

Please [complete this form immediately](#)
if lack of technology or lack of internet access
is a barrier to participating in distance learning

Dear Students:

As the SUNY Poly community responds to the coronavirus pandemic, I would like for us to take a moment of pause and reflect on the situation we now find ourselves in. Among the more than 3,000 people in our community, everyone has a distinct situation. Some of us are parents who are challenged by school closings. Others are individuals who live in communities or households with limited internet capacity who have now been asked to complete their work online. Caregivers and families of vulnerable individuals are concerned about basic daily tasks like obtaining food and medicines while simultaneously trying to focus on learning, teaching, and serving. I ask that we all be mindful of the challenges each of us face in this situation, and would like to thank everyone for their patience, understanding, tolerance, and collaborative work.

Below, I address several topics that are important to students as we move into the distance learning environment.

Technology needs

We recognize that students may have barriers to participating in distance learning such as lack of a computer or tablet and/or lack of internet access. If you have any barriers to participating in distance learning, [please complete this form immediately](#), and we will reach out to you to address these needs.

Requests for feedback from students

We have developed a feedback system designed to give all members of our community the opportunity to tell us how our temporary shift to this mode of instruction is working for them. We will be reaching out to students with additional, short surveys to quickly identify any difficulties and to ensure successful access to course materials. Please respond to these surveys, even if only to report that all is well. In addition, we will be adding a live chat feature to our Web site to facilitate feedback and interaction.

What students can expect from faculty

Students should expect to hear from faculty about each of their courses at least 24 hours before their first scheduled class after Spring Break ends, on March 23, 2020. Faculty messages should be posted as an announcement on Blackboard (Hint: announcements and other updates are easy to track with [the Blackboard app](#) available for iPhones and Android phones). Students who have not heard from their faculty in this time frame can let us know using the [“How’s it going”](#) form.

The SUNY Poly faculty are currently redesigning courses for the remainder of the semester to be delivered via distance education. Distance learning includes two primary techniques: 1) Synchronous learning, often using Blackboard, Collaborate, or similar video conferencing systems, where all

participants gather at the same time but from their chosen location, and 2) Asynchronous learning, which involves participants sharing learning materials on their own schedule and from places of their choosing, though often with expectations and specific deadlines for sharing materials.

Students should try to login to scheduled synchronous class sessions at least 15 minutes early. Please use the live chat or the "[How's it going](#)" form to let us know if you encounter any difficulties, and we will try to address your issues as soon as possible.

You can also expect that your faculty will maintain regular office hours, and will be sharing with you changes to their schedule.

Student Obligations

Students have an incredibly important role to play in this process as well. First, we ask that you keep us informed about the challenges you face. Second, we ask that, as much as possible, you get your equipment and technology ready to go prior to Monday's return from Spring Break. Third, it is important to stay focused and be present: whether this means completing homework on time, logging on early to synchronous sessions, or emailing faculty when you have a question or concern.

Blackboard Community Hub

We have developed a wealth of resources for students in our [Blackboard Community Hub](#). These resources inform students about offers for [free Internet access](#), provide information about [accommodations and disability services](#), and many other topics.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Schneider
Interim Provost
SUNY Polytechnic Institute