.
Thank you!

Sincerely,
Melody Tankersley, Ph.D.
Interim Senior Vice President and Provost

cc: Kent and Regional Deans, Chairs and Directors