

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CURRICULAR ADJUSTMENTS DURING THE SPRING 2021 SEMESTER DUE TO THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Approved by the Faculty Senate - December 1, 2020

WHEREAS,

The 2020/2021 Academic year has been severely impacted by the historic COVID-19 pandemic;

The unpredictable trajectory of community infection rates results in health, social, economic, and emotional hardship for everyone in the university community;

The Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters have been condensed to eliminate breaks in an attempt to discourage travel in order to decrease the risk of coronavirus infection of students, faculty and staff;

Elimination of breaks and condensation of curricula have added to the stress levels of students and faculty who have faced personal and professional hardships due to the pandemic;

There is a need to provide a mechanism whereby faculty can model the prioritization of self-care and be responsive to the mental health needs of the students in their classrooms;

The Faculty retain their right to academic freedom to teach their courses according to their expertise and to the professional standards of each discipline;

BE IT RESOLVED that that the Faculty of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln suggests instructors may consider curricular adjustments to Spring 2021 courses in recognition of the need to cope with the impacts of the pandemic. The following guidelines are encouraged to promote pandemic coping mechanisms to benefit the university community.

Instructors may temporarily reduce or redistribute the academic workload for their courses to allow for periods of less intense course requirements during the Spring 2021 semester at their own discretion;

Possible curricular adjustments may include one or some combination of the following recommended accommodations:

- Up to four “Reading Days” interspersed throughout the semester to encourage course reading, for asynchronous assignments, for group discussion, or for creative assignments and project work, etc.
- A week-long “Test Holiday” (recommend the week of March 15-19 after the Midterm) when class meets but no major quizzes or projects are due.
- Increasing quiz or test retake or grade replacement opportunities.
- Other activities at the discretion of the instructor.

Instructors may opt out of participating, especially for courses that may be required for certifications, for laboratory courses, or for sequential courses when curricular adjustments would negatively impact student preparation for their disciplinary major. Any curricular adjustments made to promote self-care should be identified as such in the syllabus to assist students in identifying adjusted workload. A coordinated effort across

departments or colleges is not recommended in order to discourage student travel. Instructors are encouraged to continually promote the use of wellness resources available to the university community as communicated by Student Health Center and Administration. Finally, curricular adjustments for the Spring 2021 semester may not reduce the instructional hours for any course, as these are required for institutional credentialing and accreditation.