

Faculty Policy - Best Practices for Online Classes

Recommendations in plain text

Requirements in bold

1. Establishes contact early in class through e-mail to welcome students and ensure all addresses are valid.
 - a. **Faculty members will send out a welcome e-mail at least one day prior to the start of class. The purpose of this e-mail is to give students faculty contact information, course dates, required materials, help desk contact information, and encouragement to complete the eCollege Student Tutorial.**
2. Syllabus clearly explains methods for contacting faculty with questions.
 - a. **Faculty member will provide e-mail address and/or telephone number where students can contact them.**
3. Establishes timeline for faculty response to questions.
 - a. **Syllabus provides a reasonable time of instructor response for student questions.**
4. Specifically states protocols for e-mail communication (subject line, student name...etc.).
5. Students are encouraged to check their “My Profile” tab in the online campus to ensure the system e-mail address is preferred.
6. Use of threaded discussion to allow students to introduce themselves and find commonality with others in the class.
7. Use of interactive tools to foster group discussion and building of learning community.
 - a. **Faculty member provides a forum for building of a learning community. Examples include threaded discussion, chat, and e-mail.**
8. Establishes rules concerning e-mail and threaded discussion protocols (netiquette, offensive language, common courtesy...etc.).

9. If using “groups”, instructions and expectations are clearly addressed before group work commences.
10. Students are asked to relate outside events or activities to subjects covered in the online classroom.
11. Instructor encourages students to challenge his/her ideas, the ideas of other students, or those presented in readings or other course materials. Threaded discussions are especially useful to achieve this.
12. Instructor gives students concrete, real-life situations to analyze, when applicable.
13. Instructor encourages students to suggest new readings, projects, or course activities.
14. Instructor makes ancillary resources available as part of the course content.
15. Students are provided information on accessing BSC’s student services (library resources, online tutoring, disability support services, etc.).
16. Online gradebook is utilized to ensure students have timely/accurate access to grades/feedback.
 - a. **Faculty will use online gradebook available in the online platform**
17. Syllabus establishes timeline for assessment of graded course materials.
 - a. **Syllabus clearly states the maximum time the faculty will take to grade assignments/quizzes.**
18. Assessment of course materials includes feedback for improvement (including use of comment fields in gradebook, dropbox, and quizzes/exams).
19. Instructor accesses the class on a regular basis in order to monitor student progress and provide timely feedback.
20. Instructor monitors threaded discussions to ensure topic relevancy and intervenes as needed to get students “back on track”.
21. Students are expected to complete assignments promptly.
22. Course content is made available in manageable segments.

23. Specific expectations are set for students with respect to a minimum amount of time per week for study and homework assignments.
24. Students are informed in advance of the consequences of “non-attendance” or non-participation.
 - a. **Syllabus specifies what is defined by the instructor as “non-attendance/non-participation” and what the instructor may do if students do not attend/participate.**
25. Instructor makes reasonable effort to contact students who have fallen behind to discuss study habits, schedules, and other commitments.
26. Course assignments are clearly communicated, including rubrics for subjectively graded items.
27. Instructors give students positive reinforcement for doing exemplary work.
28. Instructors work individually with students who are poor performers to encourage higher levels of performance.
29. Expectations regarding technical requirements, necessary software, and basic computer skills are included in the syllabus and students are made aware of how to contact the online help desk.
30. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor when concepts are not understood.
31. Thoughts are given to different learning styles when course is created.
32. Any audio/video segments included in the class are accompanied by a written transcript.
33. Students with different backgrounds are encouraged to share their viewpoints on topics discussed in the class.

History of This Policy:

First policy draft approved by the Faculty Senate on May 15, 2007 and by the Executive Council on August 7, 2007.

Reviewed – March 6, 2014.