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To: Faculty and Instructors

Date: January 4, 2024

## **SPRING 2024 SEMESTER – UPDATES AND REMINDERS**

Happy New Year! Welcome back to campus. We hope you had a chance to get rejuvenated over winter break. As we begin spring semester, we want to share some useful information and reminders with you. We are very appreciative of your efforts to support student success in and out of the classroom, which make all the difference for our students. We are enlisting your help to spread the word to students about supportive resources, including [free tutoring](#), [academic coaching](#), [presentation help](#), and [student success workshops](#) as well as means to help students facing [financial hardships](#) and [food insecurity and other necessities](#). Please share these resources widely with students.

### **ACTIVE LEARNING TEACHING STRATEGIES**

Thank you for your support of active learning across campus. A culture of active learning is characterized by an environment where students actively participate in the classroom, in which learning is understood as the construction of knowledge, and instructors serve as guides to construct knowledge. For easy ways to incorporate Active Learning in your class, check out the [Active Learning toolkit online](#). The [Active Learning Workshop Series](#) will continue this spring, aimed at empowering and equipping instructors to successfully implement active learning practices in their classrooms and other learning environments. We hope that you will be able to attend the [Active Learning Summit](#) on February 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> – see forthcoming Office of Instruction newsletters for details.

### **CONSIDER SETTING THE STAGE FOR PRODUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH “CLASSROOM NORMS”**

If you are experiencing any situations in class that suggest that your students lack an understanding about appropriate classroom decorum, consider setting the stage for productive

engagement with a discussion about classroom norms. Students benefit from clear guidelines outlining your expectations, as well as expectations they might have of you and each other. Involving students in collaboratively generating a list of classroom expectations promotes understanding and adherence and sets the stage for productive and sustained engagement. At the start of the semester, you might engage students in establishing “classroom norms” that should guide classroom engagement and interaction. Classroom norms represent familiar ways members of a learning community interact with one another, created through implicit and explicit reinforcement. These norms might encompass participation and academic expectations, how to communicate or disagree, behaviors to exhibit or avoid, collaboration expectations, etc. Classroom norms are usually generated through some coalescence activity at the outset of the semester. For example, instructors might provide a pre-constructed set of expectations for students to explore or amend, offer categories of expectations and ask students to define A-level performance in each, or create space for students to co-generate expectations that promote academic achievement and a productive learning environment. Following this activity, instructors consolidate the expectations into a final list, which is presented to the class. Regularly revisiting this list reinforces classroom norms, serving as a reminder before challenging classroom moments occur or when student adherence to the norms seems to be slipping.

## **GENERATIVE AI**

Please continue to be proactive in communicating with students about acceptable and unacceptable use of generative AI tools, including opting to incorporate the use of generative AI tools in your courses as appropriate. ChatGPT, a conversational artificial intelligence tool built on top of OpenAI’s GPT Large Language Model, is just one such tool. Similar tools include Google Bard, Anthropic Claude, and OpenAI’s GPT4. Other generative AI tools convert text to images, videos, code, and more. As these models continue to improve and proliferate, the conversation about the impact of generative AI on higher education will continue. Consider: How can generative AI tools be used in the classroom? What problems it might present? What are the ways we should prepare students for productive engagement with these tools - both now, and in the future?

Instructors are encouraged to take the following steps:

1. **Familiarize yourself with generative AI tools** that are relevant to your field. If you don’t know where to start, you can see:
  - [ChatGPT Guidance for Instructors](#) from the UGA Center for Teaching and Learning
  - [Introduction to Large Language Models](#) video from Andrej Karpathy (YouTube)
2. **Develop a course policy on the use of generative AI** and talk to your students about your expectations. Remind students that they are required to follow UGA’s [Academic Honesty Policy](#) and discuss how that policy applies to your course, including their engagement with generative AI tools. A repository of Classroom Policies for AI Generative Tools is available [here](#).
3. **Do not rely solely on AI detector tools** to identify whether an assignment was created using generative AI. These tools (including Turnitin’s AI writing indicator score, described below) can return false positives and fail to detect some AI-generated material. If you suspect a piece of work was completed using generative AI, carefully analyze the work. If you believe a violation of A Culture of Honesty may have occurred, instructors

have a responsibility to report to the [Office of Academic Honesty](#). A facilitated discussion will be scheduled for you to talk with the student about their process for completing the assignment and whether a violation occurred.

### ***A Word of Caution About Turnitin***

UGA students, faculty, and staff have access to the Turnitin suite of tools. Turnitin is available [through eLearning Commons](#) and [via integration with Google Docs](#) online. Supported services include [Feedback Studio](#), [Originality](#), [PeerMark](#), and [Draft Coach](#). Turnitin's Originality aids instructors and students in maintaining and promoting academic integrity, and can be used to generate a [Similarity Report](#) for student work. UGA's Similarity Reports include an [AI writing indicator score](#), which is independent from the similarity score. Instructors should use Turnitin's AI writing indicator score with caution, as the tool can generate [false positives](#) or can fail to detect some AI-generated material. It is important to note that the AI detection scores should not be used as a definitive measure of misconduct.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY INSTRUCTOR TOOLKIT**

All UGA instructors of record as of Fall 2023 have been enrolled in the "Academic Honesty Instructor Toolkit," a standalone course on eLC which contains information and resources on a range of key topics, including:

- UGA's honesty policy, and what to expect when reporting an instance of possible dishonesty,
- Research-based, low-effort strategies for reducing academic dishonesty, and
- Strategies for addressing the use of generative AI in your classrooms.

### **KEY POLICY REMINDERS**

#### ***Syllabus Checklist and Posting***

[University policy](#) requires that a syllabus for each course be available online. Please post your syllabus on your eLC course page and on the university's [syllabus website](#). The syllabus checklist is available [via the CTL website, as is the Spring 2024 List of Instructional Days \(.xlsx download\)](#). Briefly, your syllabus should include course information; instructor information; course description and details including a topical outline; assessments and grading; as well as the required course statements and policies including academic honesty policy and UGA Well-being Resources. *Please be sure to incorporate the updated policy on Well-being Resources* (included in the checklist above).

Clearly describe your attendance policy on your syllabus to make students aware of the classroom expectations at the beginning of the term. UGA is a residential campus where classroom attendance has always been an important part of the educational experience. As instructors, you generally have the authority to adapt and enforce an attendance policy that best suits your classes, but you should check with your departmental/college leaders regarding any accreditor-based requirements.

#### ***Classes Not Meeting***

Pursuant to [University Policy 4.07-1](#), when “professional matters require absence from campus, classes must be covered by a member of the faculty or by an approved teaching assistant.”

### ***BOR Policy on Political Activities for Faculty and Staff***

As we head into an election year and with controversial events continuing to unfold in the Middle East and around the world, please be cognizant of Board of Regents Policy 8.2.18.3 regarding political activities. Classroom instructors should be particularly aware of the following provisions:

A USG employee engaging in political activities and/or associated political expression must do so only in their personal capacity and shall not speak on behalf of the USG or its institutions or hold themselves out as representing the USG or its institutions, unless specifically authorized by the USG or the employee’s institution, as applicable. USG employees must take reasonable steps to avoid any appearance that such political activities and/or associated political expression represents the views of, or is endorsed by, the USG or its institutions. In addition, USG employees are prohibited from using state property, resources, or materials (including work email) or work time to communicate personal political views or in conjunction with any political campaigning.

The full policy can be found [here](#).

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### ***Setting up the eLC Gradebook***

It is very important for students to know their academic standing in their classes. Please post grades in a timely manner so that students can make informed decisions about studying or seeking tutoring or additional help. **You are strongly encouraged to use the eLC gradebook.** The CTL provides resources to help with the process of setting up your gradebook. [Instructions for setting up your eLC gradebook](#) can be found online with both step-by-step text and video directions. These resources cover grades setup, entering grades, calculating and releasing grades, displaying final calculated grades, and exporting/importing the gradebook.

### ***Communication with Advisors: SAGE Access***

Faculty have access to [SAGE](#) (Student Advising and Guidance Expert), the online platform used for academic advising. You can use this tool to:

- Quickly and easily raise a concern about a student (attendance, academic, or general);
- Identify and communicate with a student’s academic advisor; and
- Send a student “kudos” as encouragement for academic improvement or ongoing academic excellence.

Near the midpoint of each semester, you will receive an invitation to complete a quick SAGE Progress Survey for your students. If you have any concerns that a student’s absence may signal a crisis for the student, please contact [Student Care and Outreach](#) or your college’s student affairs representative.