

March 27, 2020

Dear Notre Dame Students,

I hope this letter finds you, your families, and your friends safe and doing well in the midst of these challenging times. Numerous faculty members have relayed to me stories of your patience, resilience, and good humor as you resumed your classes online this week. I am grateful to you for that as well as for your efforts in many distant locations to maintain the strong sense of community we work so hard to build at Notre Dame.

In the many years I have served as Notre Dame's provost, I have not had the occasion to write to you as a group. I do so today to share with you several important adjustments we are making to respond to the upheaval caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

Earlier today, the University's Academic Council approved several temporary amendments to the academic codes that govern grading for [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) students, and several other temporary adjustments to policies as outlined below. I encourage you to view these measures not as an easing of our academic standards, but instead as an acknowledgement that we are all learning and growing together as a University community in the face of the challenges presented by the coronavirus.

Changes to Undergraduate Student Grading for the Spring 2020 Semester. This semester undergraduate students will have the opportunity to view their final course grades at the end of the semester, and then choose whether to accept their letter grades or elect a pass/no credit option. Those receiving a letter grade of A through D can choose to receive a pass (P); those receiving an F grade can choose to receive a no credit (NC). Pass and no-credit grades will have no effect on a student's grade point average. Undergraduates may make this choice for any or all of their courses. The Registrar will provide in the near future administrative instructions for choosing the pass/no credit option. This grading option does not apply to courses completed prior to spring break.

Temporary Expansion of Leave of Absence Policy for Undergraduates. For the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester, any undergraduate student who withdraws from classes due to a specific COVID-19-related concern will be granted a leave of absence and be allowed to automatically re-enroll in the fall. The leave is subject to the approval of the dean of the student's primary degree-seeking college or school, or the dean's designee. The student must return to the degree program by the first class day of the Fall 2020 semester. Post-baccalaureate students should refer to their college or school for leave policies specific to their degree program.

Changes to Graduate Student Grading for the Spring 2020 Semester. Graduate students, after viewing their final grades, can choose to accept their letter grades or choose a pass/no credit option. Those receiving a letter grade of A through C can choose to receive a pass (P); those receiving a letter grade C- through F can choose to receive a no credit (NC). Pass and no-credit grades will have no effect on a student's grade point average. Graduate students may make this choice for any or all of their courses. The Registrar will provide in the near future administrative instructions for choosing the pass/no credit option.

The Law School, Mendoza College of Business, and School of Architecture will soon articulate their own policies for professional students.

Flexible Deadlines for Thesis and Dissertation Defenses. While the conferral date for graduate degrees will remain May 16, the deadlines for defense of theses and dissertations will be extended from March 30 for defense and April 6 for submission, to **April 20** for defense and **April 27** for submission.

Even though we are separated by physical distance during this unusual semester, please know that the faculty, staff, and I will continue to do all we can to deliver a high quality distance education, and to make those adjustments to various policies, procedures, and deadlines that are necessary because of the many challenges facing us in this unique moment in Notre Dame's history.

Each of you and your families hold a special place in our hearts and prayers. Best wishes for a successful spring semester.

Yours in Notre Dame,



Thomas G. Burish
Charles and Jill Fischer Provost

cc: Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.
Laura A. Carlson, Vice President, Associate Provost, and Dean of the Graduate School
(The Rev.) Hugh R. Page, Jr., Vice President and Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs