Dear Students,

What is happening in our lives and the lives of people all over the world is, without a doubt, causing enormous challenges and is radically altering the normalcy of our lives.

President John Adams said that “Every challenge is an opportunity in disguise.” And so, here we are, each and every one of us, facing the biggest and most unusual challenge we have ever confronted—a challenge that requires all of us to work together to answer the most challenging question we’ve had to answer.

If there ever was a time when the value of your pursuit of a college education is more clear in preparing you take on this challenge, now is the time to prove it. I ask you to seize this moment and prove to yourselves that you can overcome this disruption and continue your education. You may have to change your work habits, the way you study, the way you interact with your professors and fellow classmates, but with focus and a curious interest in learning you will succeed.

Understand that everyone in our College is committed to helping you succeed.

Sure, it could be easy to throw up your arms and tell yourself that you’ll wait for everything to return to normal. And, yes, our lives will return to normal. But accept this challenge: prove to yourself that you can succeed. When you do succeed, you’ll demonstrate to yourself that you are, indeed, proving that the education you are pursuing is preparing you to tackle whatever “big question” you want to answer.

David Boocker
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

PS: IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CHANGES

This is a long email, but I urge you to read to the bottom. Here is covered:

- Laptops Available for Loan
- WiFi Accessibility
- eTextbooks Available for Free
- Revised policy for CR/NC grading
- Sharing concerns about a course
- Getting help

Laptops Available for Loan

We know that not all students have access to a computer, and we want to get all available laptops checked out to as many students as possible. ITS has a small number of laptops still available for student check out, and encourages students to apply if they are in need of a loaner to complete coursework.
WiFi Accessibility

Additionally, we know not all students will have reliable internet connectivity in your homes, so the campus remains open for student usage. Wireless connectivity does exist in some outdoor spaces on campus, should you want to use that option to access course materials or digital resources. For connectivity off-campus, students are encouraged to check with local internet providers, many of whom are offering significantly discounted internet access packages for students at this time. In addition, the campus will be making a limited number of mobile hotspots available for student check out beginning in early April.

eTextbooks Available for Free

Our campus bookstore’s eTextbook provider – VitalSource – is now offering free access to ebooks for students who may have lost access to course materials as we transition to remote teaching and learning. If you previously accessed textbooks via the library, shared a book with a classmate, or accidentally left your books on campus, visit bookshelf.vitalsource.com to access free books through May 25. You will need to create an account using your unomaha.edu credentials, and we encourage you to check out this student FAQ.

Revised CR/NC Policy

At all times, undergraduate students at UNO may request, instead of a letter grade (A,B,C,D,F) for a class to instead receive a grade of “Credit” (CR) or “No Credit” (NC). This is essentially “pass” vs “fail,” since to receive a grade of CR one has to earn a C-. The grade of CR means you have passed the course, earned credit so the course will be on your transcript, and can go on to take other courses that list your course as a pre-requisite requirement. Ordinarily, students may request up to 24 hours in his/her degree plan to be CR/NC and the deadline to request it is generally at the time in the semester when the 50% refund is given. This can be a helpful tool if students are confident about passing a course but concerned about a course contributing to one’s GPA. For Spring 2020 semester only, any undergraduate student may request one (1) additional class be graded on a CR/NC basis, irrespective of major, minor, or other requirements, and this course will not count toward the 24 hour limit. Students interested in this option should consult his/her advisor and complete the form by April 10th. Each college may, at the discretion of the academic dean, utilize the grades Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) in lieu of CR/NC. We hope this additional flexibility will allow students to complete the semester in confidence.

Concerns about a Course?

As your dean, I want to hear about any concerns about your courses. I’ve been working with faculty throughout the College these past few weeks, and all are committed to your success and learning as we resume (remote) instruction March 30. That said, if you are encountering difficulties or have a concern, you may tell me about it confidentially by visiting the Keep Learning tab within Canvas (or at keeplearning.unomaha.edu) and clicking on Student Assistance -> Course. This form will route your concern directly to me so that I can look into the situation further.

Getting Help

We understand you may be unsure of how the transition to distance learning will go this semester. Stay the course! UNO Faculty and staff are here to guide you. Make sure to visit the Keep Learning website for support and tips on this transition (including how to access the same robust support services you’re accustomed to as a Maverick, in addition to tips on using the technology your instructors will be utilizing in remote teaching and learning mode). You can visit your academic advisor (over Zoom) to talk through challenges you are experiencing. Additionally, the Accessibility Services Center (ASC) staff is fully mobilized to problem solve concerns and needs from registered ASC students regarding their accommodations. Please note, requests for Academic Withdrawal or Course Drop are strongly discouraged and will only be considered on a limited basis for extenuating circumstances. Finally, we care about your overall wellbeing — Counseling and Psychological Services continues
to offer online and phone appointments. Help is available by calling 402.554.2409.