

Emergency College Closure Protocols – Academic Affairs

Decision-making and Communication

October 2, 2024

In the event of an emergency closure of Napa Valley College, the following standards and procedures will be enacted by the Vice President of Academic Affairs to ensure continuity of learning for students and the integrity of instruction and academic standards for faculty.

I. Modifications to Term Length and Class Schedules (generally in effect when more than one full week of instruction will be missed)

In the event of an emergency closure of the NVC campus, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will apply the following standards and processes:

Analyze all course offerings to determine if any sections fall more than 6.5% below the minimum threshold for awarding units of credit. For a standard 3-unit lecture course, this would represent 45 hours or less of instruction.

Notify the Division Dean of all sections meeting the above criteria.

Communicate these decisions to the Academic Senate leadership, program coordinators, and all faculty as soon as possible.

The Division Dean will:

Consult with the program coordinator and decide which sections meeting the above criteria require additional scheduled class hours to meet minimum standards for the award of credit

Develop a specific plan to schedule additional hours as determined through mutual agreement with the program coordinator.

Facilitate the communication of schedule changes to the students.

II. Modifications to Academic Standards or Practices

In the event of an emergency closure of the NVC campus, the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) will apply the following standards and processes:

After notification of a closure by the Superintendent/President, the VPAA will reinforce notice of the closure with the Academic Senate leadership and all faculty and will advise about the enactment of the emergency protocols.

Suspend all deadlines for submission of class work, exams, quizzes, or other academic assignments for the duration of the closure, including courses offered via distance education.

Suspend attendance or participation requirements for students for the duration of the closure.

Determine if the length of the closure requires an extension to the length of the academic term, either through a calendar extension or other mechanism.

Distribute a copy of the suggested guidelines for faculty on modifications to teaching on the resumption of courses as outlined in Appendix A to this document.

All other decisions to modify teaching and testing schedules on the resumption of instruction will be made at the program or department level and communicated to the individual instructors by the program coordinator and division dean.

III. Communication

The VPAA will make every effort to communicate District decisions regarding academic and instructional matters to the entire campus community during an emergency closure. However, the nature of the emergency closure may eliminate access to some methods of communication, such as email, the college website, and phone service. With this caveat, the VPAA will strive to:

Establish two-way communication (email, direct messaging, phone, text, face-to-face) with all academic deans and the Academic Senate President to ensure timely, accurate, and complete communication of critical information and to develop recommendations for major decisions.

Establish one-way communication (email, website, social media, emergency communication platforms) with all other faculty and campus constituents, including students.

Students will be notified of closure dates and protocols regarding suspension of deadlines, tests, and other class work during the closure. All other modifications to academic standards, course schedules, and curriculum will be communicated to students by program coordinators and deans in concert with program coordinators or other program faculty.

Academic Affairs will work closely with Student Affairs and the PIO's office to ensure that information is disseminated broadly to all students.

Deans will:

Establish two-way communication with all program coordinators and critical division staff.

Establish one-way communication with all other division members, including part-time faculty.

Programs will:

Establish two-way communication with all program/department faculty, as possible.

Establish one-way communication with all other program members, including part-time faculty.

IV. Other Considerations

Should a return to on-campus instruction require adjustments to the room schedule, updates will be made in Colleague and broadly communicated as outlined above.

If the emergency closure necessitates an extension of the semester, a revised calendar will be submitted to the CCCCCO and reviewed with relevant constituencies.

Appendix A: Guidelines for the Resumption of Classes after Emergency Closure

Course Content (Example Language Regarding Compressing Hours)

This will undoubtedly be the most problematic part of the adjustments we will need to make this semester. We are not adding instructional hours, so the amount of time and the manner in which you intended to deliver course content may require retooling. This is where you will need to be most creative and flexible in your approach and to keep the students first and foremost in your decisions. You will not simply be able to layer two weeks of content on top of the schedule you already planned for the remainder of the semester. That would be too much to expect of students and would likely lead to a significant number of students dropping out and failing courses.

We have to make sure we cover, at a minimum, the content on the course outline of record, but you have the freedom to deliver that content as you see fit and to devote as much or as little time as you determine is adequate to meet the learning objectives of the course. A practical way to approach this is to focus less on the delivery of content and more on what the student needs to learn. It's a subtle shift but could be valuable in determining what adjustments you need to make for the rest of the term. Please review the course outlines of record, the learning objectives, and the student learning outcomes, as they will provide a clear path for the rest of the semester.

Syllabi and Course Schedules

You might consider creating a revised syllabus to outline how your course will proceed for the balance of the term. If you develop a new or revised syllabus, make sure to turn it into your dean and division administrative assistant.

Assignments

You are welcome to adjust your schedule of assignments. This could include dropping assignments, blending assignments, or other similar adjustments. If you make major revisions to your syllabus, please see the note above.

Tests and Quizzes

As with syllabi, schedules, and assignments, you are welcome to alter your schedule of tests and quizzes. Again, be flexible when considering how you will handle this and avoid overloading students.

Due Dates

You will need to adjust due dates for assignments. Again, please revise your class schedule or syllabus as needed and send it to your dean.

Homework Hours

Nearly every course at NVC includes outside-of-class hours that are specified on the Course Outline of Record. Remember that it is okay to ask students to work outside of class up to the level delineated on the COR. This could be one way to address lost contact hours in the classroom. However, as with everything else, please remember that your students are enrolled in multiple course sections and having a flood of new homework from five classes may prove overwhelming for many students.

General Guidance

You might also find it helpful to use technology to help provide content and additional academic support for your students. Consider adding content to Canvas.

You may find it useful to begin your first-class meeting back after the emergency closure with an opportunity for your students to share their stories regarding their experiences during the emergency, and it may also be helpful to conduct a review of the material covered prior to the closing. Please reach out to them on that first day back and ask them what they need and how you and the institution can support them.

Be flexible and supportive. Remember that learning is more difficult when learners are stressed. Even students who were not directly affected by the emergency are experiencing a great deal of stress over the closure of the college. It's important that we take on the burden of that additional stress by modifying our approach in the coming weeks, being flexible and compassionate in our approach, rather than expecting the students to make up the lost time on their own.