

October 5, 2024

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
PROGRAM DIRECTORS
COLLEGE PROVOSTS

Re: Clarifying Instructional Guidance During Potential Campus Disruptions Next Week

Dear Colleagues,

During the 2023-2024 academic year, we experienced unprecedented events that challenged instructional delivery and continuity. Despite these challenges, faculty and students alike demonstrated resilience in providing quality instruction during times of uncertainty, even as they navigated conflicting messages from the Senate and Administration.¹ As we begin the new academic year, we want to learn from these experiences to minimize confusion and maximize clarity in how faculty can best deliver their courses if we face another campus closure or experience restricted campus access.

As the chairs of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and Graduate Council (GC), our goal this year is to avoid such issues by clarifying process and articulating our understanding of purview.

Campus Closures, Class Cancellations, and Restricted Access: Any decisions regarding campus closures, class cancellations, or restricted campus access are the sole purview of the Administration. They are responsible for making such determinations and communicating those decisions to the campus community. In cases of restricted access, this would include locking classrooms, laboratories, or buildings and communicating those decisions to faculty.

Instructional Modality and Faculty Guidance: Decisions about instructional modality in response to a campus closure or restricted access fall within the purview of CEP and GC.² While a campus closure may necessitate a shift to emergency remote instruction, it is important to remember that this transition is not automatic for all courses, nor is it always feasible based on course type (e.g., labs or studio courses). The Senate, via CEP and GC, provides oversight and guidance on instructional modalities, ensuring academic rigor is maintained while respecting faculty autonomy to the extent possible.

Moving forward, we anticipate that Administration will continue consulting with CEP and GC on matters of teaching modality as part of the decision-making process for campus closures or restricted access, especially with respect to campus-wide communications.

As we know, the future is uncertain, and the possibility of challenging times ahead is unsettling. As chairs of CEP and GC, our role is to uphold the processes that enable faculty to teach courses confidently, even during tough times. We recognize that many of you have already received messaging about potential events next week. For instance, students have publicly announced

¹ CEP and GC's May 20, 2024 [Memo](#); Chancellor/EVC [Memo](#), May 20, 2024

² Santa Cruz Regulations [13.8.5](#) and [13.22.4](#)

two rallies on various online platforms (October 7 and October 8). While we do not know how these events will impact access to campus, Senate leadership, including CEP and GC chairs, have made clear their intentions to work preemptively with the Administration regarding instructional continuity and modalities should campus access become limited or there is a campus closure. Such collaboration would allow the Senate to offer immediate guidance. Additionally, we are aware that some deans and chairs have already communicated with faculty regarding possible interruptions next week, and we appreciate proactive efforts to ensure instructional continuity. We encourage others to do the same by pointing faculty to, for instance, relevant campus policies³ and pedagogical resources.⁴

Finally, we want to highlight that *we consider emergency remote instruction a rare modality*, reserved for situations where in-person instruction is not possible due to natural disasters, health crises, infrastructure failures, security threats, weather-related emergencies, or other hazardous events that require campus closures/limited access. At the same time, we recognize some course types (e.g., laboratories, studio and field study courses) may not be readily transferable to remote instruction without significant impact on student learning and their ability to meet course learning outcomes. In such cases, we encourage chairs, directors, and provosts to collaborate with faculty directly on best pedagogical practices. We understand remote instruction, even when campus is closed or access is restricted, is not always practical.

CEP and GC value the feedback you have provided, both formally and informally, following last year's disruptions. Your insights have been invaluable as we frame our work for the upcoming year and develop a shared understanding of Senate purview. We acknowledge the complexities you face in providing quality instruction amid uncertainty, and we are committed to ensuring that the Senate supports your work by providing clear guidance and advocating for faculty interests.

Sincerely,



Tanner WouldGo, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy



Chad Saltikov, Chair
Graduate Council

cc: Cynthia Larive, Chancellor
Lori Kletzer, Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
Jody Greene, Associate Campus Provost
Department Managers
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Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Dean, Arts Division
Alexander Wolf, Dean, Baskin School of Engineering
Jasmine Alinder, Dean, Division of Humanities
Bryan Gaensler, Dean, Physical & Biological Sciences
Katharyne Mitchell, Dean, Division of Social Sciences
Richard Hughey, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education and Global Engagement

³Relevant campus policies: [Demonstrations and Protests, Learn, INTERIM Conduct Regulations \(Provisional; under Senate review\)](#)

⁴Teaching and Learning Center, "[Unplanned Events](#)"

Peter Biehl, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
Matthew McCarthy, Chair, Academic Senate
Melissa Caldwell, Vice Chair, Academic Senate
Raphe Kudela, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget
Amanda Rysling, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction
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