

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome “back” from what I hope was a restful and at least somewhat restorative Thanksgiving break. This past week was certainly one for counting even small moments of good fortune near the end of what has been a truly bizarre and disorienting year.

Here in the final week of classes, I’d like to offer a few updates, reminders, and sneak peaks of what’s to come. They include:

- Revealing Hidden Labor Workshop
- Wrapping Up Fall 2020: Grading
 - Final Grades
 - Balancing Flexibility with Learning Outcomes
- Engaging Students during Winter Break
 - Co-Curricular Engagement
 - Front Row @ Drake
- Virtual Global Engagement Grants
- Coming Soon from Faculty Success

Revealing Hidden Labor

Faculty routinely take on responsibilities, large and small, that do not fit neatly into prescribed categories and which are under- or unrepresented in guidelines for periodic performance evaluations and tenure-and-promotion review. Faculty from groups traditionally marginalized or who work with students from those groups are especially vulnerable to having their “hidden labor” undervalued.

On December 9, 2020, at noon, I’ll be hosting a 1-hour workshop called “Revealing Hidden Labor.” In this session, we will discuss ways faculty can make “hidden” labor more visible in the way they represent their work and accomplishments in the materials they put forward for review. While doing so is no substitute for systemic change in the way we value such labor and measure its impact, revealing hidden work is one step toward earning appropriate recognition and raising awareness among senior colleagues and administrators about where the gaps in our evaluation and reward structures are.

An approximately twenty-minute presentation will precede period for Q&A and discussion. The session will not be recorded, but a narrated PowerPoint summarizing main points of the discussion will be available on the Development Archives menu of the [CTE website](#).

Please pre-register, using your Drake email address, at [this link](#) by noon on Tuesday, December 8th. Registrants will receive an invitation and link to this Teams meeting on Wednesday morning.

Wrapping Up Fall 2020: Grading

Final Grades are due on Wednesday, December 16th, at 10:00 am. Because the office of the registrar and deans' office have only two and a half days to finalize planning and decision-making based on students' grades, it's especially important this year that we submit all of our grades on time. Doing so is as much a service to our colleagues as to our students.

Flexibility and Outcomes: One of the stressors faculty face at this time a year—and particularly in this particular year—is balancing the need to provide flexibility to students, on the one hand, with the professional obligation to evaluate student work fairly and consistently according to the standards of our classes and disciplines. It's easy to conflate these two demands, which may seem in competition with one another.

It's perfectly appropriate to entertain requests for Incompletes or to offer alternative assignments and extensions that, in past semesters, we might not have considered valid, especially if doing so will advance our students' learning or give them the best opportunity to demonstrate that they have met our course objectives.

At the same time, if Isaac Newton were a professor, he would have created a "Law of Conservation of Flexibility": The more flexibility we offer to our students, the more we constrain ourselves: Additional teaching, grading, and student engagement over the break may be manageable up to a point, but try to be realistic as you imagine what your future self can accomplish in terms of following up with students in the coming months as you make arrangements with them to complete outstanding work.

As we consider ways of providing flexibility to our students, I think we need to keep those allowances separate from expecting less of them in terms of their learning. While I'm not in favor of a customer-service model of higher education, if there's one thing our students are paying for, it's learning opportunities. When we draw back from encouraging them to achieve the outcomes customary in our programs or disciplines or courses, we do them no favors.

We will each find our own ways of achieving this balance. This reminder comes to encourage everyone to think carefully about the allowances they extend and the standards for student performance they find important.

Engaging Students over Winter Break

Students have opportunities to stay in touch with Drake and connected to the community even during the seven-week hiatus before we reconvene in the Spring.

Co-Curricular Engagement opportunities give students ways of building on their learning and engagement from the fall and bridging the gap to the spring semester. Please encourage your students and advisees to check them out [here](#).

Front Row Thursday is a program of Thursday-evening multi-platform virtual events that will run through January. Students, faculty, and staff are welcome to join these events, which will

include performances, discussions, talks, athletics programming, and the like, to stay connected to the Drake community throughout the break. Everyone is invited to propose an event for inclusion in the series. More information is available at [this link](#).

Virtual Global Engagement Grants

Small grants will soon become available from Drake International to support providing virtual global engagement opportunities to our students. Keep an eye out for the next *OnCampus*, where details will appear.

Coming Soon from Faculty Success

Please remain on the look-out for news from the office of Faculty Success, including calls for Levitt Teacher and Mentor Award nominations and information about grant requests for academic year 2020-2021, including Student Assistantship grants. Information will arrive via email and in *OnCampus*.

Finally...

It's been a long, challenging, exhausting, and disorienting semester. Next semester is likely to be much the same, although, hopefully, our experience of Fall 2021 will have provided somewhat more clarity and predictability. Even though it probably goes without saying, please do your best to find opportunities, however small or infrequent, to decompress and reflect, to let your mind wander, to experience wonder unadulterated by worry, and to rest. Soon enough, we will all need to begin drawing from whatever stores of resilience, patience, and energy we can build up for ourselves now.

As always, if you have questions or if there are ways the CTE can support your needs, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best wishes,

Craig

Craig N. Owens
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