



January 5, 2024

Dear Faculty Members and University Instructors,

I hope you had a peaceful and restful Christmas and New Year's break, and are refreshed at the beginning of a new year and a new semester.

With this new semester quickly approaching on Monday, January 8, 2024, there are several important issues that I want to bring to your attention.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is central to the teaching and research missions of the University, both understood in their broadest terms: educating the whole person and pursuing the truth in all of its forms. Our need to maintain academic integrity is all the more important during this semester, since many of our students are spread throughout the country and may be tempted to use different methods to complete their assignments and examinations.

Instructors are obliged to familiarize themselves with [University policies and procedures](#) regarding academic integrity. It is also important to be proactive in educating students about academic integrity. Best practices include:

1. Use the distribution of the syllabus as an opportunity to discuss academic integrity within the context of the course and the discipline/field. Explain why it is important as a member of the academic community. This concept is even more important for graduate students who are becoming intentional members of that community; expectations are higher for that reason.

2. When possible, include professional codes of ethics, case studies, and/or discussion questions to prompt student thinking beyond mere consequences and sanctions. Stressing integrity over dishonesty puts the proper constructive context on the discussion.

3. As the first "major" graded assignment nears - paper, report, design, midterm, etc. - revisit this discussion and acknowledge the increased pressure compared to the start of the semester. Situations like these are the decision points, and there are resources to help students make the best decision; the first and most important resource is the instructor. Asking questions is the best way to avoid suffering sanctions. There are other resources, including the [Center for Academic and Career Success](#) and the [Writing Center](#).

Attendance and Academic Performance Surveys

There is a strong correlation between attendance and student success. As such, instructors are asked to review their attendance policies during the first class. Instructors of first-year undergraduate students must take attendance. All instructors will receive surveys soliciting information about student attendance and academic performance via [Cardinal Success](#). I ask you to please complete these surveys promptly. Concerns about students can also be reported at any time to the [Center for Academic and Career Success](#) or by issuing an alert through [Cardinal Success](#).

Class Rosters – Students attending who are not registered

All instructors are responsible for checking class rosters on Cardinal Station regularly through the end of the drop/add period, which is Friday, January 19, 2024.

For the Columbus School of Law, the last day to add or drop a class is Tuesday, January 16, 2024.

Do not permit a student who is not registered to attend class. All students must be properly registered. If a student who is not on your class roster attends your class, you may allow her or him to remain for that class period only; however, please tell the student that you will not permit further attendance until her or his name appears on the official class roster and communicate clearly so that the student does not think that you are resolving the situation for him or her.

If the student is unsure what to do, direct her or him to the [Center for Academic and Career Success](#) or to the appropriate dean's office.

Class Rosters – Students registered and on the roster who are not attending

Please inform the [Center for Academic and Career Success](#) if undergraduate students on your rosters are not attending class. The [Center for Academic and Career Success](#) and the dean of your school will follow up to determine the status of these students.

Classroom Setups

Please make sure that at the end of each class meeting, the classroom is set up as it is displayed on the floor plan posted on the back of the classroom door or near the door.

It is understandable that instructors will want to change the seating arrangements at times, but the rooms need to be reset with the desks/tables back in place at the end of the class.

Facilities has no more than 2 people working in each building overnight and with limited time to get all the regular tasks done, the Facilities teams cannot keep putting furniture back in place as it affects the time the staff has to clean the rest of the building.

Course Syllabi

Course syllabi are required. Each syllabus should incorporate specific goals for student learning and how these will be assessed. You can find guidelines for University Syllabi at <http://pir.cua.edu/course-syllabi/course-syllabi.cfm>.

While academic units can modify the template to fit their accreditation or regulatory mandates, instructors should use the modification provided to them by their academic unit. Syllabi must be uploaded to the Syllabus Manager before the first class meeting (see <https://secure.cua.edu/syllabi/login.cfm>). There are no exceptions to this requirement. Please be aware as you write your syllabus that final exams, if required, must be administered on the day and time assigned by the Registrar during the final examination period.

Please visit the Center for Teaching Excellence website for the particulars in building a Blackboard syllabus. The virtual presentation on building a Blackboard syllabus [can be found here](#).

Instructional Continuity and Contingency Planning

The spring semester often brings with it the possibility of delayed openings or emergency closings due to inclement weather, as well as the increased chance for illness and subsequent absences from courses.

As part of our constant efforts to maintain instructional continuity, I ask that you continue to include in your course syllabi the following or similar contingency language:

1. “In the event that the University as a whole, or this class in particular, must shift to entirely online course delivery, the following adjustments will be made to the mode of instruction, assignments, and assessments for that specified time period...”

Note: Your syllabus should include how you will handle these situations that impact the whole class. If online instruction will be used, Zoom links should be available in advance.

2. “Students may still be required to quarantine due to close contact or to isolate them at times over the course of the semester due to a number of health reasons, including COVID, RSV, or other illness. In these cases where students are told by Student Health and/or the Dean of Students that they cannot attend class in person, students need to have access to course materials. In this case, the following adjustments will be made to the mode of instruction, assignments, and assessments for students who are required to not attend in person...”

Note: Your syllabus should clearly specify whether access is hybrid participation, recording of the class, or make-up class participation. If hybrid participation is the option specified, provide Zoom links in advance.

3. In other rare circumstances, students may make requests for alternative class participation arrangements for a limited time period related to their personal health, family emergency, or extraordinary circumstance. In such a case, students may request to have access to course materials in place of in person attendance only for these circumstances. All of these arrangements are at the exclusive discretion of the instructor.

Note: You should specify what conditions (if any) are acceptable to request alternative participation. For example, health issues other than COVID, family emergencies, etc. You should also make clear what access they will allow for students (hybrid, Zoom recording, make up class, etc.).

Remote Lab Access

Catholic University provides access to technology resources intended to be used by students as a component to their academic progress.

In addition to the in-person use of desktop computers located in campus computer labs, classrooms, dedicated spaces and library facilities, the University provides students with remote-friendly access to both specific applications and to individual desktop environments.

The remote lab access website is

<https://technology.catholic.edu/programs/labremoteaccess/>, and I encourage you to share this link with your students, so that they can take advantage of this access and find which type of access is most useful to them.

Textbook Mandates – Higher Education Opportunity Act

In order to ensure we are in compliance with U.S. Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) and Middle States accreditation requirements, we are obligated to *“disclose, on the institution’s Internet course schedule and in a manner of the institution’s choosing, the International Standard Book Number and retail price information of required and recommended college textbooks and supplemental materials for each course listed in the institution’s course schedule used for pre registration and registration purposes.”*

To ensure compliance with HEOA mandates, there is functionality in the Campus Solutions Student Administration system (Cardinal Students) that will allow us to include textbook information as part of the class maintenance table for each course section. This information will be displayed on the schedule of classes in Cardinal Station Self-Service to students and faculty. The textbook and pricing data are populated by an interface with the bookstore ordering system. It is therefore imperative that your textbook information is completed accurately so that the ISBN and price information in Cardinal Students is updated and available to students as they register for courses.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

The Center for Teaching Excellence

The [Center for Teaching Excellence](#) (CTE) is committed to assisting all full and part-time faculty members in fostering an environment in which students are given a robust teaching, advising, and mentoring experience within a world-class research context. The Center continues to provide [individual consultations](#), feedback on syllabi, course design, and instructional coaching, and will be sponsoring workshops and orientations throughout the academic year.

What may be of particular interest to you at the beginning of this semester are the many [virtual presentations](#) and numerous [resources](#) gathered and developed by the CTE team.. When building or revising courses, the [Quality Review Program](#) is a comprehensive tool that provides guidance in creating in person, online, and hybrid courses that meet standards based on carefully researched best practices in teaching and learning.

For instructors teaching online, CTE has developed a training program called '[How to Teach Online](#)', which can be accessed using the university's new Brightspace platform. Anyone currently teaching online or planning to do so in the future can take this self paced online training, in addition to reaching out to the CTE team for any additional assistance.

To support the university's transition to Brightspace in Fall 2024, the Center is planning numerous training sessions throughout the spring semester, so I encourage you to bookmark the [Center for Teaching Excellence](#) website as a favorite place on your web browser.

University Libraries

Please reach out to your [liaison librarian](#) to schedule a meeting to discuss library resources and services that you need for instruction and research. Your librarian can even provide a personalized tour of the library.

Using Open Education Resources (OER) in your curriculum can improve the success of students. The library's catalog includes links to texts from two large collections, the Open Textbook Library and LibreTexts. To see what is available in your subject area and consider it as a complement to or replacement for a required text, simply add the keywords "libretexts" or "open textbook library" to your search.

Last semester Special Collections hosted a half dozen classes from various disciplines in the Archives and Rare Books reading rooms. Faculty and instructors are encouraged to include the university's primary research materials from these collections in their curriculum and should contact lib-archives@cua.edu if interested. Additionally, a reminder that later this month the annual audit of borrowed museum items on campus will begin, and full cooperation by borrowers will be greatly appreciated and facilitate completion.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Patronal Feast of Saint Thomas Aquinas

The University Mass celebrating the patronal feast of Saint Thomas Aquinas is scheduled for Thursday, January 25, 2024 in the Great Upper Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The Mass is scheduled to begin with the faculty and administration procession at 12:00 p.m.

No classes will be held that day between 11:50 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

We will again be holding the faculty luncheon after the patronal Mass. Please be on the lookout in your email for a more formal invitation to this luncheon in the coming days.

University Research Day

I want to take the occasion of this letter to remind you that University Research Day (URD) will be held on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. The event has proven to be a great success since its inception in 2016, and I encourage you to review the presentations from [Research Day 2023](#) and [Research Day 2022](#) to “whet your appetite” for this year’s event!

Since this year’s research day is a little more than three months away, I strongly encourage faculty to work with students on ways in which they can prepare to participate in URD’s panels, poster sessions, and interactive research demonstrations. I also want to emphasize that URD is not limited to student presentations, and faculty members are encouraged to share their research with the University community on April 17.

The Research Day Planning Committee sent out a Call for Abstracts in November and again in December, and set the submission deadline as Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at 5:00 pm. The committee has also posted guidelines, helpful hints, and abstract examples on the [abstract submission page](#).

For more information, please contact URD co-chairs Christopher Raub (raubc@cua.edu) or Gregory Miller (millergj@cua.edu).

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY CALENDAR REMINDERS

Monday, January 8: Opening of classes in the spring 2023 semester.

Monday, January 15: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday - The University is closed.

Friday, January 19: Last Day to register or add regular session courses for credit, and the last day to drop regular session courses without record.

Friday, January 19: March for Life - No classes between 11:00 a.m. and 3:10 p.m.

Tuesday, January 23: 5:00 p.m. Deadline to [Submit Abstracts](#) for University Research Day

Thursday, January 25: Patronal Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas University Mass - No classes between 11:50 a.m. and 3:10 p.m.

Wednesday, February 14: Ash Wednesday

Monday, February 19 - Friday, February 23: Faculty submit interim grades for undergraduates in Cardinal Students

Tuesday, February 20: Administrative Monday - Classes follow a Monday schedule this day; Tuesday classes do not meet

Friday, February 23: Midterm

**Courses in the Columbus School of Law are following the [school-specific calendar for the spring 2024 semester](#).

A FINAL REFLECTION

Today the Catholic Church in the United States celebrates the memorial of Saint John Neumann (1811–1860), the fourth bishop of Philadelphia and the only male citizen of the United States to be named a saint.

Originally born in Bohemia, Neumann immigrated to the United States in 1836, was ordained a priest for the Diocese of New York in 1836 and ministered in the Buffalo area. He later joined the Redemptorists in 1840 and became a full member of the order

in 1842, serving in Ohio, New York, and Maryland. He was naturalized as a United States citizen in 1848, and was appointed bishop of Philadelphia in 1852.

During his eight years as bishop, Neumann presided over a diocese that was building new churches on average once a month. He became the first bishop in the United States to organize a school system at a diocesan level, increasing the number of schools from one at the start of his tenure to 200 when he died in 1860 at the age of 48. Neumann was also a champion of the immigrant communities in his diocese, especially the German and Italian national parishes in the greater Philadelphia area.

From his personal diary comes a prayer that I found poignant, and I hope his words could become the model for all of us in our ministry as educators:

*"In whatever distress you may be,
I beg you to let me know.
And I will help you,
according to my ability."*

Thank you for your attention to these issues and events. I wish you and your students every success during the upcoming semester.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Dominguez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Aaron Dominguez, Ph.D.
Provost

Office of the Provost

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