

Dear Students,

We are a week into the revised semester and our remote course delivery. We hope that the restart of your courses is going well. The faculty, administration and the support staff at Franklin Pierce are all committed to your success. We understand that challenges will arise and that at times frustration will set in and that you may feel confused, uncertain, anxious, stressed and worried. This is normal and we want you to know that we are all here to assist you. Please keep in mind that just as it was with your face-to-face courses, your success relies on good communication with your faculty when you need help.

Learning online can be challenging, especially if it is new to you, but there are positives and many strategies and resources to help you learn well online. Instructors will vary in how they approach “remote teaching,” our term for delivering classes over the web. For some of you, classes are not going to be limited to set times of the day or week. Many classes have changed format so that you can access the lectures and materials more on your schedule. You may be stressed because not all of your remote classes will be the same and you will have to navigate the differences. We faculty know that and like clarity and certainty too, so whether we meet at a fixed (synchronous) or flexible (asynchronous) time, we will continue to work to make sure meeting times, assignments, and expectations are clear. You will know exactly what will happen and when, just like in your face-to-courses. And if you are ever unsure, contact your instructor immediately.

Classes are likely to have changed so that the format of tests and assignments varies. If your class would normally have had a lot of multiple-choice exams, it may now have more discussion boards and short essay assignments that give you better (and less stressful) ways to interact with the material and show what you know. Going remote can also allow you even more interaction with your classmates. That’s because a course on a learning management system (LMS), such as Canvas, has technological bells and whistles that give you more ways to learn than an in-person lecture does.

There may be some bumps in the road. While many of you have not taken online classes, many faculty have not taught online either. Our commitment to your education is motivating us to hustle and get our courses online even if we have never taught online before. Even with very hard work, going online still takes time and what faculty have been asked to do on short notice is unique. Teaching remotely is a crucial safety feature to reduce exposure to COVID-19, and it is the best way to deliver your courses and continue your progress without shutting down or delaying your graduation. It is an instant response to an emergent health crisis and is being set up quickly. We are using the many best practices for online teaching to guide your remote learning. Be patient with yourself and with your faculty. We are all working hard to get up to speed and may just need some extra time. We want to do the best job for you that we can, and we will get it all figured out. Remember we all need to be patient and understanding as we adjust to this situation.

How can you best prepare? GET TECHY. If you have never taken a class online before, you will have to get familiar with how it works. We are creating resources for you. Here is a resource you can reference in [CANVAS](#). This will give you basic technology savviness—AND some great tips for learning online as well. Tech savvy, after all, isn't everything.

Now that we are delivering courses in an online format, a lot more of the responsibility is in YOUR HANDS. You have to make sure you find the time to log in for each of your courses. You have to be more attentive to day-to-day requirements and changes. You now have readings, assignments, and discussions for multiple courses with no in-person time when the instructor will remind you of what is due and when. And you have to participate to make the classes work.

PLAN WELL. Create a schedule for the next few weeks, blocking out when you will work on which class. Yes, this is a good thing to do in general, but now it becomes a critical need to stay sane and on top of it all.

TAKE NOTES. While 98 percent of students take notes while in face-to-face classes, few take notes in online classes. If all your classes are online, you may think you have a lot of extra time or that you can take a break from note-taking. Bad idea. Even if your remote teaching instructor does not do synchronous lectures, take notes on the recorded lectures and your reading assignments. Notes keep you focused and help you learn.

ATTEND to your mental and physical health. By now you know to keep your distance, wash your hands often, and not touch your face, but social distancing is a poor choice of terminology. Keep physical distance but play UP your social ties. Talk to, text, and message your friends and family. Keep in touch. Reconnect. Social support is one of the biggest psychological predictors of health. If you need information or emotional support, prioritize getting it. Make special time for friends and ensure you get physical activity. This is also the time to sleep more. Eating well, sleeping more, and talking to friends are all factors that will make your body stronger at fending off infection and speed up your recovery if you do get sick.

REACH OUT if you need help. Communication with faculty about their particular courses is always best. Key services such as the [CAE](#) (for tutoring), your Faculty and Academic advisor, [Counseling and Outreach Education](#), [Dean of Students](#), [Residence Life](#), the [Registrar](#) for course information and registration concerns, [SFS](#) for billing and financial aid, and your College Deans ([CLASS](#), [CHNS](#), [COB](#)) are making sure they can deliver their services remotely as well. They can be your first stop for support as you navigate this new experience. These offices will have many things available, just in different formats.

The Faculty at FPU, as you know, are committed to their teaching and we know you love going to a physical class and interacting with your classmates in real life. The energy that arises from the learning process is palpable. Teaching in this new format can have a lot of that too. Students can do as well in online classes as they do in person—sometimes better. That is good to know. It is still a hard transition the first time and we haven't had much time to make it. Teaching face-to-face is not the same as remote teaching, but we all should be open to doing things in new ways.

The faculty and staff at Franklin Pierce know how stressful this can be for you. Do not hesitate to reach out to us. Together we will punch through this pandemic.

Sincerely,

The Office of Academic Affairs

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