

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
Rachel Beane, Associate Dean for Faculty Recruitment and Pre-major Advising
Dallas Denery, Associate Dean for Curriculum
Dharni Vasudevan, Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Inclusion
Date: August 7, 2023
Subject: **Start of Fall 2023 Semester Notes and Reminders**

Welcome to Bowdoin's 222nd academic year! We hope your summer has been restorative, both personally and professionally, and that you are looking forward to the start of the fall semester. We write to remind you that [all of us in the Office of the Dean for Academic Affairs](#) are available to support you in your work.

While we have moved out of the COVID-19 pandemic, its impacts continue to be felt. In this context, please remember the need to *balance accountability and flexibility* in your teaching. The 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.* For related resources, you may visit "Teaching at Bowdoin: Intentional Course Design" on your [Canvas](#) Dashboard (especially Module 3.2).

Please also note that the pandemic-related freeze on auditing courses has now been lifted. Please see information on the [registrar's webpage about your rights and responsibilities regarding auditors](#).

Like you, we have been thinking a lot about the potential impacts of generative artificial intelligence (AI) on students and the teaching/learning environment. Please be sure to state on your course syllabus your expectations relative to generative AI use for assignments. Programming and opportunities for discussion will be offered over the course of the year; in the meantime, here is link to [Generative AI Resources 2023](#) collected by Academic Technology & Consulting.

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](#).

Note: All classes at Bowdoin meet in person. Please do not honor student requests to Zoom into class, except in rare circumstances.

Scheduling Meetings and Events

The [Fall 2023 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.

Monthly Faculty Meetings will take place at the newly established time of Fridays 2:20-3:50 PM, with the first taking place on Friday, September 8, 2023 in Barry Mills Hall. Additionally, 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 Wednesday 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 22	New Student Arrival Day
August 28, 7:45-8:45 AM	Breakfast Meeting for Pre-Major Advisors
August 29, 3:30 PM	Convocation: <i>Please join us in regalia outside Searles at 3:15.</i>
August 30	First Day of Classes
September 8, 2:20-3:50 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, 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 note that Jewish holidays require the cessation of work for the entire day, not simply during the time when services are held. *Please remind students to declare their intention to observe religious holidays at the beginning of the semester.* The Religious Holiday Policy and a list of major religious holidays and policies can be found on the [Academic Calendar](#) (scroll 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 using the classroom computer: If you need last minute adjustments to the audio-video, computer or projection system, call 207-725-3030 and press 2. Before departing, Windows users should “Restart” the machine; Mac users should “Log out.” Please do not unplug or relocate cables, as this affects other faculty users and can compromise the integrity of the system.

Working with Course Materials

Canvas Learning Management System

[Canvas](#) is Bowdoin’s Learning Management System 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. Fall 2023 courses will appear in the **Unpublished Courses** section of the Dashboard, where you may build and organize them before sharing them with your students. Once you publish a course, it will appear in the **Published Courses** section and will be available to your students. 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 in [CampusGroups](#).

Student Laptops and iPads

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). 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 Resources

The [College Library’s website](#) is the gateway to the Library’s print and electronic collections, our extensive database and e-journal holdings, and the new shared catalog of the Colby, Bates and Bowdoin libraries, **Compass**. 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. Please use the [Reserve forms](#) to submit requests, including for [digitization of DVDs](#). 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, see the [Reserve-Guidelines](#) page.

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. Please contact [Kate Wing](#) or your [Research Librarian](#) to inquire about licenses for items you are interested in assigning as readings.

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: First-year students will not have their books until at least the second 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 and Classroom Technology

[Making curricular materials accessible](#) can benefit many people. Implementing even a single change 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, contain highlights, notes, or cut-off text; include information in your syllabus about using [Canvas Ally](#) or [Sensus Access](#) to download alternative file formats of readings; use the accessibility checker in the Canvas text editor to identify easy to fix issues. In the classroom, use the lavalier microphones if available and check font size on presentation slides (size 24+ is best). Contact [Juli Haugen](#), digital accessibility consultant in academic technology, for help with creating accessible materials or for any other questions about [creating an accessible course in Canvas](#) or [available assistive technology](#). Join a [digital accessibility workshop](#).

Comment Cards

Comment Cards are a critical means by which we support our students. Please use a Comment Card early and often when you have concerns about, for example, a student's repeated absence or difficulty completing course requirements, as this will alert their advisor and student dean. Often, a student who is having trouble meeting expectations in one course may be having trouble in other courses and other areas of their life. If a student performs poorly or fails a course, it is difficult to have a productive conversation with the student if no Comment Cards were submitted over the course of the semester. The Comment Card system 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](#).

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](#).

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.