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Subject: Update from the Academic Policy and Regulations Team
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To: Rick L Danheiser danheisr@mit.edu

Dear Colleagues and Students,

I am writing to provide you with an update on the work of the Academic Policy And Regulations Team ("APART"), which was created in mid-April as a successor to the Emergency Academic Regulations (EARs) Team that developed the emergency regulations including the alternate grading scheme in effect for the spring. I serve as the Chair of APART, whose membership (see <https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/committee/academic-policy-and-regulations-team>) includes students and the current and incoming chairs of key Faculty Governance committees concerned with the Institute's educational mission.

The charge for the APART is "to recommend, seek input from stakeholders, and implement changes in academic policies and regulations in response to COVID-19. The team is also responsible for clarifying interpretation and application of these policies, for evaluating changes to our subject evaluation process, and other matters that may arise." Below I summarize recent decisions by the APART and some of the matters under current discussion.

(1) Pre-Registration

Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz and Registrar Mary Callahan announced on April 28 that pre-registration is being postponed (<https://ovc.mit.edu/2020/04/28/update-on-pre-registration/>). The Institute is currently evaluating various scenarios for the fall semester with the aim of providing an outstanding learning experience for students and ensuring a safe return to campus. Once departments have developed an accurate subject listing and schedule for the fall term, APART will set a date for pre-registration to open. At this time we do not anticipate that this will be before June 26.

(2) Summer Grading

At this time APART advises that summer subjects that normally offer letter grades should assume that this will be the case for the summer. APART will continue to review the question of whether any emergency academic regulations are required for the summer. In the event that emergency academic regulations are promulgated for the summer, then APART could choose to mandate "alternate grading" for all subjects, or for no subjects, or we might provide options, e.g. each department could decide whether alternate grades can be employed in a subject. Consequently, even if some EARs are introduced, it is possible that subjects could still be allowed to employ normal grading.

Note - there are master's programs (e.g., SM in Real Estate, LGO dual MBA/SM in Engineering) where most of the cohort finish their thesis by the end of the Spring term and will be receiving "alternate grades" for their thesis. If normal grades remain in effect for the summer, then for the few students who do not finish until later in the summer departments/degree programs will be allowed to use alternate grades.

(3) Summer UROP

As announced previously, this summer students have the option to register for the summer session and receive credit for UROP at no cost (i.e., tuition is waived) <https://ovc.mit.edu/summer-student-options-travel/>. Departments may set a cap on the number of units for their summer for-credit UROP subjects, but the cap may not exceed 18 units. Departments will also determine whether students may receive a letter grade (i.e., A/B/C/D/F) or whether grading will be P/D/F for those subjects. In the event that emergency academic regulations (EARs) are declared for the summer, it is possible that alternate grades (PE/NE)

might be mandated, or the regulations could make an exception in the case of UROP grading.

(4) Surveys of Students and Subjects

APART has approved a “two survey” approach developed by Teaching and Learning Laboratory Director Janet Rankin and Mary Callahan and their colleagues. These two student surveys will consist of (1) a Qualtrics-based Institute-wide remote learning experience survey and (2) a separate subject-specific survey.

Information from the Qualtrics-based Institute-wide remote learning experience survey will be made available to the community. Note that this survey will not provide information on a subject-by-subject basis.

To enable students to provide specific and actionable feedback on how subjects might be improved in remote (and face-to-face) offerings in the future, the subject-specific surveys will include a variety of question-types, including those involving “open ended” responses. They will not include questions asking for numerical ratings of instructional staff. The results of the subject-specific surveys will be strictly limited to the instructors of the subjects and the associated Department leadership, and a very limited number of key people who have been supporting remote teaching across MIT this semester and may be doing so in the fall.

With regard to timetable, the Qualtrics-based Institute-wide remote learning experience survey will be released on Wednesday May 13 (the day following the last day of classes) and will close on May 31. The subject specific survey will open on Thursday May 21 (the day following the last day of final exams) and will also close on May 31.

An additional survey is being developed for Instructors to provide feedback on their experience with remote teaching. The timetable for this survey will be later than that for the student surveys.

(5) Scenarios for the Fall

Several hypothetical scenarios for the fall semester have been developed by Vice Chancellor Waitz and Team 2020 and are now being commented on by departments and programs. APART will also be providing on input on scenarios as the discussion of plans for the fall continue.

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