COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and Planning for Completion of the Academic Term

Communication from the Executive Committee of Senate
6 May 2020

The *Senate Policy on Academic Implications of Disruptions or Cessations of University Business Due to Labour Disputes or Other Causes* (the Disruptions Policy) remains in force because of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on academic activities at the University. The Senate Executive Committee continues to monitor the impact of the disruption, and work collectively with the Provost and Vice-President Academic to respond to emerging matters.

With the Summer 2020 session commencing imminently, and planning underway for the FW 2020-2021 session, the Senate Executive Committee has authorized additional temporary changes to policies and practices, and endorsed a set of planning principles to govern Fall 2020 courses.

Temporary Additions to the Core Information <u>Required</u> on Undergraduate and Graduate Course Outlines:

For all Summer 2020 undergraduate and graduate courses and all Fall 2020 undergraduate and graduate courses that will have an online proctored examination, the following paragraph:

"This course requires the use of online proctoring for examinations. The instructor may use an online proctoring service to deliver the exam(s), which would be administered through the Learning Management System (e.g. Moodle, Canvas, etc.). Students are required to have access to minimum technology requirements to complete examinations. If an online proctoring service is used, students will need to become familiar with it at least five days before exam(s). For technology requirements, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and details about the online proctoring service visit – [*link to be added*]. Students are required to share any IT accommodation needs with the instructor as soon as they are able."

For all Summer 2020 undergraduate and graduate courses, the following information:

"Several platforms will be used in this course (e.g., Moodle, Canvas, Zoom, etc.) through which students will interact with the course materials, the course director / TA, as well as with one another. Please review the syllabus to determine how the class meets (in whole or in part), and how office hours and presentations will be conducted.

Students shall note the following:

- Zoom is hosted on servers in the U.S. This includes recordings done through Zoom.
- If you have privacy concerns about your data, provide only your first name or a nickname when you join a session.
- The system is configured in a way that all participants are automatically notified when a session is being recorded. In other words, a session cannot be recorded without you knowing about it.

Technology requirements and FAQs for Moodle can be found here - http://www.yorku.ca/moodle/students/faq/index.html"

Temporary Addition of a New Language Proficiency Testing Model for Admission to Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the closure of language testing centres around the world. To provide a reliable alternative for international students and the University, Senate Executive has authorized the following:

- For the **FW 2020-2021 session only**, the addition of the **Duolingo English Language Placement test** to be used to meet the language requirements for students who cannot access the currently accepted language tests; and

- the requirement that direct entry students have a **Duolingo score of 115**. Students entering York through a bridge program must have a Duolingo score that aligns with the program's required IELTS or TOEFL score, and will undergo additional assessment from York to confirm that written and verbal submissions meet institutional standards.

Principles to Guide Fall 2020 Graduate and Undergraduate Course Planning

The governing principles of the Senate Disruptions policy are: *Academic Integrity*, *Fairness to Students*, and *Timely Information*. In a disruption, the primary obligations the policy assigns to Senate are to ensure the academic integrity of all programs and to maintain high quality instruction and supervisory support to students. Remedies and alternative courses of action to preserve academic continuity in a disruption shall preserve the University's academic standards, while also balancing both the need for fairness to students in keeping with the circumstances created by the disruption, and students' need for timely information about the status of academic activities.

In the context of meeting the requirements of the Disruptions policy, a set of guiding principles has been articulated to aid Faculties', units' and course instructors' planning for the Fall 2020 term amid the current uncertainties about the status of campus operations and health regulations that will be place in the Fall. The guidelines are premised on preparing for online / remote delivery of both undergraduate and graduate courses while preserving flexibility to adjust to holding in-person components in small groups in courses where online delivery cannot satisfactorily replicate those components (e.g., small graduate classes, labs, studios).

The guiding principles for Fall undergraduate and graduate course planning are:

Prioritizing Health and Safety: All instructors should be ready to deliver undergraduate and graduate courses remotely / online to the fullest extent possible as long as needed to protect the health and safety of all students enrolled in the course, as well as those with whom they may interact on or off campus, including instructors themselves. In order to maintain the likely social distancing restrictions, and given the limited availability of large classrooms, course planning will need to assume that it will not be possible anytime this Fall to bring groups larger than 50 together in a single room (and our ability to accommodate groups of up to 50 would depend on a space assessment to ensure we could do so safely within any continued social distancing requirements).

Focusing on Student Learning Outcomes: The expectations for courses rest with student learning outcomes (SLOs) and academic standards for achieving those SLOs as established by instructors. In the case of a disruption, it is often the case that the SLOs previously involving a hands-on learning component can be met with innovative online or other remote activities. However if there is no obvious means by which to achieve SLOs without at least some in-person learning activities, and/or if an instructor has a proposal for an optional in-person component, they should complete the "In-person Component Template" and submit it to their Department Chair/Director or Dean's Office as appropriate. Proposals will be reviewed to determine whether they can be implemented in a manner consistent with evolving emergency restrictions and whether

they can be accommodated safely within space and other constraints of our campuses. Proposals should include clear contingency plans to complete the entire course remotely/online if necessary for health and safety reasons, or to defer to a specified future time any elements which the instructor has determined can only be completed in person. Deans / Principal Offices will communicate timelines and any other guidelines for submitting proposals.

NOTE: The recommended group size for hands-on learning components is no more than 25 at a time in order to maximize utilization of different-size classrooms for different purposes; Faculties may consider on an exceptional basis if it is possible to accommodate proposals involving groups between 25 and 50.

Prioritizing Access to Campus Spaces: It will likely be necessary with social distancing requirements to ration space bookings for on-campus learning activities this Fall. First priority will be given to experiential activities that require access to labs, studios or other physical facilities, and that cannot be replaced or delivered via alternate means while still meeting SLOs and protecting students' ability to progress in their programs. Assuming these requirements are met, Faculties will have flexibility to determine other priorities for allocating any remaining space based on safety considerations and the needs of different programs and cohorts of students, with the goal of maximizing the overall quality of student learning experiences.

Equity in Accommodating Student Circumstances: Course delivery should be planned with sufficient flexibility to provide equitable access for all enrolled undergraduate and graduate students to achieve SLOs. Instructors should take into account the needs of students in different geographic locations and time zones (e.g., by providing asynchronous access to course materials and activities with technological support from Faculties where it is appropriate and reasonable to do so), as well as accommodation needs related to health, family status or disabilities as per existing University policies. It should be clear to students at the start of a course if it includes a required in-person or synchronous learning component to meet the SLOs and what flexibility they will have for completing that component during Fall20 or F/W 20-21 for 6 credit courses. In the case of courses that start online/remotely with an optional in-person component, students should be provided with reasonable alternative access to the learning activities offered in that in-person component.

Scheduling Courses to Enable Progression: Programs, especially those with significant international student enrolments, will need to plan Fall offerings with a view towards ensuring that students whose arrival to campus is delayed, or who have limited ability to participate in remote/online learning, will have viable pathways to start the program in January and to progress in a timely and pedagogically responsible way. Where courses scheduled for Fall or Fall/Winter cannot be completed remotely, efforts will be made to push the course or selected course elements to the Winter or Winter/Summer. This may involve scheduling changes for instructors.

Alison Macpherson
Chair of Senate
6 May 2020