

Good afternoon, all. I hope each of you is well.

Several updates for a Friday afternoon.

1. **Harris County is offering free health care for those affected by coronavirus.** I mentioned this in Update #4 (way back on March 12), but it may be more urgent for some now than it was then. Here's a link to some health care resources: <http://www.stcl.edu/uncategorized/coronavirus-call-center-for-residents-without-access-to-healthcare/>.
2. **Graduating students, please complete the Commencement Survey by Tuesday.** So far, we have more than 200 responses. Thank you for sharing your opinions!
3. **Please see the attached Q&A regarding how the law school will implement the Credit / No Credit Grading Policy for this semester.** Thank you to everyone who reached out to me this week with questions; the faculty and I have tried to address all of them here. Your questions and your suggestions were invaluable in shaping this final document, and you will find many of your recommendations included.

As I mentioned last week, there are very few easy answers this semester, and the information available to us is constantly evolving. We know -- and regret -- that no approach will satisfy everyone. Throughout this spring, we have been guided by the principles of fairness, opportunity, diversity, community, excellence, and justice that make South Texas strong. And, none of these decisions is taken -- or made -- lightly. For instance, several faculty members and I spent many hours over the past week drafting the procedures that will implement the Grading Policy. Another group of faculty spent several hours drafting procedures for final exams. That led to the creation of the attached Q&A and another Q&A relating to Final Exams (see item 4, below). Then, the entire faculty met for another 2 1/2 hours (at our now-weekly faculty meeting) this morning finalizing everything.

I continue to thank you for your patience and your understanding as we all work through these issues.

4. **We are finalizing the Q&A answering all of the questions we have received regarding Final Exams, which will be forwarded to everyone by Monday.**
5. **I will hold a Community Zoom gathering next week.** Now that we have upgraded to the site license for Zoom, I have a new resource: the ability to host a large community gathering! I have been wanting to do this, and now we can test it out. Watch for more details!
6. **As always, please send emails to president@stcl.edu with any questions that we can answer.**

7. Several notes for next week:

- We will circulate information regarding the CARES Act -- and the opportunities it offers for students who have student loans.
- We will send an update on financial aid and other opportunities for students who find themselves with unexpected financial emergencies.
- We will provide updates on the steps that South Texas is taking to assist students with internships, externships, clerkships, and employment.
- We will provide more information on new summer course offerings and registration. (Our plan is that summer courses will be offered on campus, assuming health and safety, and city and state ordinances, permit it.)

Wrapping up for today...

For many in our community, this week is particularly meaningful. In the Jewish tradition, sundown on Wednesday began Passover, the commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt. For Christians, today is Good Friday, a day of sorrow that is replaced, on Sunday, with the celebration of the defeat of death and sin at Easter. While these celebrations are very different, one thing that unites them (as well as many celebrations in several other faith traditions, as well) is a confident hope in a better future.

Whether you subscribe to these faiths or not, we all can benefit from that confident hope. I expect that a sense of hope in a better future is what brings many of us to South Texas. Hope in the power of education to open doors of opportunity that otherwise would be bolted shut. Hope in the strength of the law to bring relief and redress to those who are without power. Hope in our community of support and encouragement, which allows -- even expects -- each of us to become better versions of ourselves.

When faced with an invisible foe like the coronavirus, with economic challenges that seem insurmountable, and with disruptions that upend our expectations, we can give in to the negative thoughts and actions; in fact, at times, that may seem easier.

But, challenging times are when the virtue of hope takes on renewed importance. Now, to be fair, hope asks more of us. It expects us to act to bring about the future we want. It calls on us to think about other people and how we can be of service to them.

That hope, however, also gives us power over our lives and our situation. While things may be disrupted now, we will -- soon enough -- be back on campus and resuming our daily activities. I can't say exactly when. But, I live in hope. I am confident that our South Texas community, together, will persevere!

My best to you and your families, this week and every week. Happy Passover and Happy Easter!

And, until that day when we are back on campus, be well and be safe.

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