

# BOWDOIN COLLEGE

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND DEAN FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

## MEMORANDUM

To: The Faculty

From: Jen Scanlon, Senior Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs  
Elizabeth Pritchard, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs  
Dallas Denery, Associate Dean for Curriculum  
Dharni Vasudevan, Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Inclusion

Date: August 15, 2022

Subject: **Start of Fall 2022 Semester Notes and Reminders**

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Welcome to Bowdoin's 221<sup>st</sup> academic year and the Fall 2022 semester! We hope your summer was restorative, both personally and professionally, and that you are looking forward to the start of the fall semester. We write with updated guidance for a successful year and to remind you that [all of us in the Office of the Dean for Academic Affairs](#) are available to support you in your work.

## Resetting Expectations for Our Students

As we continue to navigate the effects of the ongoing pandemic and to extract lessons from our experiences of teaching and supporting students during challenging times, we strongly encourage you to *balance accountability and flexibility* in your teaching. The emerging consensus is that students do best when provided with structure and clarity of expectations. This allows them to plan their semester and juggle competing claims on their time. At the same time, all of us have firsthand experience with unexpected events, emergencies, and illnesses that have upended our best-laid plans. In these cases, all of us need responsiveness and flexibility. For the sake of equity as well as your own well-being, *it is best to be explicit and upfront about expectations of students and limited provisions for flexibility on your course syllabus. Please be sure to hold students accountable.*

## Important Reminders

- **Attendance:** This semester, we will continue to provide in-person teaching and engagement and have no expectation that faculty will provide hybrid or remote teaching. Be explicit in your expectations for student attendance. If a student is not in class, they should be considered absent; see below for all COVID exceptions. **Please do not honor student requests to Zoom into class for reasons other than required COVID isolation.**
- **Deadlines:** Please specify on your course syllabi all due dates and any built-in flexibility that you might allow, and hold students accountable to your stated expectations. You might explain that due dates are not arbitrary but rather scheduled to foster students' ability to make steady progress toward learning goals. If you choose to offer flexibility around deadlines, remember that flexibility should be transparent, consistent, and equitable. If your syllabus states, for example, that you allow each student to use up to two deadline extensions over the semester,

hold to this. For related resources, please log in to your [Canvas](#) Dashboard and visit “Teaching at Bowdoin: Intentional Course Design” (especially Module 3.2).

- **Comment Cards are a critical means by which we support our students.** Please use Comment Cards to alert the student, their advisor, and their dean when you have concerns such as a student’s repeated absence or difficulty completing course requirements. Often, a student who is having trouble meeting deadlines or expectations in one course may be having trouble in other courses and other areas of their life. Additionally, if a student performs poorly or fails a course, it is difficult to have a productive conversation with the student if there were no Comment Cards over the course of the semester. The Comment Card is an effective way to make sure that students who need additional assistance receive it. We also encourage the use of Comment Cards to celebrate a student’s success. Find information and instructions on using Comment Cards on the [Comment Card webpage](#).
- **Communication.** We support you in being both caring and direct with your students. If you find it difficult to manage student requests for additional flexibility beyond your stated expectations, perhaps because of a cultural shift in student expectations during the pandemic, please reach out to associate dean Dharni Vasudevan and/or director of the Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching (BCLT) Katie Byrnes to brainstorm approaches.

## Fall 2022 COVID Guidance

We are a residential college devoted to in-person teaching and learning. Although we continue to live with COVID, we emphasize the primacy of in-person teaching and learning. Please refer to the [College’s COVID-19 website](#) for the most up-to-date guidance on College policies. Below are guidelines specific to classroom practice and teaching, which are not necessarily on the COVID website.

The option to audit courses at Bowdoin continues to be on hold. No auditors are allowed to attend classes for the Fall 2022 semester.

*If you are not well enough to teach due to COVID or otherwise, you should tend to your health. You may cancel your classes or ask a colleague to step in for a class session. As is our normal practice (see p. 2 of the [Faculty Handbook](#)), those faculty who find it necessary to be absent from the classroom for more than an equivalent of one week of any one course during a semester should consult with their chair for guidance and support and receive approval from the Dean for Academic Affairs. However, if you are in COVID-isolation but feel well, you may shift temporarily to teaching online for the duration of your isolation/recovery. *Be sure to keep your chair informed of any online teaching.**

Similarly, *students are expected to attend all classes in person*, unless they are sick or are in a required COVID-isolation period. Students who test positive for COVID are instructed to inform their instructors and ask how they can make up missed assignments. Students should visit the [Resources for Students webpage](#) to receive instructions on what to do if they are COVID positive. As always, please work with students who must be absent to find ways for them to catch up on course content they have missed. This can include all those strategies we have relied on in pre-pandemic times: self-guided work, additional assignments, individual meetings, and so on. You also are welcome – but not expected – to rely on any of the approaches you developed during our period of online teaching. A few methods that worked well in the past include:

- Low tech solutions, such as simply suggesting that students obtain notes from classmates and

- meet with you during office hours;
- Sharing already-recorded videos of your lectures;
- Using simplified hybrid methods such as “laptop buddies” (enlisting a student to help an absent student connect to class via a laptop, so this burden does not fall repeatedly on the instructor).

The particulars of your arrangement with a student in this situation are up to you, with the goal of maintaining your own wellbeing and helping the student stay on track.

Ultimately, instructors have authority to determine the best method for accommodating students making up missed classes. We want to be clear: duplicative instruction is not expected. Indeed, we recognize that the in-person class experience – the core of our educational model – cannot simply be replaced by other methods, and students are expected to return to the classroom as soon as they are healthy enough to do so. If you are concerned about a student’s extended absence due to COVID, you may either send a Comment Card or contact the student’s dean. If a student remains sick beyond the five-day required COVID-isolation period, please consult with the student’s dean.

For students who miss class for reasons other than COVID, our pre-pandemic practices apply (offer self-guided work, additional assignments, individual meetings, etc.). *Again, faculty are not obliged to provide online/hybrid instruction.*

## Standard Policies and Practices

College policies and practices for instruction, can be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#) Section V, on the [Teaching and Advising webpage](#), in the [Academic Calendar](#), and in the [Bowdoin College Catalogue and Academic Handbook](#).

### Scheduling Meetings and Events

The [Fall 2022 Time Blocks](#) include two Friday blocks when no classes are scheduled: a meeting block (Fridays 2:20-3:20 PM) and a Common Hour (Fridays 3:30-4:50 PM). Currently, there are no campus-wide Common Hour events planned for the fall semester, but any such events will be publicized via email and the Digest.

Faculty Meetings will take place at the usual Monday late afternoon time, monthly. Additional faculty forums may be scheduled and announced by the Governance and Faculty Affairs Committee (GFA). The schedule of faculty meetings and reserved forum dates can be found [on the Academic Affairs website](#). Agendas and materials for faculty meetings will be announced via email on the Friday before each meeting.

### Start of Semester Dates

Please refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) and the [Registrar’s Calendar](#) for a comprehensive view of dates and deadlines, but here is a summary of opening events:

August 23	New Student Arrival Day
August 29, 7:45-8:45 AM	Breakfast Meeting for Pre-Major Advisors
August 30, 3:30 PM	Convocation
August 31	First Day of Classes
September 12, 4:25-5:55 PM	First Faculty Meeting

## Religious Holidays

As members of a multicultural community, our students come from a variety of religious backgrounds and may wish to observe important religious holidays. While it is not feasible to schedule coursework around all religious holidays for a class as a whole, faculty members should honor requests from individual students to reschedule assignments and to be absent from classes that conflict with their observance of major religious holidays.

No student is required to take an examination or fulfill other scheduled course requirements on recognized religious holidays. Instructors are encouraged to avoid scheduling examinations on recognized major religious holidays. *Please remind students to declare their intention to observe religious holidays at the beginning of the semester.* Please note that Jewish holidays require the cessation of work for the entire day, not simply during the time when services are held. Please also note that the entirety of Ramadan falls within the spring semester (March 22-April 21, 2023); be especially mindful of Muslim students who observe this month by fasting each day, from sunrise to sunset.

The Religious Holiday Policy and a list of major religious holidays and policies can be found on the [Academic Calendar](#) (scroll down to the bottom). Questions about religious accommodations can be directed to the [Rachel Lord Center for Religious and Spiritual Life](#).

## Course Work Outside of Class Time

Please avoid scheduling mandatory events and exams outside of scheduled class time, because these may conflict with other student commitments, including their other scheduled courses or employment. If you do schedule such events outside of regular class time, highlight them on your syllabus and during the first week of classes, and offer alternative options. Your understanding and flexibility may be needed with regard to student schedules and availability of rooms or facilities.

## Collegial Classroom Practice

Please keep in mind the following practices:

- Please start and end your class at the designated times.
- During class, please remain considerate of people working in nearby offices.
- Leave your classroom in its original seating configuration and in good condition – boards erased, seating straightened, course materials picked up. Please remind students to discard their trash.
- For those faculty using the classroom computer: When departing, Windows users should “Restart” the machine; Mac users should “Log out.” This saves the incoming professor precious minutes in advance of class and allows efficient access to either operating system. Please do not unplug or relocate cables, as this affects other faculty users and can compromise the integrity of the system. Call x3030 if you need last minute adjustments to the audio-video, computer or projection system.

## Working with Course Materials

### Canvas Learning Management System

[Canvas](#) is now Bowdoin’s Learning Management System (replacing Blackboard) and is the go-to platform for you and your students. Only students registered for a course have access to the course materials, which can be viewed, downloaded, and printed, as needed. You may also create links in Canvas to library-licensed e-books, database articles, and streaming audio and video.

### *Canvas Dashboard*

Fall 2022 courses will appear in the Dashboard after you login. They are in the Unpublished Courses section. After you build your courses and publish them, they will move to and appear in the Published Courses section. (You will see a few other courses in the Published Courses section, including the HR Compliance and Environmental Health & Safety trainings as well as an Orientation to Canvas: Helpful Resources and Tips course.)

### *Course Availability*

Like in Blackboard, courses in Canvas are unavailable to your students until you are ready to share them. Simply click on the **Publish** button on the Home Page to make the courses available when you are ready. **Until you publish your courses, your students will not see them in their dashboards.**

### *Support*

For assistance with Canvas, contact [Jennifer Snow](#). For assistance with Panopto, the platform for videos linked to courses on Canvas, contact [Paul Benham](#). A series of trainings and open labs are listed on the [Canvas-Panopto Migration website](#).

### Student Laptops and iPads

As announced in February 2022, Bowdoin's [Digital Excellence Commitment](#) provides a standard set of technologies to all students and provides training and other resources to faculty in order to incorporate the technology into their classes, if they choose to. Each incoming student will be given an Apple iPad Mini, an Apple Pencil 2, and a 13" MacBook Pro, and most returning students will have a 13" MacBook Pro and an iPad. As you consider using these technologies in your classes, don't hesitate to contact the IT Service Desk for assistance (207-725-3030, [servicedesk@bowdoin.edu](mailto:servicedesk@bowdoin.edu)). You might want to include related expectations in your syllabus, e.g., that students should bring charged devices to class or have specific software installed.

### Library Reserves

Books requested for course adoption with the designations of Required, Recommended, Optional, or Choice will be pulled by library staff and added to course reserves. Faculty may request that additional books, audio, and film be placed on reserve at any time during the semester.

Faculty are encouraged to make use of the library's extensive collection of e-books to support their courses. At the same time, it is important to be aware of potential license limitations before depending on a particular title as the primary access point for your students. When only 1-User and 3-User licenses are available, only that number of students can use the book simultaneously. Please contact [Kate Wing](#) or your [Research Librarian](#) to inquire about licenses for items you are interested in assigning as readings.

The library also offers e-reserves for text, audio, and streaming film resources. Please use the [Reserve forms](#) to submit requests, including for [digitization of DVDs](#), which will be made available through Canvas. To request digital copies of print articles and book chapters owned by the library, please submit a [Bowdoin Digital Delivery](#) request. Due to copyright restrictions, the library is unable to scan books in their entirety. For reserve guidelines, library contacts, and more, please see the [Reserve-Guidelines](#) page.

### Virtual Bookstore

If you have adopted books for your courses, please ensure they are listed correctly in [Classfinder](#) by finding your course and clicking "Order Books." If you have questions about course adoptions, please

email [Kate Wing](#). Some materials, such as art supplies and laboratory supplies, are sold by the [Bowdoin Store](#). For questions about course supplies sold by the Bowdoin Store, contact [Andrea Sehestedt](#). **Note:** It's possible that some first-year students will not have all their books by the first week of classes.

### Mindful Printing

Students are allocated a quota of up to 1,200 monochrome, double-sided pages. Single-sided or color printing will reduce their quota at a faster rate. Consider specifying those articles that you would like your students to print and making others optional. Students are responsible for costs if they exceed their quota. You might encourage students to read and annotate electronic versions of articles. More information can be found on the [OneCard office's printing and copying page](#).

### Accessible Course Materials

You can easily benefit many people when you make your curricular materials accessible. Implementing even a single change for better accessibility while updating course material and documents can go a long way. A few quick things you can do: make sure scanned documents are not blurry or contain highlights, notes, or cut-off text; include information in your syllabus about using [SensusAccess](#) or Canvas Ally to download alternative file formats of readings; or use the [accessibility checker](#) in the Canvas text editor to identify and fix text color contrast issues. Contact [Juli Haugen](#), digital accessibility consultant in academic technology, for help with creating accessible materials, or consult these guides:

[Tips for creating an accessible course in Canvas](#)

[Adding captions to or editing captions in course videos](#)

[Identifying and locating more accessible versions of non-searchable pdfs](#)

### **Final Exams and Projects**

As outlined in the [Catalogue](#), final exams (or cumulative exams bearing the signature qualities of a final exam, by any other name) are to be given according to the schedule published each semester by the Registrar's office. The date and time of final exams for courses can be found after Add/Drop II in the "My Classes" window on [Polaris](#) and [in the Final Exam Assignments link on the Registrar's website](#).

### **Annual Professional Activities Forms**

Each spring, faculty members are asked to complete a Professional Activity Form (PAF). If you are someone who likes to plan ahead or want to add to your form as you go through the year, download a [blank PAF](#) now.

We in academic affairs – [the dean, the associate deans, and all our staff](#) – are here to support you throughout the coming year. You may e-mail, call, or message any one of us through Teams.

Thank you for all you do for your students and for the College.