

Dear Students,

With three weeks of remote learning under our belts, I want to congratulate all of you for the exceptional job you've done in making this unexpected transition in your spring semester. I am in awe of your flexibility and determination in the face of all the changes that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to our community. Many of you have reached out about what is working and not working for you, and be assured your faculty and staff are making every effort to address your concerns to make this a successful semester for you.

We recognize that the stress on you and your family is unprecedented during this time, and we are committed to working with you individually to ensure your success. Your professors will continue to be flexible in the way content, assignments and assessments are delivered, and will be accommodating of your circumstances. Faculty and staff are committed to work with anyone who needs extra help.

One of the concerns we've heard from students is about the impact this transition may have on their GPA. We have already made a number of adjustments that we hope will address this concern:

- We extended the withdrawal deadline for Spring 2020 courses.
- We are extending the incomplete and in-progress deadline to the end of the Spring 2021 semester.
- We will defer Academic Suspension for Spring 2020.

Some of you have asked about a pass/fail grading option for the Spring 2020 semester to alleviate concerns about the impact of remote learning. After lengthy discussion among our senior leadership team, and thoughtful consideration of input from higher education professionals outside Franklin Pierce (including other institutions, and the guiding bodies of financial aid professionals and registrars), we have made the decision not to go to a pass/fail option.

We believe students need letter grades for many reasons, including:

- Financial aid eligibility
- GPA needed to maintain a scholarship
- Academic success programs
- Eligibility for Honors Societies or Latin Honors
- Desire to make the Dean's Honors list
- Accreditation restrictions in major of study (e.g. Education)
- Athletic team eligibility (though this is being relaxed during this semester at least)
- Coursework that is a prerequisite or corequisite for another course
- Coursework that requires a particular grade to move forward in a program
- Re-taking a course the student previously failed
- Planning to transfer to another college/university

- Planning to apply to graduate or professional program/school

Although less visible to students, there are also significant institutional hurdles to offering pass/fail grading options. For example, we would need to develop a consistent and equitable pass/fail policy, and our student administrative system (Jenzabar) does not allow easy conversion of a student grading scheme to pass/fail.

We appreciate your understanding of the reasons that the pass/fail option is not the best for students at Franklin Pierce. We will do everything we can to minimize the impact of the pandemic on you and your academic efforts. Please know that we will continue to make decisions with your input where possible, and always with the best interests of our students foremost in mind.

Stay safe and be well,

Dr. David Starrett
Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs