

MARCH 17, 2020

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Dear Students,

No one could have imagined the unprecedented situation we find ourselves in today. We, together, are facing disruption and disappointment with a semester indelibly marked by a sudden shift in priorities. Public health and the protection of our community, is a paramount concern, followed very closely by the preservation of an educational experience that acknowledges this unique moment in history and still moves forward with the vital work of our students and faculty.

By now, you are ‘returning’ from spring break and starting your second week of an extended period away from school. Thank you for your patience; many of you face disruptions in your lives—concern for family members in other cities, students returning to their permanent addresses, thoughts of how to finish a semester in one week less, and with the stress of a global pandemic. You are not alone – the faculty and staff of the Sam Fox School are working tirelessly to make these transitions as easy as possible.

As a community of designers and artists, we are surprisingly resilient because of the very nature of our work. We have a predilection for inventiveness – our ability to solve problems, be flexible with changing scenarios, adapt our style of working to the situation at hand and think out of the box under systemic conditions that are complex and fluid. This challenge strengthens our resolve that the world is interconnected, and our success relies on the well-being of others.

Later this week, you will see a series of updates explaining how we are adjusting to accommodate a shift from gathering around a table to one of zooming through teleconferencing and online courses. We understand this is a new way of working and that the transition may have a few bumps. Please be assured and calm; the faculty have your best interests at heart. All faculty are engaged in the review of their courses; we are investigating online tools, re-thinking end-of-semester requirements, and planning with flexibility and the hallmark ambition that many of you expect.

Your faculty will try their best to communicate with you often. Please share your circumstances; in fact, you may have already received queries from them. Otherwise, you’ll get an announcement from each of your classes, asking that you take a “quiz.” The quiz is a series of questions about your new working circumstances: your time zone, your internet connectivity, your computer equipment, etc. Please respond as it will help your teachers build a tailored experience. They want to hear from you.

There will be no changes to the advising and registration timeline for Fall 2020. Your advisor will be in touch, and you can meet via phone or video. Instructions for undergraduate students will be posted to the Sam Fox School intranet ([here](#)) by the end-of-day, Tuesday, March 17th. A few interim amendments to graduate and undergraduate academic policies will appear there as well

(Spring 2020 only). Lastly, information on graduate student advising and registration will be sent via email by the end of this week.

We want to keep you up to date with the latest information. ([Here](#)) you'll find a collection of messages keeping the Sam Fox School students, faculty, and staff informed with answers to common concerns. If you have additional questions, contact your faculty, the Chairs of your program, our fantastic staff, or us. Further, if you feel ill and require health resources, know they are available ([here](#)), and don't hesitate to reach out. As we face this pandemic, our community will support those in need without bias or judgment. Stay healthy, stay optimistic, and let's use this time to be stronger together (online) than apart.

Very best wishes,

Heather and Amy