

My dear colleagues,

This afternoon we received notice of yet another change to the academic calendar and to our efforts to teach and learn with our students. It is difficult to absorb the impact this may have on our students after we have just begun the transition to remote courses and after the past few weeks have seen such increases in the expansion of the coronavirus and the need to shelter ever more protectively. I write to assure you that we will find our ways through all of this, as we can, and that we will remember what I recommended on March 12 as our commitment to ourselves and our students: "First, take the kind step."

Please be kind to yourselves, your loved ones, and your students as we navigate these surprises. There are good intentions motivating the decisions. As a start, you might decide which parts of your course your students can continue to engage on their own or with limited guidance from you over the coming break (those with sufficient access to assignments and resources such as the internet). And then you might reassure your students that you will continue to support and guide them through the next weeks despite the disruptions to class plans. Finally, I suggest you invite your students to share their feelings and ideas about going forward. Discussion boards, email threads, Slack channels: these are all places for conversation. Ultimately, you will choose what to do. Allowing your students to share their thoughts may help them find purpose and belief in seeing their courses to completion.

Judy Cahn and I will be in touch in the next few days with resources and suggestions. In the meantime, the college's support services continue to function, and we are all responding to emails and other contacts as quickly as we can. Please reach out for what you need.

Warm regards,

Gina

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