

# Instructor & Student Support Collaboration

## Guiding students to successful course completion & navigating barriers along the way

### The basics & getting started:

- New students have had the opportunity to attend a live New Student Orientation webinar hosted by two Student Support Specialists. The webinar introduces the students to all resources available and walks them through a sample course, including submitting assignments, discussions, and reviewing feedback. In addition, each student has been contacted individually to go over initial questions and goals. All new and returning students are sent reminders and FAQs about their upcoming courses.
- Limited access to basic course content and an abbreviated syllabus begins 5 days prior to the start date.
- On the start date itself (after 5am) the Read & Understood ungraded quiz becomes available. Once completed, full course access is granted: syllabus, discussions, dropbox, quizzes, links, supplemental resources. The Read & Understood can be accessed on the course home page, under content, or in Quizzes. All students receive an email about the R&U and a welcome text on their first day.
- Students Support Specialists are contacting students within the first five days to ensure they complete the R&U. They also communicate that if not completed days 1-5, the student will be dropped according to policy.
- [Policy](#): Students are required to complete a Read & Understood Agreement for each course in which they are enrolled, in order to acknowledge enrollment and financial responsibility for the course. If not completed within the first five days of the course, the student will be administratively withdrawn from the course.

# Instructor & Student Support Collaboration

## Besides 'setting a good pace' why are the first two weeks so important?

- By the last day of week 2 the student must have submitted gradable work in Brightspace (quiz, discussion, assignment) to remain enrolled. There is an official check-point and process to administratively withdraw non-participating students. We are required by the DOE to ensure that only actively participating students are continuing in each course. We cannot disburse financial aid to students who have not submitted gradable work.
- Between weeks one and two, Student Support Specialists send general reminders to their caseload of students, regarding submitting work. We urge instructors to contact Student Support Specialists and the Program Director if the student has not been active. No one is in trouble! This collaboration helps us begin time-sensitive outreach to find out their plans and offer support & options. We are here to identify barriers and may be aware of other circumstances related to a student situation (other courses, financial standing, previous academic performance etc....)
- SJC reports student enrollment status to outside entities every 30 days. Thus, it is important to keep students submitting gradable work consistently throughout their course. There should not be more than 2-3 weeks that go by without reportable participation. Emails or other communication outside of Brightspace do not count. *We urge instructors to contact Student Support Specialists if there is a significant gap in Brightspace submissions.* We will work with the student to identify barriers and help with time management and staying on track. Ideally, we are engaging students to submit work, not having to withdraw them for non-attendance.
- Policy: Students who fail to maintain regular, active participation for the duration of their course(s) may be administratively withdrawn from the course(s). Applicable academic and refund policies will apply.

# Instructor & Student Support Collaboration

## Obstacles & Student Progress: Everyday life is getting in the way!

- Early and immediate communication to Student Support regarding an obstacle provides the student with the most options.
  - No student communication or no known extenuating circumstances (just busy?) If a student falls behind, it is imperative that the instructor reach out to the student as soon as they are “off schedule”, also alerting the Student Support Specialist. The instructor can cc the Advisor/Student Support Specialist on the email to the student or communicate otherwise.
  - *Collaboration here is so important, welcomed, and appreciated!* While instructors are crucial in guiding a student through the course, the Student Support Specialist is guiding a student through their entire program. Not only do they develop relationships with students and know their goals, they are cognizant of financial and academic policies. Therefore, it is imperative that we work together, as we won't know the moment a student begins to falter and be able to act quickly. With an alert from an instructor we can begin calling, emailing, and sending texts. We will find out what other supports a student may need.
  - Policy: In order to maintain satisfactory progress in a course, students are expected to submit assignments and participate according to the due dates established within the course.

# Instructor & Student Support Collaboration

## Major Life Events & Student Progress: What are my options?

- Rarely, a student may experience a life event that leaves them at a crossroads
  - Extenuating Circumstances
    - If a student communicates that they have experienced a *serious* life event such as a death in the family or prolonged illness, the next step is for the instructor to review their current progress and standing in the course.
      - Is it feasible to agree on a plan to get caught up in a week or so?
      - Will the student need more time? If so-- the student may be eligible for an Incomplete Grade and *must* reach their Student Support Specialist ASAP.
  - An Incomplete Grade, with approval, allows *up to* 4 weeks to complete work. To be eligible the student:
    - Must have experienced a significant extenuating circumstance
    - Must be current in their course at the time of the incomplete request
    - Must be in good financial standing with the college
    - Must apply for this at/close to the time of the event. This cannot be applied for during the last week of their term (unless that is when the event occurred, and then the student would be mostly complete with their course)

**\*\*Instructors are encouraged to work with Program Directors and Student Support Specialists to decide if a student should/should not apply and determine eligibility.\*\***

# Instructor & Student Support Collaboration

## This student appears eligible, what are the next steps for an “Incomplete”?

- The Student Support Specialist provides the link for students to apply for an Incomplete Grade through Sharepoint. This must be reviewed and processed quickly by instructors and/or Program Directors. Each involved party receives email updates regarding steps in the Sharepoint process.
  - It is best practice to work out a “new” plan/timeline for assignment completion. The student should stick to this customized plan, otherwise if remaining course work is not completed within the established time frame, a final adjusted grade will be assigned based on course grade calculations.
  - We urge you to *only allow the student the additional time that they need to complete work*. The policy allows for *up to 4 weeks*, but it is in the students’ best interest to complete outstanding coursework as soon as possible after the end date. This is due to program progress and potential financial aid ramifications.
  - **Policy:** In the event of extenuating circumstances, such as a death in the family, a prolonged illness or emergency, a student can request an incomplete course grade, at least one week prior to the end date of the course. In order to be eligible, a student must be up to date in their coursework. In addition, the student must be in financial good standing with the college. To do so, the student will speak with his/her student support specialist and then complete the online Incomplete Grade Request Form. The instructor, in consult with the Program Director, will review and approve or deny the request, and provide a new due date, not to exceed four weeks from the original course end date, for completing the remaining coursework, if approved. A grade of “I” will be assigned and reflects an agreed upon course of action between the instructor and student to complete the course within the designated time frame. If remaining course work is not completed within the established time frame, a final adjusted grade will be assigned based on course grade calculations.

An Incomplete Course Grade may impact your financial aid eligibility and/or loan deferment status. Please contact Financial Aid at 800-752-1266 or [finaid@sjcme.edu](mailto:finaid@sjcme.edu) with any questions.

Note: Students needing an Incomplete Course Grade due to ADA accommodations should contact Holly Sanborn, Manager ADA Accommodations, at [hsanborn@sjcme.edu](mailto:hsanborn@sjcme.edu) or 207-893-7562.

# Instructor & Student Support Collaboration

## We might be out of options... what now?

- If the student is *not* eligible for an Incomplete Grade and/or catching up is not feasible, the student and Student Support Specialist may determine that withdrawal is best.
  - It is not ideal, and we hope it isn't the first option, but ultimately, we are working with adult learners who are trying to balance multiple responsibilities. Sometimes "it's just not the right time". We do our best to present options and attempt to reengage the student at a better time.
  - Any information you have that would help us identify barriers or reengage the student is always welcome.

# Instructor & Student Support Collaboration

## Helpful hints:

1. How can you find the student support specialist assigned to each student?
  - You are cc'ed on the enrollment confirmation email to the student from Online Operations. This email lists the Student Support Specialists name.
  - We've heard that many instructors use the information from their rosters and confirmation emails to create their own "sheet" for each course with details about each student, including the Student Support Specialists name and contact info.
  - In Campus Cafe under the students contact information
  - If you're unsure, email [onlinestudentsupport@sjcme.edu](mailto:onlinestudentsupport@sjcme.edu) and we'll connect you!
2. Encourage (require?) students to write to/from their SJC email. If they are writing from a personal email, please remind them that important communications are sent to student email only.
3. Discourage students from messaging through Brightspace. Although emails can be sent via Brightspace (and it will come from your SJC account), replies do not go back into Brightspace. We see students get caught in this loop of waiting for a response in Brightspace that will never come! Unfortunately, we cannot disable this feature at this time.
4. We are here and want to help!! Not sure who to contact? You can always start with [onlinestudentsupport@sjcme.edu](mailto:onlinestudentsupport@sjcme.edu)