



Dear Faculty,

I am writing to inform you of modifications to our protocols and practices for student class absences. These modifications align with guidelines from the [US Centers for Disease Control](#) on how best to limit the spread of infectious diseases, especially with the current concern over the spread of Coronavirus / COVID-19.

Specifically, the CDC recommends that people stay at home if they feel sick, especially if they think they may have an infectious disease. However, the need to stay home may impact a student's class participation, which often has implications for their course grades. In order to avoid contagion of infectious diseases, it is critical that students feel that they can miss one class or a series of classes without penalty.

Beginning March 23 and extending to the end of Spring Semester, May 15, 2020, our campus protocols are as follows:

- Students are encouraged to stay at home if they are sick, and most especially if they think they may have an infectious disease.
- Students who need to miss a class, or series of classes, due to illness or 14-day quarantine are responsible for emailing their course instructor, to let them know of the need, as soon as possible. There is NO need for a medical excuse to be provided, at least initially. MSU University Health Partners will continue their policy of NOT providing students with medical excuse documentation as part of their commitment to maintain patient confidentiality.
- Students are responsible for completing any work that they miss due to absence; including assignments, quizzes, tests and exams.
- Students are responsible for communicating with their instructor(s) via the means established by the instructor(s); e.g., via D2L, email, text, etc.

Students who adhere to these processes should not be penalized per the attendance policy for the course.

Providing regular clear instructions to your students is critical during this time so they understand how you will communicate with them and your expectations of them. I ask that faculty make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for students who cannot come to class due to illness. Suggestions for reasonable accommodations include:

- Providing students an opportunity to join a live lecture via WebEx and/or recording of lectures through WebEx or Techsmith Relay and making those recorded lectures available on D2L (which is a closed platform). Refer to online for support from Academic Technology and Outreach <http://ato.montana.edu/technologies/> and the Center for Faculty

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- Requesting that students who join via WebEx or who watch recorded lectures provide feedback through mandatory discussions, quizzes or essays on the material covered in order to receive credit for attendance and participation.
- Providing make-up exams or tests might be administered through D2L. Guidance for online assessment and testing proctoring methods are available. More information will be provided in a separate communication.

The CDC recommendation applies equally to teaching assistants, who should also stay home if they are sick. Please work directly with your TA(s) to develop a plan for how to manage in the event that they should have to stay home due to illness.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated on this and all the other many efforts that are rolling out campus-wide to prepare the campus for the possible spread of the Coronavirus / COVID-19. More information will be forthcoming about online and hybrid teaching options, and training to bolster our ability to continue teaching and learning while responding to a heightened need for minimizing the spread of disease.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob".

Robert Mokwa
Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs
Montana State University