

Concluding Fall 2020

A Message from the Provost

Dear faculty, advisors and instructors,

I hope you all had a safe, restful and enjoyable Thanksgiving weekend. It is hard to believe that we are stepping into December and will soon be heading to a winter break. A semester that felt like it was going to be long and drawn out ironically is moving by so quickly. I am grateful to all of you for your hard work, creativity, and resilience that has helped UAF to continue with its high-quality academic offerings, intensive research activities, and many services to internal and external stakeholders.

There are some important reminders and academic policy adaptations to keep in mind as we step into the last phase of the fall 2020 academic semester.

Academic calendar and final exams

UAF is following its normal academic calendar and is maintaining its schedule for all finals, including in-person exams. There may be exceptions in some rural community campuses due to regional needs. Faculty in our rural community campuses should communicate with their students and provide them specific guidance on any changes regarding their classes or final exams.

Disruptions from travel

As students return to campus after the Thanksgiving break, some will need to practise strict social distancing as they wait for their COVID-19 test results. Some may be in quarantine, and others may be facing other difficulties that make it difficult for them to start with their in-person classes. Some students may need additional time to complete assignments, and others may need to take their final exam remotely. Anticipating COVID-19 and travel-related disruptions, I urge faculty and instructors to be as flexible as possible in accommodating student needs.

Appeals for late withdrawals

The administration is also being mindful and flexible in approving appeals for late withdrawals. Faculty and students should check out the information on how to [appeal for a late withdrawal](#) and use this [PDF of the appeals form](#) for submission. Some things to keep in mind for late withdrawals:

- Withdrawals can impact a student's financial aid. In particular, international students, student athletes and students receiving VA funding should not appeal to withdraw from their class without first checking on how it will impact their eligibility and funding.
- If a student is diagnosed with COVID-19 and cannot complete the course, it is reasonable to allow an incomplete for that reason.
- If a student has COVID-19-related issues that have made it difficult for the student to make adequate progress in the course, then a late withdrawal may serve the student better than an incomplete. Academic difficulties related to COVID-19 may be considered as a reason for an appeal for late withdrawal.

Resources for students

For students who continue to struggle and are in need of counseling, please direct them to UAF [Student Health and Counseling Center resources](#). Please remind them that

- the Student Health and Counseling Center is providing telehealth services via SecureVideo. You can call 907-474-7043 to schedule an appointment.
- the UAF community mental health clinic has graduate-level counseling students providing counseling services. They are accepting new clients for 50-minute counseling sessions once a week until Dec. 4, 2020, and from Jan. 11-April 26, 2021. The fees are negotiable and range from free to \$10 depending on client needs. For more information, can contact Director Valerie Gifford at vmgifford@alaska.edu or 474-1999.
- students can always reach out to the [Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) for a variety of support at uaf-studentrights@alaska.edu or 474-7317.