

Post-Closure Academic Resource Guide for Faculty and Advisors

Sonoma State University

1. *Wellness Communication with Students and Colleagues*

A. Safety

As you communicate with colleagues or students, please first inquire about their health and safety. Ask if they have been evacuated, without power, or have lost a home due to the Kincade Fire. Ask if they have food, clean water, heat, and a place to shower and charge electronics. Sonoma State will be using [NomaCares](#) as a central website for campus community members who are impacted and need assistance.

NomaCares email: nomacares@sonoma.edu
Phone: **707-664-3833**.

The phone will be answered by Student Affairs staff from 8:00am to 5:00pm daily for a week and will roll to the email address after hours.

Student Affairs staff will work with Academic Affairs staff to manage student issues. Faculty questions will be referred to Faculty Affairs and staff questions will be referred to Human Resources.

Note that in 2017, we had some students, staff, and faculty who were reluctant to contact NomaCares about food insecurity or other issues because they thought other people were in worse circumstances than they were or because they were afraid of being stigmatized or because they felt shame. Please be sensitive to these feelings and encourage those in need to contact NomaCares, even if they aren't sure their situation merits it. Let them know that all NomaCares requests are treated sensitively and confidentially. We can provide some reassurance and some help.

General Information on Disaster Relief and Recovery:

<https://www.ready.gov/coping-with-disaster>
<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services.html>
<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp>
<https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/disaster-survivors>

Information for People Serving as Helpers, Mentors, and Friends:

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/type/disaster_earlyintervention_tx.asp
https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/type/SPR/SPR_Manual.pdf

<https://ct.counseling.org/2017/07/lending-helping-hand-disasters-wake/>

B. Physical or Mental Health concerns

Watch for signs that people are experiencing physical or mental health concerns as a result of the fire. We know people may be especially stressed about the Kincade Fire because of the Sonoma Complex fires in 2017. If you or your colleagues need help, please contact Human Resources for our [Employee Assistance Program](#). Students should be referred to the [Student Health Center](#) or to [Counseling and Psychological Services](#). You may also contact NomaCares at nomacares@sonoma.edu or **707-664-3833** to let us know about students who need assistance.

2. Academic Communication with Students

Many of our students are worried about their classes and are seeking guidance and communication. You should reach out to all of your students as you usually do (via email, Canvas, PeopleSoft, text, or other means) regarding changes in dates and assignments,

When classes resume, check in with students on the first class period and perhaps offer to talk with students individually who may be experiencing difficulties with course work because they have been impacted by fire, evacuation, or loss of power. Remember that students may not want to share their experiences of fears in front of other students. Holding class discussions immediately upon re-open may also make some students more anxious, so offer students multiple ways of communicating their concerns. You can send out by email or post on your Canvas site information about counseling services, health services, advising, etc. Here are a few links to share:

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)
[Student Health Center](#)
[Advising Central](#)
[Financial Aid](#)

3. Academic Deadlines and Processes

A. Academic Calendar for Fall 2019

The [campus academic calendar](#) will remain the same except for an extension on the deadline for individual course withdrawals.

- **Extended deadline** to withdraw from an individual class in Fall 2019: **December 6**
- Registration for Spring 2020: **November 18 - 22** (by appointment only; dates subject to change)

- **Thanksgiving Holiday** (No classes Nov. 27, campus closed Nov. 28-29)
- Thesis deadline for December 2019 graduates: **December 1**
- Last day of Instruction: **December 6**
- Last day for full- term withdraw (with documentation of serious illness or injury; no refund): **December 6**. Any withdraws after this date are considered retroactive and need to follow the University's withdraw policy.
- Finals Week: **December 9-13**

If you are working with students who believe they are unable to meet these academic deadlines for the semester, please refer them to their academic advisor or have them contact NomaCares at nomacares@sonoma.edu or 707-664-3833. If you have concerns about a student, please contact nomacares@sonoma.edu and provide the student's full name and student ID if you have it. For graduate students, you may also contact the Office of Graduate Studies at graduate.studies@sonoma.edu.

B. Course Adjustments

Faculty have freedom to make any adjustments they believe are necessary and appropriate to course schedules, assignments, deadlines, and test dates. It's important to make sure the learning outcomes for the course are met in some fashion as you contemplate the time remaining in the course.

The stress of "making up for lost time" is a big one for faculty, but please take a compassionate and sensitive stance with students to get through this crisis. Consider adjusting your syllabus, extending deadlines, cancelling or modifying some assignments or readings, and adjusting grading criteria. It will be difficult to squeeze in everything that was in the original syllabus and course schedule, and we ask that you not try to fit in extra class periods that only some students will be able to attend. Please be very clear about your expectations and explain to students how the syllabus or course schedule for your course has changed as a result of the class periods missed.

If you have questions about how to adjust your syllabus, assignments, or deadlines, contact your Department Chair, Associate Dean, Dean, the Faculty Center, or the Office of Academic Programs. All of these individuals can help with the adjustment process.

Please keep in mind that students may have lost books or course materials in the fire or in the evacuation process and so may need assistance to continue with course work. **Students whose books are lost to fire should contact NomaCares (nomacares@sonoma.edu).** The university will make every effort to help replace books quickly.

C. Incompletes

An incomplete is appropriate under the following circumstances:

- When a student has completed a substantial amount of the work for a course (usually 50%) but is unable to complete the course requirements within the academic term.
- When the remaining work can be completed by the student outside of class.

An Incomplete is not appropriate when it is necessary for a student to attend a major portion of the class when it is next offered.

Students this semester may have gaps in their work because of the fires and the aftermath. If a student met deadlines and completed work before the fires, but has spottier completion rates in the second half of the semester, this may be a situation in which an incomplete is appropriate. Faculty will need to evaluate the amount of work completed for the course as a whole to ensure it is a substantial amount.

Incomplete Form and policy are [here](#).

D. Grade Mode Changes

Through November 22, 2019, students may petition to change the grade mode of a class from letter grade to Credit/No Credit for “serious and compelling” reasons. This applies only to classes that are already coded to allow for both letter or Cr/NC grading (mainly GE classes). Grade mode changes must be done manually in the Registrar’s Office. Use the **General Petition form**, available in your department or at the Registrar’s Office.

E. Course Withdrawal

Through December 6, students may petition to withdraw from one or more classes for “serious and compelling” reasons (see definition below). The usual \$20 course fee has been waived for Fall 2019. The student must complete the [Petition to Withdraw from a Class](#), signed by the course instructor, the student’s advisor, the students’ major department chair (if the student is declared), and the university registrar. A Dean’s signature is not required. Students should include an explanation of the circumstances and documentation. If it is problematic for students to obtain documentation for fire-related situations, advisors or course faculty may indicate this on the form and omit documentation.

Please note that students are not eligible for refunds if they drop an individual course or courses. The deadline for getting a refund for the difference between full-time and part-time tuition was September 3, 2019. There will be no financial aid reductions at this point in the semester for students who drop one or more

classes as long as the student remains enrolled in at least one course. There may, however, be financial aid implications in future semesters for dropping a course or courses in fall 2019. All questions about financial aid should be discussed with a financial aid advisor.

F. Total Withdrawal and Leave of Absence Requests

Through December 6, students may petition to withdraw from the entire semester for “serious and compelling” reasons. The definition of “serious and compelling” is laid out in the university [policy for Withdrawal from Courses](#), section B. As noted in the policy, the University Standards Committee will consider unusual or special cases on their merit. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Student and/or the family of the student lost home as a result of the fires.
- Student and/or the family of the student was evacuated as a result of the fires.
- Student experienced the death of a family member as a result of the fires.
- Student had significant caretaking responsibilities for family members as a result of the fires.
- Student experienced significant psychological and/or physical trauma as a result of the fires.

If students indicate they need to withdraw from the semester or take a leave of absence, please encourage them to talk with their academic advisor in their major or in Advising Central (the Advising Center), the Financial Aid Office, and REACH (Housing), if they are residential. It is important that they get advice before making a decision to withdraw. Intervention at this stage is crucial: there may be ways of helping a student to stay in school and not lose the whole semester. Even if they need to withdraw, advice can help a student re-enter more easily.

There is no fee to withdraw from the term. There are CSU and federal guidelines that govern full refunds for complete withdrawal for Fall 2019. Standard policies apply, but students who believe there are reasons for a full refund should consult with the Registrar’s Office.

Students will find information on withdrawals and leaves of absence on the Registrar’s webpage:

- [Withdrawals](#): Withdrawing at this point in the semester is allowed for “serious and compelling” reasons and requires the signatures of the instructor and department chair. Students may withdraw from a course or from the whole semester. Encourage students to fill out the online form called [Withdraw Completely from Sonoma State](#). It is possible that students who think they should withdraw can be helped to stay if they fill

out the form. Advising Central will review these online forms and communicate directly with students.

- [Leaves of Absence](#): A Leave of Absence is available for a semester or two and can help students more easily re-enter the institution when they are ready to come back.

G. Retroactive Withdrawals

Per section IV of the SSU Withdrawal from Courses policy, students may only withdraw from the entire semester, for “serious and compelling” reasons, after the

last day of instruction. However, during Spring 2020 *only*, the University Standards Committee will consider petitions to withdraw from an individual class taken at SSU in Fall 2019 *only*, for “serious and compelling” reasons related to the fires.

H. Probation and Disqualification

Probation and disqualification processes and criteria will not change, but individual student situations, for those students directly impacted by the fires, will be reviewed by the University Standards Committee.

I. Testing

WEPT: WEPT exams will continue November 4-9, as scheduled, in both hand-written and computer formats. You will find the WEPT schedule [here](#).

Prometrics Tests: If you have students who have signed up for GRE Subject Tests, the LSAT, or the MPRE, they should contact [Testing and Proctoring Services](#) to check on when exams will be scheduled or rescheduled.