Faculty Guidelines for Online Learning
Effective 3/18/2020
Version 1.0

The following recommendations and guidelines will be critical for ensuring effective teaching and learning during this period of online instruction. Please use these as a baseline expectation from which you might receive additional college/school-specific guidance from your Dean.

Online Course Preparation
1. **As much as possible, course content should be moved online.**
   Course content will be available online and to students remotely beginning Monday, March 23rd.   In the rare exceptions when this is not possible, please coordinate with your Dean/Department Chair to develop alternative plans. The current plan is to resume in-person course delivery beginning Monday, April 6th but this is an evolving situation and is subject to change.

   Note: For courses with more than 50 students, please plan on those courses being online through the remainder of the semester.
2. **Focus on the most important learning goals for sessions moving online.**
   These are extraordinary times and not everything planned at the beginning of the semester will be able to transition easily online. Identify the key learning goals for sessions moving online and the fewest essential technology tools that can facilitate the transition. There is no need to learn or to introduce new software and often simple tools (e.g., email, Zoom) can help maintain learning in your class.
3. **Create and communicate revised syllabus for weeks taught online.**
   As you make plans for online class sessions and any modifications to assignments or grading, all changes should be communicated to students in writing through a revised syllabus either via email or Canvas. Please indicate the date of any syllabus changes next to the syllabus emended item(s). These efforts will help reduce student confusion and/or grade appeals later in the semester.

Course Materials
1. **Be mindful of access to learning materials.**
   Students may not have been able to bring all of the necessary course materials home. Please see if your textbook publisher is providing digital copies as a result of this nationwide disruption. Please help students avoid additional textbook costs.

Schedule/Attendance
1. **Reset course expectations for students.**
   After creating a plan, reset course expectations for students including deadlines, class participation expectations, and plans (modality, frequency) for communication (see "Communication" section below for more specifics). Please also consider that current circumstances will impact students' ability to meet your expectations such as illness, technology limitations, time zones, or other legitimate reasons. These adapted expectations need to be communicated not only in the syllabus but also in Zoom sessions and emails.

2. **Synchronous online class sessions should be held during class times.**
   Synchronous online class sessions are where the instructor and students are all online at the same time through a tool such as Zoom. Such synchronous "live" sessions should be conducted during the

regularly scheduled class time to avoid conflicts with students' other classes and confusion that can occur with people in different time zones. Predictability will aid teaching and learning. As we test out the bandwidth for synchronous teaching campus-wide using Zoom, please consider a back-up plan to communicate with students via email and/or Canvas.

We strongly encourage you to understand and offer lenience for students who may not be able to participate during the scheduled time (e.g., students in significantly different time zones).

3. **Provide latitude to students, particularly during the first two weeks, before using the administrative form to drop students for no participation.**
   During the first week of online learning, you should monitor attendance and follow up with students to promote engagement. Additionally, the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success will monitor attendance and promote engagement.

   Submission of administrative drop forms will require documentation from you to demonstrate attempted contacts with students as well as approval from Department Chair/Dean. Such documentation will include, but not be limited to, timing and number of emails sent, types of communications sent to the class as a group via email and Canvas, etc. Final approvals will be the responsibility of the Registrar, in coordination with the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success.

4. **The Caring Community Connections (CCC) Program provides support to students who are experiencing challenges by identifying and linking them to appropriate resources.**
   If students do not engage with you or their assigned class group members for an extended period of time (more than a week) please consider completing a CCC form indicating a concern about attendance in your course.

Communication

1. **Communicate early and often with students.**
   Let students know that you are working on class materials and will keep them regularly updated. Not only will frequent communication help ease the anxiety and uncertainty they are feeling, but communication will smooth the transition by letting students know the details and expectations for their learning to continue. You can begin this communication during spring break, prior to classes returning on Monday.

2. **Establish communications expectations.**
   Let students know what communication channels you will use to contact them, how frequently you will do so, and how quickly you will respond to messages. Each instructor can and should set the communication pattern that works for them; the key is to communicate what students can expect from you. You should continue to hold office hours (e.g., via e-mail), as established in your course syllabus, as one engagement strategy.

3. **Consider accommodations for students with disabilities.**
   As you make modifications to the class and any assignments, keep in mind any students in your class who may need accommodations and how changes may impact these students. As much as possible, please try to rely on existing accommodation processes while also being understanding of the need to be creative and flexible when helping students with accommodation needs. Library

staff (see below for more on library support) will also be onsite to provide scanned learning materials for students with accessibility needs.

4. **Extend modifications to assignments or due dates equitably across all students.**
   If you make exceptions for some students in your class, consider making equitable options for all students. Some students are more accustomed to advocating for themselves than others, so what you learn in making modifications for one student may help others as well.

5. **Support students in seeking out resources.**
   You might have students who are experiencing food and/or housing insecurity and the need for support beyond their academic learning. Offer reminders to your classes of the resources they have at SMU. All students seeking help can fill out a CCC form to maintain privacy. For students living locally, they can reach out to the following:
   Caring Community Connections
   Counseling Services
   The Shop

Grading/Assignments

1. **Attempt to adhere to existing grading policy.**
   You are encouraged to adhere to a course's posted grading policy where possible. OIT and CTE are available to provide support, as needed, for required modifications in Canvas.

2. **Communicate any grade changes.**
   Any grade changes are required to be communicated (via e-mail/Canvas) to students through a revised syllabus.

3. **Pass/Fail.**
   We recognize that the transition to online learning will impact the pass/fail process. We are working to develop clear guidance and anticipate additional information prior to the transition to online learning on March 23rd.

4. **Grade Book.**
   Maintain an active gradebook that students can see in Canvas or identify a way to communicate grades on work produced remotely.

Course Evaluations

1. **Course evaluations will remain an important feedback mechanism.**
   We will proceed with course evaluations for this term. However, we are considering how this data might impact faculty affairs (e.g. promotion/tenure, annual reviews) and will provide additional guidance before the distribution of evaluations for the spring 2020 term.

Library

1. **Library services will remain available online to support online learning.**
   SMU Libraries' physical locations will be closed for onsite use. Librarians in Bridwell, Business, DeGolyer, Fondren, Hamon Arts, and Underwood Libraries will be available online during regular working hours to support faculty, staff, and students in their teaching, learning, and research needs. Unless conditions change, essential staff will be onsite to perform core duties to ensure electronic access to resources and services.

2. **Circulation of physical materials and delivery of print materials transitioning to digital where possible.**
We will try to obtain electronic versions of needed articles, books, book chapters, textbooks, and course adoption texts that you can share with your students or use for your own research. Make your requests via Interlibrary Loan (https://www.smu.edu/libraries/services/ill). Note: Any book requests that cannot be filled electronically will be held in a queue until libraries are able to lend again.

   Requests for access to items in special collections and archives can be submitted through Ask Us (https://www.smu.edu/libraries/fondren/ask).

   All due dates for materials currently on loan will be extended to June 1, 2020. Fines and fees will be suspended until the same date.

If you need any assistance preparing for online learning, we encourage you to call the help desk at 214-768-4357 or to submit a help desk ticket through e-mail at help@smu.edu and they will route it to the appropriate support team member in OIT, CTE, or SMU Libraries.