

**Subject:** RESENDING Message from the Provost re pass/fail policy  
**Date:** Friday, March 20, 2020 at 4:27:38 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** UofL Update,Service Account  
**To:** UofL Update,Service Account  
**Attachments:** Pass Fail Policy for Spring 2020 (002).pdf, Study Habits during COVID 19.pdf, Faculty Evaluations for Spring 2020.pdf

Dear Colleagues,

I sent the forwarded letter to students a few minutes ago with two attachments: the pass/fail policy **for this semester only** and a guide to studying during COVID-19.

I know the pass/fail policy will be a surprise to some of you. Most of our peer institutions have gone to a more lenient pass/fail policy for this semester in acknowledgement that remote teaching and learning, not to mention social isolation, is hard, and our students are facing extraordinary unexpected challenges, not only with online learning, but with living expenses, job losses, children out of school and at home, at-risk parents and adults at home, and many more personal roadblocks. Given that, many of our students are afraid to stay in classes for fear of ruining a GPA in the online environment. We hope a P/F option may encourage many of them to stay in classes and finish the semester.

Some students don't believe me when I say that UofL's faculty will bend over backwards this semester to ensure their success; I know from a long history here that our faculty are kind and compassionate and that you will do your best to help students succeed. Students don't want to anger or annoy you by taking your class pass/fail; I have assured them that you will not be biased against them if they choose to take your course pass/fail. The policy, like most of those across the nation, overrides program policies regarding pass/fail to allow students to change their grade option until the last day of classes; it also allows students to opt for pass/fail for as many classes as they want **for this semester only**. I know some of you will be opposed to this policy, particularly as it overrides some program requirements, but the deans, the associate deans, and the XC of the Faculty Senate, as well as student government, are all on board.

I am calling this the semester with an asterisk: it truly is an extraordinary semester, one which requires many fairly quick policy changes and decisions that don't always allow for broad university input or our sometimes slow shared governance processes. But remember: these changes recognize that circumstances this semester are exceptional and require us to put an asterisk by Spring 2020. They are not permanent.

Just as I am asking grace from you toward your students (and OK, maybe toward me and the other administrators who are dealing with issues as best and as quickly as we can!), I want to extend grace to you. I know that while you are trying your best in the new online environment, like our students, you may be worried that your best will not be as good as it normally is. While we will still give students the opportunity to evaluate you this term, we are giving you the option to NOT include the evaluations from this semester in any annual review, any future tenure or promotion review, or any future periodic career review. Spring 2020 will forever have an asterisk by it in terms of teaching evaluations if you choose not to include them.

And while this applies to fewer faculty, I will be sending a letter to the deans for all probationary faculty, reminding them of Redbook 4.2.2 C, which is our policy for extending the probationary period. Any probationary faculty member who has not reached the end of their fifth year on the tenure track can request a one-year extension for an extenuating circumstance. I believe the coronavirus crisis qualifies as such. One caveat: the policy allows for only two extensions during the probationary period so faculty who have already received two may not ask for a third (I know of no one in this situation, but that doesn't mean there is no

one).

I appreciate your patience as we are asking a great deal of all of our faculty, staff, and students—and sending an awful lot of notes too. My hope is that we soon will have addressed most of the major policy questions and that things will settle down into the new normal for the “asterisk” semester. I ask that you take the time to read the letter to students below, and work with them with compassion and care so they can finish their semester in this extraordinary moment in our institution’s history.

Thank you again for all you do to ensure our students’ success.

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**From:** UofL Update,Service Account <[ulupdate@louisville.edu](mailto:ulupdate@louisville.edu)>

**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2020 12:39 PM

**To:** UofL Update,Service Account <[ulupdate@louisville.edu](mailto:ulupdate@louisville.edu)>

**Subject:** From the Provost: New pass/fail policy and other resources for students

Students,

I know that some of you are nervous about the online environment. As I said in a previous note, many of your instructors are worried, too. Like you, they didn’t choose remote delivery of classes, and I have asked them to do their best, knowing they won’t be perfect. I am asking the same of you. Success might mean something different this semester than it would in a “normal” semester: it might mean not giving up when you are tempted to; it might mean finishing all of the courses you signed up for without stressing about grades; it might mean practicing social distancing to keep yourself and others safe and healthy; it might mean finding out that you are stronger than you thought.

To help you take on the challenges of this semester, effective immediately, **all undergraduate and graduate students will be permitted to convert any of their courses to pass/fail grading.** All courses for which you receive passing (P) grades will count toward degree requirements, which overrides some program and college policies. At the undergraduate level, all grades of D- or better for which you elect the pass/fail grade will convert to a P; at the graduate level, all grades of C- or better will convert to a P. Pass grades do not impact GPA, but an F will be calculated into your GPA. The entire policy is attached to this email and will be posted to our COVID-19 website: please check it out for details and talk with your advisor or faculty mentor before making a decision if you have concerns. We are not currently processing requests for withdraws from courses, or from the university, that were submitted after the beginning of spring break; we want you to try to meet the challenge of this semester and to not give up. You can pass your courses, earn credits toward your degree, and not fall behind without a negative impact to your GPA. Since it is already too late to receive any refunds, we will wait until the last week of the semester to process requests to withdraw.

We are doing our best to help you finish the semester strong under stressful conditions. In addition to the pass/fail policy, I am attaching a Guide to Adjusting Study Habits during COVID-19: <http://louisville.edu/delphi/-/files/Adjusting-Your-Study-Habits-During-COVID.pdf>. The last page offers resources UofL is providing to help you: technical support for Blackboard, the virtual Writing Center and online REACH tutoring services, and Microsoft Teams for staying connected to your classmates, your instructors and your friends during social distancing.

Additionally, the Counseling Center is taking phone calls and counseling by phone, and Campus Health is open (but please call first). Charter will offer **free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days** to college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription for students who need access to wifi (<https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more>). Please utilize these resources and others that will help you succeed.

When my son was in first grade, I baked a cake to celebrate the day he came home sobbing with a less than perfect grade. I wanted him to learn what I hope you will learn this semester: success is doing your best, not being perfect. Do your best to trust that your faculty are on your side and will help you succeed; do your best to meet your deadlines and to ask for help when you need it; do your best to be kind, patient and compassionate toward others, since we are all struggling this semester; do your best to roll with the punches and finish the courses you started. Finally, do your best to take care of yourself. We want you here. We are fighting for your success.

Best,

Beth

Beth A. Boehm, PhD  
Executive Vice President and University Provost