Faculty Handbook
Full-Time and Adjunct Instructors

2021-2022

Great Falls College MSU
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Welcome!

Great Falls College Montana State University (GFC MSU) is privileged to have a diverse and extraordinarily talented group of full-time and adjunct faculty. You perform an essential service to the college and to our students, whether teaching on campus, online or concurrently in a high school. Information in this handbook has been provided to assist you as you teach students, meet them where they are and help them rise to the outcomes of the courses, programs and college.

Faculty Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of faculty is to provide quality instruction for student learning and to maintain a positive learning environment. Your emphasis is teaching and assessing students.

1. Plan and teach classes as assigned and as outlined in the course descriptions, learning outcomes, and course syllabi.
2. Supervise the learning activities of students.
3. Assess the academic progress of students in a timely, consistent, fair, and recorded manner.
4. Report attendance and student grades on time.
5. Participate in an evaluation of teaching performance.
6. Submit requests through the department chair or program director for equipment, supplies, textbooks, and other instructional aids.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of services, regulations, and procedures as defined in the Faculty Handbook.
8. List student availability times and your contact information in the course syllabus, using the approved syllabus template.
9. Check college email regularly to receive important information.
10. Use the college or learning management system email to communicate with students, as opposed to a personal or other account.
11. Complete all required orientation activities or trainings.
12. Participate in the student learning outcomes assessment process by collecting student learning assessment data, submitting assessment reports, and collaborating with other faculty to create and revise program assessment plans and curriculum maps.
13. Perform other necessary administrative duties associated with teaching, including submitting requested paperwork and documents in a professional and timely manner by given deadlines.

Full-time faculty are also expected to provide service to the campus and community, and to participate in departmental/program, division, and college meetings. Adjunct faculty are invited but not required to participate in such meetings.

Full-time faculty can find more information about their responsibilities as outlined in the faculty union contract.

Adjunct faculty should refer to campus policy 203.2.
Academic Freedom and Responsibility

To ensure instructional excellence, the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education supports academic freedom (see Montana BOR Policy 302). In the development of knowledge, research endeavors, and creative activities, college faculty and students must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism. The faculty member is entitled to freedom in discussing subject matter but should be careful not to introduce matters that have no relation to the field. Faculty and students must be able to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence to participate as responsible citizens in community affairs.

It is the responsibility of all faculty members to align the course outcomes with established student learning outcomes on the course, program and college level. It is their further responsibility to ensure such content conforms to any and all departmental standards as specified in the Great Falls College MSU Catalog and/or the outcomes of the expressed program.

At no time shall the principle of academic freedom prevent the institution from making proper efforts to assure the best possible instruction and academic climate for all students in accordance with the mission of the institution.

Principles of Good Teaching and Learning

The best teaching and learning occur when:

The classroom climate is one of mutual respect among all participants. It is a primary responsibility of GFC MSU instructors to foster and exhibit respect for all students, to hear every student's voice, especially those who have been silenced in previous educational settings. Respect involves a recognition of different points of view, different values, different styles of learning, different talents, and different kinds of intelligence.

Students are motivated. The stronger the desire to learn something the more learning will occur. Instructors who display genuine passion for their subject matter and communicate high standards can generate a similar enthusiasm among students. Love of learning is the strongest motivation we can provide for our students.

The learning environment is treated as a holistic, dynamic system designed to accommodate different ways of learning and knowing. Instructional methods should promote a cycle of learning that includes opportunities for direct hands-on experience; for reflection through reading, writing, and discussion; for students to derive personal meaning or make connections to their daily lives; and for discovering direct applications for the learning. The deepest learning states often occur when the whole brain is engaged.

Content is presented with the "big picture" first as a context for the specific, differentiated information of the subject. The most meaningful learning generally occurs when students have a context for the specific content they are trying to learn. This content – information/material/activities – should be connected either to broader foundational concepts or to students' personal experiences. Learning that lacks a contextual framework tends to be superficial and short term.

The class encourages dialogue and collaboration among students, as well as between students and the instructor. Dialogue among course participants allows for the integration of new knowledge with what students already know, which in turn generates further understanding and fresh insights. Interactions among students and teachers can be the most effective triggers of meaningful learning.

The class provides opportunities for direct experience and active application of course content. Students generally learn things best if they experience them firsthand or apply them directly to solve a problem. Providing students with opportunities to teach others what they are learning is one of the most effective ways to accomplish this kind of applied learning in the classroom.
Student development and transformation becomes an intentional goal of the teaching and learning process. Student development involves positive changes in students’ frames of reference and their ability to think critically and abstractly. This transformation is most likely to occur in an environment that includes safety and trust and provides occasional experiences of cognitive dissonance (i.e. experiences which lead students to question their own beliefs and frames of reference).

Assessment is an ongoing process that provides prompt feedback to students about their learning. Assessment is most effective when there is the least anxiety and the maximum potential to learn from the assessment procedure. Hence, students should perceive assessment as a natural and on-going part of the learning cycle.

Things to Know

8-Week Advantage

- The college has implemented a program called the 8-Week Advantage to achieve its goal of helping every student define a purpose, path and plan resulting in on-time completion. The 8-Week Advantage consists of courses running in two 8-week blocks per semester, rather than as a 16-week course. Some exceptions do exist, such as some courses in the Health Sciences division.

- More information about the 8-Week Advantage can be found at the GFC MSU 8-Week Advantage web page.

Absences

- You should hold your class(es) in accordance with your workload document or letter of appointment (LOA) and the times, days and dates listed on the class schedule in Banner Web.

- If you must be absent for any reason, please notify your division’s administrative associate and your program director/department chair to make arrangements. The college does not provide substitute instructors. Full-time faculty may have other faculty substitute for them by going through a process outlined in the Faculty Absence Guidelines. For more information on leave, see policy sections 406.1 through 406.10.

- Full-time faculty must submit a Travel Request & Authorization Form if traveling on behalf of the college (for conferences, meetings, etc.) or a Personal Leave Request for personal time off such as vacation or sick leave. Full-time faculty have 3 personal days to use each academic year and accrue sick leave. Personal leave must be taken in 4-hour or 8-hour blocks. If you are unable to attend commencement, you must use one of your 8-hour personal leave days or take leave without pay for that date.

- Adjunct faculty do not have personal days and do not accrue sick leave.

- For specifics on sick leave and bereavement, contact Human Resources located in G24 or at 406-268-3701.

- If absences, illness or other unforeseen life events happen to you during the block or semester, please let your division director know.

Accessibility

- Accessibility is related to a design process in which the needs of all people, including those with disabilities, are considered. Products created with accessibility in mind can be used independently by any person, regardless of disability. Individuals with disabilities are able to independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services within the same timeframe as individuals without disabilities, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

- Great Falls College MSU is committed to affording students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities the opportunity to participate in the college’s academic and non-academic activities by providing access and reasonable accommodations that may be necessary to ensure access. This extends to the college’s electronic and information technologies and applies to their procurement, development, implementation, and ongoing maintenance.
• It is the responsibility of all college administrators, faculty, and staff to provide access to education, services, programs, and activities to individuals with disabilities.

• Providing access to all is in accordance with federal and state laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 508 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act as amended, and Title 18, Chapter 5, Part 603, and Title 18-5-604 and 49 of the Montana Code Annotated.

• Electronic instructional materials (syllabi, textbooks, presentations, handouts, etc.), whether optional or required, will be accessible to all students. This includes electronic instructional activities (online collaborative writing, web conferencing, etc.) and electronic library materials delivered within the college’s learning management systems, in face-to-face classes, or in an alternate fashion, such as email, blogs, etc.

• Electronic documents will be accessible to all students. Electronic documents include, but are not limited to, word processing documents, PDFs, presentations, publications and spreadsheets which are scanned, uploaded, posted, or otherwise published or distributed electronically.

• Video media resources will be closed-captioned and audio-described, and audio resources will be transcribed.

• If you need help checking the accessibility of your course resources or making them accessible, please contact the Teaching and Learning Center at 406-771-5148.

• If you have concerns about accessibility, please contact Disability Services.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

• Students with disabilities may receive accommodations through the college’s Disability Services. Common accommodations include, but not limited to, a distraction-free testing environment through the Testing Center, additional time on exams, a lumbar support chair, a sign language interpreter, a note-taker, etc.; however, other accommodations are determined by the Director of Disability Services through an interactive dialogue with the student.

• A student must go through Disability Services to receive accommodations and will present an official notice of the accommodations from Disability Services to the instructor.

• A software program that reads text aloud is available for all students’ use. Students need to see Disability Services though in order to be set up in the program.

• Dual enrolled high school students on our campus, online, or concurrent (taught at the high school by high school faculty) must register with Disability Services at Great Falls College. Students with disabilities are entitled to accommodations in school, be it K-12 or post-secondary education. However, the nature and delivery of those accommodations, as well as the distribution of responsibility, differ significantly between high school and college. IDEA and Section 504 are laws that mandate “free and appropriate public education” for all K-12 students. The ADA and Section 504 guarantee equal access to post-secondary education by requiring “reasonable accommodations” to college students who are “otherwise qualified” as a student. “Otherwise qualified” students must meet all entrance and academic progress with or without reasonable accommodation; there is no “special education” in college.

• No accommodation at the post-secondary level may reduce standards or in any way compromise the integrity of the course; accommodations must be deemed reasonable and agreed upon by the student, Disability Services Director, and the instructor. For more information on such accommodations and Disability Services, go to Disability Services Home Page and see Appendix D.

Adding a Class

• Students can add a class themselves on the web through the third day of class. After that, students need permission to “late add” a class. Students request permission through an Override Authorization Form. If you teach online, you can send your approval via email in lieu of signing the form. The student will need to attach your approval email to the form. A division director must also sign the form.
• Research has shown students who add classes late are not as successful as other students. Thus, the division directors are wary of approving late adds after the first week unless there is a strong reason to do so.

App
• The college has a mobile app that can be downloaded from the Apps or Play store. Search for Great Falls College MSU. The app provides campus information. For students, the app is also linked to their Banner account for class schedules and course information.

Attendance
• Attendance must be taken every day throughout the semester. The last date of attendance must be reported for students who fail a course because there are financial aid ramifications to the student.
• Class rosters can be found in the secure area of Banner Web/MyInfo under “Faculty Services.”
• Attendance can be tracked in D2L/Brightspace; however, you can use other methods as long as you are consistent and the attendance is kept-up-to-date.
• Check your rosters each day the first week of class as there are usually quite a few changes.
• After the first day of class, call the students who do not show up for a face-to-face class or enter an online course shell to make sure they know classes have started. If they plan to attend, we want them not to get behind. If they do not plan to attend this semester, they need to drop the class. Submit a Student Academic Alert for any student you are not able to reach. The alert notifies advisors who will also try to reach the student.
• Attendance records must be kept for 3 years. If you keep attendance within D2L/Brightspace, the data is automatically archived. If you do not keep attendance within D2L/Brightspace and you leave employment at the college, you will need to give your attendance records to the division’s administrative associate.
• You will receive an email from the Registrar’s Office asking you to report attendance as of the 15th day of class. Students who have not participated in a class will be dropped from the course. It is imperative you take attendance. (See policy 210)
• Your class attendance policy should be detailed in your course syllabus. The point of an attendance policy is to encourage students to participate so they will be successful in the class. When drafting a policy, consider options to enable students to continue receiving instruction when an illness or other event prevents them from participating in the traditional manner.

Attire
• Because the college is a professional setting and we want to set an example for students of appropriate attire in the workplace, the college follows a “smart casual to business casual” clothing practice. To see examples of smart and business casual, go to the link: Attire Guide.

Auditing a Course
• Individuals may audit a course with instructor approval. Rules and criteria for auditing a course can be found in the Grading policy (308.1).

Building Hours
• The building is only open certain days and times during the year. A current building schedule is posted on the college website.
• Full-time faculty do have additional access to the building through a key card you can get from Facilities. However, that time is also restricted as shown on the building schedule.
Cheating/Academic Integrity

- The college’s Academic Integrity policy can be found within section 300.40 of the Student Conduct, Grievance and Title IX Policy. The policy lays out the possible consequences of cheating. State the consequences of cheating in your class in your syllabus making sure to adhere to the policy.

- Turnitin Plagiarism Detection software, Respondus Lockdown Browser, and Respondus Monitor are available within the learning management system D2L/Brightspace to help prevent cheating. Additional information can be found in D2L Help. For any issues with the software, please contact the Technology Assistance Center in G100, at 406-771-4440, or elearning@gfcmsu.edu.

- If a student cheats, you will need to complete a Notification of Academic Integrity Policy Violation form.

Class Roster

- A list of your students can be found by going to the secure area of Banner Web/MyInfo under “Faculty Services.”

- There will also be a class list in D2L/Brightspace. However, the roster in Banner Web is the official list of students enrolled in the course. If a student is on one list but not the other, send the student to the Registrar’s Office immediately.

- Students can add themselves to a course through the third day of class. After that time, they need instructor permission. A lot of changes occur during the first week of class. Check your rosters daily during that time. Changes in course registration will appear immediately in Banner; changes in course registrations may not appear in D2L/Brightspace for 24 hours. So, the Banner roster is always the most accurate.

Classroom Management & Student Conduct

- Learning can only occur in an environment where everyone feels safe to participate.

- If you have a concern about student conduct – being disruptive, bullying, harassing, etc. -- please talk to your program director/department chair or division director.

- Several resources are available to help you: a Safety and Welfare Guide for working with concerning students and the Student Conduct, Grievance and Title IX Policy.

- Behavioral incidents should be reported using the Behavioral Referral Form.

Classroom Set-Up & Etiquette (if teaching on campus)

- Each classroom is equipped with an instructor station and computer, whiteboards or whiteboard painted walls, a projector, speakers and microphone, camera, and moveable furniture. The speakers, microphone and camera enable you to record your class and/or interact with students participating remotely.

- Technology training is available through the Teaching & Learning Center. Contact: (406) 771-5148.

- Do not remove furniture from the classroom.

- A classroom may also include adaptive furniture or equipment for students with accommodations through Disability Services.

- Faculty are encouraged to move the desks and chairs to create an optimum learning environment; however, please return the desk and chairs to the original rows before leaving a classroom.

- Erase the whiteboards and take instructional materials with you when leaving a classroom. Whiteboard markers and erasers are available from your division and should be carried with you to and from the classroom in a “pack it in, pack it out” manner.

- Ask students to throw away their garbage so the classroom is clean for the next class.

- If you change the computer settings, please return them to the original settings before leaving.
Your classroom should be unlocked; if it is not, contact your division’s administrative assistant or maintenance at 406-788-1188.

**Common Course Numbering (CCN)**
- The Montana University System practices Common Course Numbering (CCN), meaning course numbers, names, and outcomes have been agreed to by a committee of faculty from different campuses within the system called FLOCs (Faculty Learning Outcome Committees). The purpose of CCN is to increase the ease of transferring between campuses for students.
- Different sets of courses are periodically reviewed by a cross-campus faculty committee to re-align or ensure alignment of courses in the system.
- Because of CCN, it is important to use the correct name, title, and outcomes for a course. Those items, along with the course description from the GFC MSU catalog, must be included in course syllabi. CCN information for a course can be found in the MUS’s [CCN Course Guide](#).

**Computer Login**  See NetID

**Course Assignments, Meeting Times and Locations**
- GFC MSU has a standard set of course meeting times for face-to-face classes, as well as set beginning and ending dates for all classes. Those dates and times must be adhered to.
- Department chairs and program directors distribute and assign courses based on student demand and program needs. Changes to teaching schedules and course assignments may occur for a variety of reasons, including enrollment numbers and changes in faculty availability.
- Full-time faculty will receive a workload document to sign. The document includes the courses and sections to be taught as well as the number of credits assigned.
- Adjunct faculty will receive a Letter of Appointment (LOA) to sign and return. The LOA outlines the courses, credits, compensation, and responsibilities of the instructor.
- Classrooms for face-to-face classes are assigned based on class size, instructional equipment needed, and room availability. Certain classrooms may be requested but are not guaranteed. Do not change classrooms without permission from your division. If you want to change rooms, contact your division’s administrative assistant.
- Course times, days, locations, starting and ending dates, and enrollment numbers can be found in the [Class Schedule](#).
- Campus rooms are numbered based on their location in different wings: R, B, G, A, and T. A stands for “Atrium,” T for “Trades,” while R, B, and G refer to the original color of room signs (red, blue, and green). Rooms numbered in the 100s are on the first floor and 200s on the second floor. See [Campus Map](#).

**Course Delivery Modes**
- GFC MSU delivers instruction in a variety of modalities to best serve students’ needs. Courses may be taught in-person, as hybrid/blended, through a HyFlex model, or online. For definitions and more information, see [Montana Board of Regents Policy 303.7](#).

**D2L/Brightspace Course Shells**
- All classes at GFC MSU have a course shell in the D2L/Brightspace learning management system (LMS) – this includes face-to-face, hybrid, HyFlex, and online classes. The course shells must be activated before the date classes start. Activate the shells through the “Course Management” tab in the D2L/Brightspace shell.
At minimum, all faculty must include the following items in each course shell:

1. A welcome message
2. Contact information using the “instructor widget”
3. The course syllabus
4. Gradebook
5. Link or log-in information for any outside learning platform (MyMathLab, NetLab, Mastering A&P, etc.)

Course shells for multiple sections of the same course can be combined; however, doing so will erase content in the shells. Therefore, shells should be combined before content is added or copied into the shells. Requests to combine course sections in Brightspace should be sent by email to elearning@gfcmsu.edu with the specific course numbers that should be combined into one shell.

Attendance can be tracked in D2L/Brightspace; however, you can use other methods as long as you are consistent and the attendance is kept-up-to-date. See the “Attendance” section of this handbook.

All faculty must complete a basic D2L/Brightspace training course prior to the start of the first semester teaching for GFC MSU.

Quizzes, tests, homework assignments, group discussions, audio/visual materials, readings, teaching aids, course documents, and more can all be completed using the course shell.

For environmental and fiscal reasons, whenever possible faculty should use the course shell as a repository of course information instead of printing materials.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

GFC MSU believes in creating an environment where all are welcome and feel included. This belief is stated in the syllabus template in the wording below and is followed throughout campus:

Great Falls College Montana State University recognizes that there are myriad dimensions of diversity, including sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, gender identity and expression, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, faith and non-faith perspectives, socioeconomic status, political ideology, education, primary language, family status, military experience, cognitive style, and communication style. The individual intersection of these experiences and characteristics is a resource, strength, and benefit to the Great Falls College Montana State University campus community.

GFC MSU has an Inclusion Team comprised of faculty and staff who work together to review policies and practices in an effort to improve access, equity, diversity and inclusion for the college community.

GFC MSU commits to a learning and working environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community that is free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based upon race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, gender, age, political ideas, marital or family status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. The college will take appropriate action to prevent, resolve, and remediate protected-class harm. GFC MSU’s Equal Opportunity Officer and Title IX Coordinator is the Chief Student Affairs & Human Resources Officer, Mary Kay Bonilla, mbonilla@gfcmsu.edu, 406-771-5123.

Dual Enrollment

GFC MSU offers several dual enrollment (DE) opportunities for students who have not graduated from high school yet. DE students are enrolled in both their high schools and the college and can take college-level classes concurrently in their high schools, on the college campus, or online through the college.

DE students may or not be receiving high school credit in addition to the college credit. All DE students do receive college credit and that credit is transcripted for the students.
• DE students take classes at a reduced tuition rate, but they are held to the same standards as college-only students.

• Faculty – both at the high school and at the college – who teach DE classes must meet the credentialing standards of the Montana Board of Regents for the Montana University System (BOR) as well as the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) for K-12 education. See BOR policy 730 for more information. Therefore, faculty who teach courses with the potential to have DE students enrolled in them must earn their OPI teaching license as a condition of employment at the college. The college reimburses the application, background check, and renewal fees. More details are provided as part of the faculty onboarding process.

• The college employs a Dual Enrollment Coordinator to act as a liaison between the high schools and the college. The dual enrollment coordinator can assist faculty in navigating issues preventing DE students from being successful in a college course.

Email

• Once your hiring paperwork is complete, including returning the Letter of Appointment (LOA) for adjunct faculty, and your information has been entered into Banner, you will be assigned a gfcmsu email account. Please allow 24-48 hours for the account to be completed. Then, go to password.gfcmsu.edu to set your password for your email and computer account. You must check this account regularly to receive important information. It is recommended that you check the campus email account even when not on contract to keep up-to-date on information.

• Only the college email account or the email feature of D2L/Brightspace should be used to communicate with students; do not use a personal or other email account.

• To log in to your college email account:
  1. Go to the Great Falls College MSU Webpage at www.gfcmsu.edu, click the “Faculty & Staff” link at the top of the page, and click on the envelope icon
  2. Sign in with the Net ID given you (for example, a12b345@gfcmsu.edu) and a password you set up (see first bullet). For help, contact the Technology Assistance Center at 406-771-4440, in G100, or infotech@gfcmsu.edu. (See the NetID section for more information).

Emergencies, Safety and Security

• An Emergency Response Card giving directions for responding to various types of emergencies is posted in every classroom.

• If you need to call 9-1-1, try to do so from the classroom phone as using it will indicate the classroom number and notify the campus crisis team.

• If you hear and/or see the emergency siren and flashing lights within the building, evacuate the building immediately. Evacuation maps are at the entrance of every classroom and meeting space. Evacuate through the nearest exit and move away from the building. Crisis Team members and Zone Stewards in fluorescent colored vests will guide you at that point. In the rare event that an off-campus gathering point is required, cross 16th Avenue to the University of Providence McLaughlin Center (gym).

• Each classroom computer is equipped with a Little Green Button, a panic button that acts as a call for assistance. Pressing the button will notify a team of campus employees that you need in-person assistance. It is not a replacement for 9-1-1 in an emergency but a way to request assistance if a situation is becoming uncomfortable. Dialing 9999 from any campus phone will accomplish the same thing.

• Informacast is an emergency notification text messaging system for Great Falls College MSU. In the event of an emergency, a text message will be sent to the mobile number registered with the system. This is a free service provided by Great Falls College MSU; however, normal text message fees may apply.

• You can also download the CrisisManager app from the app store or tinyurl.com/crisismanager. Open
the app, tap the “+” sign and select “Client Plans.” Locate our school’s name. Select homepage to view. The app includes the college’s safety plans.

- More information about the college’s safety plans, crime statistics, notification systems, and security-related information can be found on the college’s safety webpage.

- A security guard is on-campus 2:30 pm-close Monday through Friday. To reach security, call 406-788-2252.

- In BannerWeb/MyInfo under “Personal Information/View Emergency Contact,” enter your emergency contact information. In addition, all faculty should give their emergency contact information to their division’s administrative assistant.

Evaluations
- In order to help ensure quality teaching and learning, the college conducts performance evaluations of full-time and adjunct faculty. A separate evaluation handbook is available for each group. Evaluations include self-reflections, teaching observations, student evaluations, and a summary meeting with your supervisor.

- Student course evaluations are administered at the end of each course. Students access the evaluations through an email link or an icon in D2L/Brightspace. Faculty should encourage students to complete the evaluations, even allowing time in face-to-face classes. However, faculty should not be in the room when the evaluations are completed. Faculty can see the results after the course has ended through a link that will be emailed to you when the student evaluation results are available.

Exercise and Wellness
- For benefits-eligible staff, the college does have a small staff wellness room in R190, which is accessed from the north stairwell. It has some weights, a treadmill, and other equipment for employees to use. You can request the access code from your division’s administrative assistant.

- Full-time faculty who elect the college’s health insurance coverage also have access to a wellness program in which they can earn points toward rewards for healthy activities. Contact Human Resources located in G24 or at 406-771-3701 for more information.

FERPA and Confidentiality
- The college adheres to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA protects the confidentiality of student records. Basically, the act states that student educational records are considered confidential and may not be released without the written consent of the student.

- All faculty have a responsibility to protect student educational records. This includes not doing the following:
  1. Publicly posting grades
  2. Linking the name of a student with that student’s ID number in any public manner, including in an email
  3. Leaving graded tests or assignments in a public place for students to pick up; they may be left with the division administrative assistant, but students will need to show a picture ID
  4. Circulating or posting a printed class list as an attendance roster or as a sign-up sheet. If the instructor prefers, he or she can take attendance each class by circulating a sheet with a place for students to sign their names. But, the sheet must not show students’ attendance for any other class day other than the day for which it is circulated. Also, the instructor must not circulate any class list that includes scores or grades for any assessments, i.e., homework, quizzes, exams, projects, etc.
5. Discussing the progress of any student with anyone other than the student (including parents) without the consent of the student

6. Providing anyone with lists of students enrolled in your classes for any commercial purpose

7. Providing anyone with student schedules or assisting anyone other than college employees in finding a student on campus
   - Students can sign a FERPA release in which they stipulate what information can be shared with whom and during what timeframe.
   - If you find yourself in a situation in which you are unsure what to do with student information, contact your division director or the Registrar’s Office.
   - More information about FERPA can be found at About FERPA and in Appendix C.

Final Exams
- Final exams are part of a college course. Faculty may use another form of final assessment, however, such as a paper, project, or presentation in lieu of a formal test.
- Because GFC MSU teaches classes in 8-week and 16-week blocks, the college does not have a “finals week” as some campuses do. Final exams/presentations should be scheduled for regular meeting days and times.

First Day of Class for all Course Delivery Modes
- Take attendance.
- Get to know your students and help them get to know each other to create a learning community.
- Review the syllabus.
- Conduct an engaging activity that makes students want to continue in the course.
- Introduce the course topic and some initial material.
- Call missing students.
- Submit a Student Academic Alert for any student you cannot reach so the advisors can try to contact the student as well.

Food Pantry
- The college does have a food pantry for students. It is located next to B108 and is run by student government. Donations can be dropped off at the site, at the student government office next to the cafeteria, or at the Office of Student Engagement (R221).

Grading
- A gradebook is included in the college’s learning management system D2L/Brightspace.
- If a department/faculty uses an alternate gradebook as part of its instructional software package, it must integrate with D2L/Brightspace so students and the college still have access to current grades in D2L/Brightspace.
- Gradebooks must be kept up-to-date. Students should always have access to their current grades.
- All instructors must submit attendance reports, midterm and final grades to Banner Web by the deadlines given. Directions and deadlines will be emailed directly to faculty.
- Grading must be timely, consistent, fair and recorded. Grading policies must be included in the syllabus and must be followed. See Grading policy 308.1.
• An Incomplete (I) grade may be issued at faculty discretion if a student’s situation meets set criteria as outlined in the Incomplete Request Form. The student initiates the process by submitting the request form to faculty. The Division Director will approve requests before they are submitted to the Registrar for posting.

Graduation/Commencement
• All full-time faculty are expected to attend commencement in the spring. It is a contract day. If a full-time faculty member is not able to attend, the person must use a full 8-hour personal day or take leave without pay.
• Adjunct faculty are welcome and encouraged to attend commencement when possible but not required.
• Academic regalia (a robe and mortarboard) are available for faculty to use during commencement through the Bookstore.

Healthy Campus Plan
• In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, GFC MSU created a Healthy Campus Plan that has now been adapted to be broad enough to cover any infectious disease. Please see the “Instruction” section of the Plan for a Healthy Campus.

HIPs – High Impact Practices
• GFC MSU believes in providing quality instruction and helping students succeed. High Impact Practices (HIPs) are academic practices that research has shown have positive effects on students. All faculty are strongly encouraged to use HIPs in their teaching: First-Year Seminars and Experiences; Common Intellectual Experiences; Learning Communities; Writing-Intensive Courses; Collaborative Assignments and Projects; Undergraduate Research; Diversity/Global Learning; Service Learning, Community-Based Learning; Internships; and Capstone Courses and Projects.
• For a definition and more information on HIPs, see Appendix J.

Holidays/Non-Instructional Days
• Before creating your course calendar, check the Academic Calendar for holidays/non-instructional days.
• GFC MSU has both a fall and a spring break. It occurs between the first and second 8-week block each semester and applies to all courses. No instructional, lab, clinical, or course-related volunteer work shall be assigned outside of the block or semester dates.
• Full-time faculty are also required to be on campus for certain non-instructional days prior to the start of a semester. Those days are meant for professional development, division and department meetings, and class preparation. The Executive Director of Instruction notifies faculty of these dates. You can also check with your division director.

Keys
• Full-time faculty receive a key that opens the division door, their office, and the workroom. They may also request a mailbox key and a key card that opens an entrance to the building during set hours. Key requests should be made to Facilities through the division’s administrative assistant using the Key Request form.
• Adjunct instructors do not usually receive keys unless there is a certain situation that warrants one. The code to the adjunct office can be received from the division’s administrative assistant.
• Classroom keys are not needed as maintenance unlocks classroom doors. If you find a classroom locked, contact your division’s administrative assistant or Facilities at 406-788-1188.
Land Acknowledgement Statement

- GFC MSU acknowledges and honors with respect, that our campus resides on the homelands of many indigenous peoples including the current twelve sovereign nations which reside in Montana today – Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Chippewa, Cree, Crow, Gros Ventre, Northern Cheyenne, Kootenai, Sioux, Little Shell Band of Chippewa, Salish, and Pend d’Oreille. We acknowledge the historical displacement of Indigenous Peoples while also honoring their contributions, continuing today, to the history of the United States. Diversity among populations is important, and we respect everyone’s history and story.

Leave Requests

- Full-time faculty must submit a Pre-Approved Travel Authorization form in ChromeRiver (the MUS’s purchasing software) if traveling on behalf of the college (for conferences, meetings, etc.) or a Personal Leave Request for personal time off such as vacation or sick leave. Full-time faculty have 3 personal days to use each academic year and accrue sick leave. Personal leave must be taken in 4-hour or 8-hour blocks. If you are unable to attend commencement, you must use one of your 8-hour personal leave days or take leave without pay for that date.
- Adjunct faculty do not have personal days and do not accrue sick leave.
- For specifics on sick leave and bereavement, contact Human Resources located in G24 or at 406-268-3701.

Library

- All faculty have the ability to check out items from the library and access its electronic databases.
- The library has study rooms, a 3-D printer, computers, e-readers, and other items available.
- For more information about the library, see the section under “Resources for You” in this handbook and Appendix E.

Lifelong Learning Class Discounts

- The college’s Lifelong Learning department offers non-credit courses for the community and customized training for business and industry. Full-time and adjunct faculty receive a 25% discount on Lifelong Learning’s community classes. See the Lifelong Learning catalog for class offerings.

Mailboxes

- Full-time faculty teaching courses on campus can be assigned a mailbox. Please see your division’s administrative assistant.
- Adjunct faculty teaching courses on campus can use the division’s mailbox. Please see your division’s administrative assistant.

NetID (Computer Login)

- Once all hiring paperwork is complete and your information has been entered into Banner, you will be assigned a “NetID” (this process usually takes about two hours). To log in to a campus computer, D2L/Brightspace or your off-campus college email account, use your Net ID as your username. You can locate your Net ID by following this link: https://www3.montana.edu/netidclaim/.
- To reset a password, visit password.gfcmsu.edu. For assistance contact the Technology Assistance Center at 406-771-4440, in G100, or helpdesk@gfcmsu.edu.
- For more information about logging into your GFC MSU email account, see the “Email” section.
Office Hours/Student Availability

- All faculty are expected to be responsive and available to students. Faculty will provide explicit information in their syllabi regarding their availability to students. This includes when, where and how to contact faculty – whether during on-campus “office hours,” a scheduling platform, in a virtual format at a set time or by appointment, etc. At a minimum, faculty should state they will make every attempt to return all messages within 24 hours, unless it is a weekend or campus holiday. On-campus, full-time faculty should also post their availability and response times outside their office doors.

- Faculty are expected to find a mutually acceptable time to meet with students, whether on campus, virtually, or via email or phone.

- In-person adjunct instructors can meet with students in a classroom if it is not being used by another class, in the adjunct office (B132), in the Academic Success Center, in student common areas, or in the group study rooms in the library. Most face-to-face adjunct instructors make themselves available before and/or after class.

Office Space

- Full-time on-campus faculty will be assigned an office. Typically, each office is equipped with a desk, chair, filing cabinet and bookshelf unless otherwise requested. To change the setup, contact your division’s administrative assistant.

- An adjunct office is located in B132 for adjunct instructors. See Appendix H for more information.

- Additional computer workspace is available in the Weaver Library.

Organizational Chart

- GFC MSU is a comprehensive two-year college in the Montana University System and a part of Montana State University. The college is governed by the Montana Board of Regents and overseen by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). It is led by MSU President Dr. Waded Cruzado and GFC MSU CEO/Dean Dr. Stephanie Erdmann. A campus organization chart is posted on the college website.

Orientation

- An orientation for new full-time faculty will be held during non-instructional contract days prior to the start of the semester. New full-time faculty are required to attend the orientation as well as complete a course called “COLS 104 Foundations of Teaching at the Community College” during their first semester at GFC MSU. Completing the course replaces the committee requirement of faculty during the first year of full-time teaching at the college. More information is available from the Teaching and Learning Center.

- All new adjunct faculty are required to complete an adjunct faculty orientation at the beginning of or prior to their first semester teaching for the college. An incentive is available upon completion. The orientation includes information about the mission of the college; outcomes assessment; the nature of the student population; college policies, procedures, and practices regarding professional expectations and performance; and other academic and student life information that will assist the adjunct faculty member in effectively carrying out teaching assignments. Adjunct faculty are invited, but not required, to complete the COLS 104 Foundations of Teaching at the Community College course. More information is available from the Teaching and Learning Center.

Pay Dates

- Faculty are paid on a regular, two-week pay schedule as shown on the Payroll Calendar.
Phone Directory

- A list of important phone numbers can be found in the online directory.

- If you are on campus, the marketing department will take your photo and add you to the college’s faculty and staff directory on its website. If you teach online, please send your photo to your division’s administrative associate. If you are an adjunct instructor, your division’s main phone number will be listed as your phone number. Your gfcmsu email account will also be listed.

Photocopies

- A small number of photo copies can be made on the copy machines in each division’s workroom. Larger volumes of copies should be sent to the print shop (see the Printing section of this handbook).

- You will need to input your department’s index number into the copy machine. You can request the index number from your division’s administrative associate. The index number is used to charge your department.

- Before copying, consider whether or not the document could effectively be accessed through D2L/Brightspace instead of copied and distributed.

Preferred Names and Pronouns

- GFC MSU supports the use of individuals’ preferred names and pronouns. Faculty may include their preferred pronouns on their syllabi and in their email signatures. In addition, faculty may ask students for their preferred pronouns at the start of a course.

- Faculty should be sensitive to situations in which a person’s appearance may not match the historical use of a pronoun or name and should use the pronouns and name preferred by the individual.

Printing

- Email Ja Sweat at jsweat@gfcmsu.edu to request print orders. Include an attachment of the item you want printed. Indicate if you want color, a special size of paper, a certain color of paper, etc. The more details, the better. He will place the item in your mailbox, or the mailbox of your division associate, when it’s ready.

- You will need to know your department’s index number so Ja knows which department to charge. You can request the index number from your division’s administrative associate.

- Before printing, consider whether or not the document could effectively be accessed through D2L/Brightspace instead of printed.

Record-keeping

- The college adheres to certain record-keeping timeframes following the completion of a course:

  - Exams/graded coursework (if not returned to the student) – 1 year
  - Gradebooks – 5 years
  - Attendance/Class rosters – 3 years
  - Notes when working with a student on an issue – 1 year after graduation or last date of attendance, whichever is greater
  - Items maintained in D2L/Brightspace meet these timeframes, such as coursework, gradebooks, and class rosters.
  - After the time periods have passed, any of the above printed materials should be shredded and electronic copies wiped (not just deleted – see IT for directions).
Faculty who leave employment at the college are responsible for submitting the student academic records listed above with the division administrative associate unless they are accessible in D2L/Brightspace.

Relationships with Students

- Interactions between the faculty and students at GFC MSU are guided by mutual trust, confidence, and professional ethics. An inherent power differential exists between faculty members and students; as a result, faculty-student interactions that go beyond their professional connection carry risks of conflict of interest, breach of trust, abuse of power, and breach of professional ethics. Faculty members shall not engage in romantic, sexual, or exploitive relationships with students. Failure to comply with this policy will subject the faculty member to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. For more information, see Personnel Policy 407.2 and Student Affairs Policy 304.1.

Student Learning Assessment

- One measure of the college’s effectiveness is whether or not students meet the learning outcomes for the college, the program, and the courses. An outcome defines what a student should be able to do upon completion of the learning experience.

- College, program, and course outcomes are aligned or “mapped” to support campus assessment efforts and promote transparency in curricular decisions. Mapping is done by faculty, department chairs, program directors, and division directors. Current curriculum maps can be found on the department/program assessment plans webpage.

- Faculty gather data through assessment tools, such as in-class activities, tests, papers, and projects, to determine whether or not students have met the outcome. Student learning should be assessed through formative assessments, emphasizing feedback and assessment for learning. If students do not meet learning outcomes, faculty create a plan and make adjustments to improve student learning so that students do meet the set outcomes. Assessment of learning should take place through summative assessment activities. Your department chair/program director and division director can provide more information.

- Assessment data should be reported following the schedule indicated on department/program assessment plans. More information about student learning assessment at Great Falls College can be found at About Assessment on the college’s website.

- The Director of Teaching and Learning Innovation can answer questions regarding student learning assessment, as well as provide support and coaching for incorporating effective assessment practices.

Student Letters of Recommendation/Reference

- If you are asked by any student (current, past or graduated) to write or complete a letter of recommendation or be a reference for employment, the student must complete a Reference Release of Information form giving you permission to share information. Otherwise, you will be violating FERPA. Keep the form for your records.

Student Resources

- The college has many resources to help students be successful. Information about these resources can be found at the Student Resources Webpage. Direct students to this webpage through your course syllabus, course shell, and personal interactions.

- Although students are told a computer or laptop is required to attend college, those who do not have one or who need to borrow one for a variety of reasons may check out ChromeBook or laptop from the Weaver Library.

- Students without internet access can check out a hotspot from the Weaver Library or access the campus network.
internet while in the west parking lot if the building is closed.

- Students may use the internet on campus and computers available in the Weaver library, Academic Success Center, Veterans Success Center, kiosks outside the Bookstore, or in any unused classroom.

**Student Success and Alerts**

- GFC MSU is committed to helping our students be successful. When students start displaying behaviors that impede that success, such as missing class, not participating, missing assignments, doing poorly on assessments, etc., faculty are expected to contact the student and discuss the situation with the goal of helping the student be successful.
- Faculty should also submit a [Student Academic Alert form](#) for students who are not performing well in a course. This form goes to the student’s advisor in the Advising and Career Services Center. The advisor will then attempt to contact the student and works with the faculty to help the student get back on the path to success.

**Supplies**

- Supplies can be found in each division’s workroom.
- Instructors are expected to practice a “pack it in, pack it out” mentality and to carry their supplies with them to and from a classroom.
- Some supplies are available in the adjunct office (B132).
- If you need something that you cannot find in either place, contact your division’s administrative associate.

**Syllabus**

- The syllabus acts like a contract between students and faculty; it tells students taking a course what they can expect from the instructor and what will be expected of them.
- All instructors must create and submit a syllabus each semester for each course they teach. All syllabi must be submitted electronically to their division’s administrative associate before the course’s first class period.
- The college has a syllabus template that must be used by all faculty. The syllabus template can be requested from the division’s administrative associate. In addition, programs or departments may also have standardized syllabi to use, so faculty should check with their program director or department chair.
- For more information about the syllabus, see Appendix A.

**Technology**

- Full-time faculty are provided with a laptop, a docking station, VPN access, and a WebEx account. This technology enables you to quickly switch to remote instruction if needed. Other technology and assistance are available through the Technology Assistance Center at 406-771-4440, in G100, or [infotech@gfcmsu.edu](mailto:infotech@gfcmsu.edu).
- For classroom technology information, see “Classroom Set-up & Etiquette” in this handbook.

**Textbooks**

- You will receive your instructor’s textbook from the division. Do not purchase your textbook(s) through the bookstore or directly from another source.
- The college is committed to reducing textbook costs for students, which includes using open educational resources (OER) which are free or low-cost to students and often electronic versions.
• Required books for most classes are listed on the bookstore website so students can see them.

• Work with your department chair or program director to provide book orders, in advance, to your division’s administrative associate for the books you will need for the upcoming semester.

• Book order requests typically will be sent out for responses in October for spring courses and March for summer and fall courses.

• In some cases, your department may have chosen the books for your course(s) already. Check with your department chair/program director.

Travel
• From time to time faculty may be traveling for college business. The division administrative assistant can help you make arrangements. College travel policies and procedures must be followed. See Appendix I: Travel Procedures for more information.

Tutoring
• Free tutoring for online and on-campus GFC MSU students is available through the Academic Success Center. See the “Resources for You” section and Appendix G. This is a great service to remind your students to use.

Whom to Contact
• Your division is your first point of contact:

  General Studies/Health Sciences/Trades Admin. Associate:
  Jeni Luft 406-771-4350  jeni.luft@gfcmsu.edu  R234

  Dental Admin. Associate:
  Terri Jarvey  406-771-4364  terri.jarvey@gfcmsu.edu  R180

• Other can numbers can be found in the online campus directory.

Withdrawals/Dropping Classes
• There is a difference between withdrawing from the college or for an entire semester and dropping a course. Students may drop a course until a certain date (see the Academic Calendar for the exact date). After the deadline, students must request to drop a class by contacting the faculty member and submitting a drop form. The purpose of the process is to create an opportunity for you to have a conversation with the student to see if it is possible for the student to be successful in the course. Your division director and division administrative associate have the drop form to give you to give the student if you and the student decide that is the best option for the student.

• Students withdrawing for an entire semester or from the college as a whole should do so through their Advisor.

• Students may only “drop” or withdraw from a class to a certain point in the semester or block as outlined in the Academic Calendar.

Workday Expectations
• As stated in the faculty contract Section 4.8, “it is presumed the College has priority on the working time of a full-time teaching faculty member.” Faculty should be engaged in classroom activities or professional responsibilities such as “teaching, laboratory supervision, lab/shop/equipment maintenance, curriculum development, professional development, departmental and institutional planning, committee activity, and student advising” (Section 4.8). If you have assigned duties outside of the normal work day, such as teaching a night or weekend class, your schedule will be adjusted by you
and your supervisor. GFC MSU has an “open campus;” however, you should be available to conduct the work of the college during normal business hours.

- Full-time faculty members who do have secondary employment must complete and submit a “Conflict of Interest” form through Human Resources and notify their supervisor. Such work should not conflict with the normal business hours of the college.

- Full-time faculty are expected to participate in campus, division, and department meetings and events. Adjunct faculty are invited but not required to attend.

- Adjunct faculty are expected to meet their course times and be available for students. However, it is understood that adjunct faculty often have other employment. Their main duties are instructional versus committees, advising, etc.

- If an adjunct faculty member also holds another position at the college, the person must complete an Internal Adjunct Schedule Approval Form showing how the schedule will be adjusted to compensate for the teaching time.
Resources for You

Academic Success Center (ASC)
- Free tutoring for GFC MSU students, both on-campus and online, is available through the Academic Success Center (ASC). The ASC also has learning support materials for students, such as anatomy models, calculators, grammar worksheets, and more.
- The ASC works closely with faculty to provide the best support for students. Such collaboration includes sharing assignment sheets, test dates, formula sheets, etc.
- Faculty are encouraged to spend time in the ASC to provide support for the tutors and students.
- Faculty may also be asked to participate in tutor training.
- Faculty should include information about the ASC in their course materials, both for on-campus and online students, and encourage students to use the ASC to support their learning in the course.
- For more information on the ASC, see Appendix G.

Disability Services
- Disability Services works with students with physical, mental, and learning disabilities to help them be successful in college. Through Disability Services, students may receive certain accommodations (see “Accommodations for Students with Disabilities” in the “Things to Know” section of this handbook.)
- Disability Services also has information available to help students with test anxiety, study skills, reading comprehension, and more. It is located in R220 and can be reached at 406-771-4311.
- For more information about Disability Services, see Appendix D.

Information Desk
- An Information Desk is located inside the entrance at the Atrium (between the Weaver Library and Student Central) and can be reached at 406-771-4433 or infodesk@gfcmsu.edu.
- The Information Desk can assist with locked classrooms, contacting IT and the custodial staff, and email account/reset password (you will need your employee ID (Banner ID#) for this).

Library
- The Weaver Library at Great Falls College MSU has a wealth of resources available for faculty and students. See Appendix E. For complete information, check the Weaver Library webpage.

Student Learning Assessment
- All information related to the campus student learning assessment process, including resources, reports, and templates, can be found on the assessment webpage.
- Mandy Wright, the Director of Teaching and Learning Innovation, can help you with student learning assessment planning and questions. She can be reached at 406-268-3713 or mandy.wright@gfcmsu.edu.

Teaching and Learning Center
- The Teaching and Learning Center provides training and support for all faculty. It is located in A124. Visit the Teaching and Learning Center’s webpage to find a variety of resources and information.
Becky Sullivan, the instructional designer with the Teaching and Learning Center, can help you better use D2L/Brightspace, organize a course, plan assessments, create learning support materials, use the classroom technology, and more. She can be reached at 406-771-5148 or becky.sullivan@gfcmsu.edu.

Technology Assistance Center (TAC)

- The Technology Assistance Center (TAC) is a combination of eLearning and IT Services.
- The TAC provides support for all instructional technology issues, including, but not limited to, email, computer log-on, and classroom technology equipment.
- TAC offers training and support to faculty and adjunct faculty who wish to integrate technology into their classrooms for all approved technology.
- TAC provides technical support for all students, directs and coordinates any services to students using the learning management system (D2L/Brightspace).
- Faculty should refer students to the TAC if students are experiencing technical difficulties or having trouble logging into courses.
- TAC is located across from the Administration Suite in G100 and can be reached at 406-771-4440.
- Email elearning@gfcmsu.edu for D2L and learning tools issues or helpdesk@gfcmsu.edu for all other tech concerns.

Testing Center

- The Testing Center at GFC MSU provides a variety of services, including proctoring placement tests, challenge exams, exams for online courses, make-up exams, and exams for students with certain accommodations through Disability Services.
- It is located in R274 and can be reached at 406-268-3711. For more information on the Testing Center, its policies and procedures, go to Appendix F or the Testing Center’s webpage.
Appendix A

THE COURSE SYLLABUS: PROMISES TO KEEP

Contact your division’s administrative associate for the current Syllabus Template.

Purposes of the Course Syllabus

At Great Falls College Montana State University, a course syllabus serves the following purposes:

1. The course syllabus tells students taking the course what they can expect and what will be expected of them.
2. The course syllabus is used by other institutions to evaluate whether a particular course is equivalent to a course they offer and therefore transferable.
3. The course syllabus is used by faculty, program directors, and department chairs to ensure that the content and objectives of the course remain consistent, regardless of the instructor teaching it, the number of sections provided, or the semester it is offered.
4. The course syllabus is used by the Curriculum Committee to evaluate the appropriateness of the credits allotted for the course, its placement in the curriculum, and its reflection of program and institutional standards.
5. The course syllabus is used by the Division Director to evaluate whether faculty instruction and assessment is well-suited to achieving the objectives of a course.
6. The course syllabus is a critical source document in any academic complaint.

In short, the course syllabus is a promise that Great Falls College Montana State University makes to its students, faculty, academic senate, administration, receiving institutions, accrediting bodies, and the public. Because the promise centers on the most important work of the College – teaching and learning – it is arguably the most important promise that it makes. If the College and its faculty are to be credible, keeping that promise is essential.

The Content of the Course Syllabus

Course syllabi often include information specific to the instructor of the course or the semester that it is offered—e.g., instructor’s e-mail address, availability to students, etc.—but all course syllabi at Great Falls College Montana State University follow a common syllabus template so that students can easily find the information they need. Components of the template are as follows:

- **Equity Statement**: GFC MSU is committed to including people from a variety of backgrounds. The college understands that this diversity strengthens and benefits the campus community. The equity statement reflects that belief and needs to be included as written in the template.

- **Course Description**: This brief summary of the content of the course should be identical to the description of the course in the College’s catalog. *It may not be altered by individual faculty except through formal curriculum change processes.*

- **Course Materials**: Any texts, supplies, or equipment that the student is required to purchase in order to take the course must be listed in the course syllabus. Although individual faculty may supplement these materials with additional materials of their own choosing in order to keep expenses and expectations consistent and reasonable from faculty to faculty and semester to semester, supplemental materials should be easily accessible and inexpensive.

- **Course Outcomes**: The syllabus should clearly state the specific skills, knowledge, and/or understanding that successful students will achieve as a result of taking the course. The course
outcomes are perhaps the most important part of the syllabus because they are directly connected to almost every purpose that a syllabus serves. Therefore, they may not be altered by individual faculty except through established curriculum processes. Additionally, the course outcomes must be aligned with the appropriate program outcomes and, if applicable, any of the College Learning Outcomes. This alignment should be consistent across course sections. Please refer to your program or department’s assessment plan to ensure accurate alignment of course and program/College Learning Outcomes.

- **Course Outline**: The course outline should give a clear indication of the content of the course—what, specifically, will be covered and in what order. The content of the course must remain constant, but faculty have the latitude to alter the format and the sequence of course content to suit their instructional purposes and circumstances. Any changes, however, must be clearly communicated with students in a timely manner and adhere to any departmental policies.

- **Course Grading**: This section of the course syllabus specifies the manner in which final grades for the course will be determined. Any activity related to the final grade should be listed in this section, including class participation and attendance, if the instructor factors those elements into the course grade. Grading scales and other methods of grade calculation should also be included. This section should reflect how you will evaluate the course.
  
  - State your expectations clearly. For instance, if attendance does affect the course grade, be specific about your expectations for attendance and explain how attendance influences the final grade.
  
  - Adhere completely to the evaluation methods that you specify in your syllabus. Grade complaints become more difficult to resolve when you have not graded students using the methods you promised in your syllabus.
  
  - Be able to defend the appropriateness of the evaluation methods that you identify in your syllabus. Do they have a logical connection to the course objectives? Do they strike the appropriate emphases and balances among objectives? Are they fair to all students in the course?

- **Student Responsibilities**: Because attendance is key to a student’s academic success, the College has instituted an “Attendance & No Show” policy (see policy 210.1). In order for the policy to function and aid in student success, faculty are required to take attendance. In addition to the College policy, departments and faculty may have additional attendance and tardiness policies. Those policies should be clearly stated in the syllabus. Other student responsibilities listed could relate to late work, missed exams, conduct, etc.

- **Accommodations Statement**: Students with disabilities may receive accommodations through Disability Services. In addition to putting this statement in your syllabus, mentioning this option for students on the first day of class is beneficial to the students who need to contact the Disability Services office as soon as possible to make arrangements for the semester.

- **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**: Maintaining academic integrity is critical to the College. The “Academic Honesty” policy 300.14 can be found under “Student Conduct” in the policy handbook

- **Academic Success Center**: Students have access to free tutoring and resources through the Academic Success Center. This statement informs students about those services and should remain in the template as written. For more information, including a current tutoring schedule, go to the ASC’s webpage or call 406-771-5121.

- **Additional Student Resources**: Students have access to a variety of resources and support services. A listing of those resources can be found on the Student Resources Webpage.

- **Non-Discrimination Information**: Both the college’s Equal Employment Opportunity and its Title IX Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation statements are listed in this section.
Submission of the Course Syllabus

All faculty must create a course syllabus for every course they teach. By the first class period, all faculty should deliver an electronic copy of the syllabus for each course they teach that semester to their division’s administrative associate. All divisions should have a course syllabus on file for every course in every program in the division. Adjunct instructors should check with their program director or department chair for any specific information or practices that need to be included in the syllabus.

Faculty will ensure all students have a course syllabus for every course in which they are enrolled. Syllabi must be made available to students electronically in D2L/Brightspace. Faculty may want to include a brief “syllabus quiz” at the beginning of the course to encourage students to read the syllabus and promote student understanding of the course policies and expectations.
Appendix B

ONLINE COURSE DESIGN GUIDELINES

GFC MSU adheres to evidence-based online course design guidelines, following the Core Principles of Quality as established by the Montana University System. The online course review tool used by the Teaching and Learning Center incorporates these Principles of Quality and standards established by Quality Matters. Online course reviews are intended to function as a collaborative peer review process to help faculty design high quality, accessible courses. The Teaching and Learning Center does not evaluate faculty; instead, emphasis is placed on reviewing course design and creating opportunities for continuous improvement of courses. Faculty are encouraged to collaborate with the Instructional Designer, the Program Director, and/or the Division Director to work on any recommendations for course improvement.

Online courses are reviewed regularly. New online courses, including those taught online for the first time, will be reviewed during the initial semester taught. Faculty are encouraged to use the self-evaluation tool available from the Teaching and Learning Center as they plan and develop their courses. The instructional designer will review the course using the course review rubric, indicating if each standard is met or not met and providing constructive feedback. Standards are considered “met” at 85%. Faculty, program directors/department chairs, and division directors have access to completed course reviews.

Core Principles of Quality for eLearning Courses as established by the Montana University System:

1. **Course Design and Introduction:**
The course design, navigation, and content, as well as instructor and student expectations are made clear to students from day one and throughout the course. The course materials, interactions, and policies are universally designed to accommodate all students.

   - Teacher presence is visible through the design and the facilitation of the course.
   - Course has an identified starting place, the organizational system of the course is explained, and uses responsive design.
   - The navigation of the course is logical, consistent, and accessible (for example, heading structure, descriptive links, alternative text, appropriate use of color, etc.).

2. **Learning Outcomes:**
Learning outcomes and objectives describe what learners will be able to do upon completion of the course. They establish a foundation upon which the rest of the course is based.

   - Course learning outcomes are clearly defined, measurable, and visible to students.
   - Module/unit objectives are measurable and aligned with course-level outcomes.
   - Students build mastery of learning outcomes through engagement with the content (such as through activities and assessments), engagement with peers, and engagement with the instructor.
3. **Assessment & Measurement:**
Assessments use established strategies to measure effective learning, are aligned to the learning objectives, and are designed as essential to the learning process.

- The grading policy includes clearly stated criteria for how work and participation will be evaluated.
- Assessment uses a combination of formative and summative assessment techniques that follow universal design (UDL) principles by involving students in their learning progress, supporting learner variability through flexible assessments, and eliminating unnecessary barriers.
- Students can clearly see how they are building mastery of learning outcomes and objectives through timely feedback and a gradebook aligned with the syllabus.

4. **Instructional Materials and Technology:**
Instructional materials, including supporting technology, have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency to enable students to achieve course objectives and learning outcomes.

- Instructional materials and technology used in the course enrich instruction and foster learner interactivity.
- Instructional materials and technology are universally designed for learning.
- The instructor uses a variety of instructional materials in the course (such as textbooks and other publications, instructor-created resources, websites, and multimedia) to support and enrich student learning.

5. **Learner Engagement & Support:**
The course design and delivery include meaningful engagement designed to enhance student’s motivation, intellectual commitment, and personal development. Such engagement should include substantial instructor-to-student, student-to-student, and student-to-content interaction.

- Instructors regularly and substantively interact with students through social presence, teaching presence, and cognitive presence to support learning throughout the course.
- The design and facilitation of student interaction is responsive to the variety of cultures and communication styles in the learning community.
- The course is effectively supported for the students through fully accessible modes of delivery, resources, and institutional support services essential to learner success.
- The instructor employs evidence-based pedagogical practices to deepen student engagement and enhance learning.
Appendix C

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

Protect Our Students - Protect Ourselves
To be allowed access to student records, you must carefully review the material presented in this
document. Maintaining confidentiality of student records is everyone's responsibility whether you are
faculty, staff or student.

Why?
• Because It’s the Right Thing to Do
• Because the Federal Government Requires Us to Do So

What Is FERPA?
FERPA stands for Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (sometimes called the Buckley
Amendment). Passed by Congress in 1974, the Act grants four specific rights to the adult
student:
1. The right to see the information that the institution is keeping on the student;
2. The right to seek amendment to those records and in certain cases append a statement to the
record;
3. The right to consent to disclosure of his/her records;
4. The right to file a complaint with the FERPA Office in Washington.

What is a Student Educational Record?
Just about any information provided by a student to the University for use in the
educational process is considered a student educational record:
1. Personal information
2. Enrollment records
3. Grades
4. Schedules

The storage media in which you find this information does not matter. Student
educational record may be:
1. A document in the registrar’s office
2. A computer printout in your office
3. A class list on your desktop
4. A computer display screen
5. Notes you have taken during an advisement session

What Are the Basic Rules?
Student educational records are considered confidential and may not be released without the written
consent of the student. As a faculty or staff member you have a responsibility to protect educational
records in your possession.

Some information is considered public (sometimes called "Directory Information"). This info can be
released without the student’s written permission. However, the student may opt to consider this info
confidential as well. Directory Information is name, address, phone, dates of attendance, degrees
received, major program. You have access to information only for legitimate use in completion of your
responsibilities as a university employee. Need to know is the basic principle.
If you are ever in doubt, do not release any information until you talk to the office responsible for student records. Call the Registrar’s Office at 771-4423, or refer the request to that office.

**Special “Do Nots” for Faculty**
To Avoid Violations of FERPA rules, DO NOT:

1. Publicly post grades;
2. Ever link the name of a student with that student's ID number in any public manner;
3. Leave graded tests in a stack for students to pick up by sorting through the papers of all students;
4. Circulate a printed class list with student name, ID number, or grades;
5. Discuss the progress of any student with anyone other than the student (including parents) without the consent of the student;
6. Provide anyone with lists of students enrolled in your classes for any commercial purpose;
7. Provide anyone with student schedules or assist anyone other than university employees in finding a student on campus.

For more information go to [Student Information on FERPA](#).
CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations in the classroom as long as the accommodation does not compromise the integrity of the course (i.e. grading standards; quantity of information). The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protect students with disabilities. These laws require that qualified students with disabilities get equal access to an education, including exam and quiz accommodations.

Accommodation Requests
All accommodation requests must come through Disability Services (DS). Accommodation forms for both 1st and 2nd blocks will be sent electronically through our MSU Vault secure server to faculty members and students. Instructions to access the secure server and a password will be sent to both the faculty member and student via email. You will need this password to open the link in a 2nd email from DS entitled “Great Falls College MSU Secure File Sharing Link.” There is no need to sign and return the accommodation form. If you do not approve of the accommodation(s), please contact Disability Services at 406-771-4311.

At the end of the semester, please shred the accommodation form since all the information contained in the document is confidential and shall not be disclosed to anyone in any manner without written consent from the student.

- Exception: Students whose disabilities and subsequent needs are obvious may be accommodated at the instructor’s discretion without going through DS (e.g., blind student bringing a guide dog to class, student in wheelchair needing lower lab table), but referral to DS is still recommended.

- Students are responsible for initiating contact with DS and making arrangements for accommodations as needed. Students are also responsible for renewing their accommodations with DS each semester. Please note: Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive verification of the student’s eligibility from the Disability Services Office.

- Instructors should review the Accommodation Request with the student and discuss arrangements.

- Although students are required to disclose the existence of a disability to their instructors in order to receive accommodations, they are not required to provide them with a diagnosis or any other details; students are encouraged to develop an open dialogue with instructors, but it is ultimately the student’s decision to disclose information; any level of disability information about which instructors become aware should remain confidential.

- Accommodation requests must be made in advance of the need (preferably at the beginning of each semester), and accommodations requiring special arrangements (e.g. alternative exams) must be requested at least one week in advance.

- Exception: On rare occasions, a disability may have a sudden exacerbation that would warrant a request for retroactive accommodations (e.g., an extreme diabetic reaction causes a student to miss an exam and the student requests a make-up exam).
• The Disability Services office encourages students to submit documentation within the first two weeks of the semester to receive accommodations. However, students may request accommodations any time during the academic year.

• If the instructor cannot provide the requested accommodation, alternate arrangements may be discussed with the student and the Director of Disability Services.

**Test Accommodations**

• The Director of Disability Services determines eligibility for test accommodations. The Disability Services Office determines appropriate accommodations and bases decisions upon documentation submitted from a student with a disability, the student’s functional limitations, and the student’s clarification about specific needs and limitations as well as the functional requirements of the program or courses the student is taking.

• Appropriate accommodations will be indicated on the Accommodation Request, which will detail the accommodation and describe the circumstances under which the accommodation should be provided. Any accommodations beyond those marked on the form should be discussed with the Director of Disability Services.

**Faculty Proctored Exams & Disability Service Proctored Exams**

**Faculty Proctored Exams**

Faculty proctoring exams should be aware of the following:

**Please note:** The provision of exam accommodations is a legal mandate, and the manner in which exam accommodations are provided is extremely important. Faculty members are critical partners in the collaborative process to ensure that students get appropriate accommodations for their exams. On the Great Falls College Montana State University campus, individual faculty or academic departments may proctor exams when the accommodation is extended time (1.5 or 2x) or students may schedule exams and quizzes with Disability Services when other accommodations are necessary, such as a scribe or reader, etc. Students requesting extended testing time and a less-distractive environment may schedule exams and quizzes in the Testing Center in R 274.

Faculty must provide students with the exact amount of time indicated on the Accommodation Request Letter. For example, if you have designed an exam to be completed in 60 minutes, then a student requesting 1.5 x would need 90 minutes to complete the exam. If the accommodation is extended time only, it is preferred that the student takes the exam in the classroom environment rather than be segregated from the rest of the class. If a student arrives late to the arranged start time, the arranged finish time need not be modified. If you are teaching a course online, please change the timer in D2L to accommodate the student’s need for extended testing time.

• The testing environment is critical, regardless of whether or not there is a specific accommodation for reduced distraction. For example, a busy hallway, lounge, or other areas accessible to the public are never appropriate for test taking.

• It is the student’s responsibility to schedule exams with each of his/her faculty members.

**Disability Service Proctored Exams**

Disability Services is responsible for providing exam accommodations such as use of a reader, scribe, interpreter, word processor, and/or distraction free environment.
• The student must contact Disability Services at 406-771-4311 or room R261 to make a reservation no less than 3 business days before the exam.

• Students requesting exam accommodations through the Disability Services office will notify his/her instructors so exam delivery and pickup arrangements can be made.

• Disability Services proctored exams are generally taken within regular business hours on the same day as regular classroom exams, although there may be exceptions.

Testing Center Proctored Exams

• Students taking proctored exams through the Testing Center will schedule exams online through the Testing Center’s webpage. The proctors do not notify faculty when their students schedule exams. It is the students’ responsibility to contact their faculty member and let them know when they have scheduled their exams.
Appendix E

GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MSU WEAVER LIBRARY

Mission
The mission of the Weaver Library at Great Falls College MSU is to support and enhance instruction and learning in a manner that is consistent with the institution's philosophy and evolving programs. The library serves as the major information resource on campus. It contributes to the educational process and assists students in achieving success by maintaining a well-balanced collection of materials in a variety of formats and by providing knowledgeable staff to help patrons with their information needs. The library also exists to foster the broader educational ideals of life-long learning, information literacy, and intellectual freedom.

Services for Faculty:
- The library supports the curriculum with a robust collection of materials, including print, av, and full-text online resources. Did you know, for example, that the library has online access to over 30,000 full-text magazines and journals? Our online databases and materials are accessible 24 hours a day from off-campus. You will also find materials on teaching and learning.
- Reference services—drop-in and by appointment, in persona and via phone, email and chat.
- Faculty can put their own materials on reserve in the library for students or have library materials reserved.
- Materials from other libraries can be obtained through interlibrary loan.
- Instruction in using library resources.

Services for your students:
- Physical and electronic materials, reference services, interlibrary loan, and instruction;
- Off-campus access to library resources;
- Computer lab;
- Laptops and wifi hotspots available for checkout;
- Areas for study and collaborative work, including group study rooms.

Some suggestions to help make your library research assignment a success—on campus or online:
- Please check to see whether the library has the resources your students will need. We have a limited budget and may not have the resources you expect. To see if the library has a specific resource, check the library catalog or contact a library staff member.
- Don’t assume that your students are familiar with the library. Many may not have used our library or may not have used a library for some time. We would be happy to schedule a library instruction session for your students.
- Consult with a librarian before making an assignment. We can advise you on the availability of resources, make suggestions about others, and point out any problems in advance.
- If you have a handout of your assignment, providing us with a copy in advance makes it easier for us to help students. Let your students know that we are here to help them. Many students think they are supposed to know all about the library and are reluctant to ask for help.

Contact the Weaver Library:
406-771-4398 or
library@gfcmsu.edu or http://library.gfcmsu.edu
Appendix F

TESTING CENTER INFORMATION AND POLICIES
GFC MSU Students
Room R274

The Testing Center provides fully online or hybrid/mixed-mode course exams (includes courses taught using D2L and MyMathLab), make-up exams for all courses, Accuplacer placement, and exams for students requiring extra time or a distraction-free environment (students must see the Disability Services Coordinator First) and provide the appropriate card when testing.

Testing Center hours vary, depending on the semester. To find the current hours, go to: http://students.gfcmsu.edu/testing

Please view the following procedures prior to using Testing Center Facilities. By making an appointment to use the Testing Center or walking in to use the Testing Center services, you are verifying that you have read and understand the following procedures.

Exam Appointments Are REQUIRED

1. To schedule an appointment please fill out the appropriate form at http://students.gfcmsu.edu/testing
   a. Appointments should be requested via email form at least 24 business hours in advance of the desired date/time.

2. All Students will schedule online unless they work with the Disability Services Coordinator.

3. A request does not guarantee the appointment. Confirmation of the appointment will be provided via the email you listed on the request form as late as the morning of your appointment—be sure to check your spam/junk mail box.

4. Students are responsible for requesting a test time that will allow for adequate time to complete the exam.
   a. ALL EXAMS must be completed by the Testing Center’s closing hour for that day.
   b. Testers WILL NOT be permitted to remain in the testing center AFTER HOURS.
   c. If the student decides to take their test without the adequate time, they will be required to fill out a time waiver.
   d. It is the student’s responsibility to know who their instructor is, the course name & number, the exam time limits, exam availability dates, and exam restrictions.

Testing Center Guidelines

1. Please plan to arrive 5 minutes prior to the start of your scheduled exam time. Due to limited testing space, anyone arriving more than 10 minutes late, may be required to reschedule
2. Be prepared to show a VALID photo ID in order to test. Examples: Driver’s license, GFC MSU Student ID, Military ID, State Issued ID, Passport, or Tribal ID.
3. **No Personal items** are allowed in the Testing Center, this includes but is not limited to: cell phones, watches, smart watches, Fitbit/fitness trackers, hats, sunglasses, coats, gloves, wallets, purses, backpacks, food/drink, headphones/earbuds, iPod, and MP3 players.
   a. Books, Notes and Calculators may be authorized if given written consent by the Instructor.
   b. All personal calculators will have memory erased before entering the Testing Center.
   c. Lockers will be provided for all personal items. The lockers are 10 ½” deep x 11 1/2” wide x 22 ½” high. Please plan accordingly as the testing center staff WILL NOT watch any personal items not locked in a locker.
   d. Power down **ALL** electronic devices prior to storing them in the locker.
4. Calculators, scratch paper and/or pencils will be provided only if the instructor gives prior written approval.
   a. The Testing Center has a limited number of graphing and business calculators available for your use.
   b. Scratch paper **MAY NOT** be taken away from the Testing Center.
   c. Completed paper exams and scratch paper must be submitted to the proctor.
   d. For Face-to-face classes doing a paper exam, scratch paper will be stapled to the completed exam.
   e. Students are responsible for knowing if their instructor collects scratch paper.
5. Please help us accommodate students and employees who are chemically sensitive to fragrances and other scented products. Thank you for **NOT** wearing perfume, aftershave, scented hand lotion, fragranced hair products, and/or other strong scented smells.
6. You are **NOT** permitted to the leave the Testing Center once the exam has started unless instructor gives prior written approval. Emergency situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
7. **NO FOOD or DRINK** is allowed in the Testing Center.
9. A recording surveillance system is installed to help monitor the Testing Center area.
10. Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of the Testing Center. Academic misconduct **WILL NOT** be tolerated (Policy 300.40, 300.41 and 300.42, GFC MSU Policy & Procedure Manual)
11. An Incident Report **WILL BE** completed and submitted to the course instructor and department chairperson for any infractions relating to the above procedures.

   Great Falls College Testing Center has the right to refuse admittance for repeated no-show appointments.
Appendix G

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER (ASC)

The Academic Success Center provides assistance to students to facilitate successful completion of coursework and program of study – both on-campus and virtually. Free tutoring is available to all Great Falls College MSU students, and no appointment is necessary.

Content specific tutoring is available in the following areas:

- Accounting
- Anatomy/Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Communications
- Computers
- Dental
- Math
- Music
- Psychology
- Writing

The Academic Success Center tutors are able to assist with various study skills to help you be a successful learner. Some of these skills include:

- Computer usage
- Mind Mapping
- Note Taking
- Reading
- Test Preparation
- Time Management
- Using Study Aids

Please encourage your students to take advantage of this free resource.

For complete information, check the ASC webpage.
Appendix H

ADJUNCT OFFICE PROCEDURES

The adjunct office is located in room B132 on the Great Falls campus for adjunct instructors to use. Please consider the following in the use of the room. Thank you!

1. Do not leave your computer logged in and unattended as this might allow corruption of your files.

2. Always attend to printing as there may be printer jams or printers may run out of paper.

3. Do not leave personal belongings unattended.

4. The adjunct office is a designated work area. Please keep distractions to a minimum.

5. Children are not allowed in the adjunct office.

6. The office phone is for adjunct faculty use only.

7. Please report problems to the appropriate division administrative associate.

8. The adjunct office will remain locked at all times. It can be used should you need to hold office hours or have a more private meeting with a student; however, other areas on campus are also available such as any commons area or group study rooms in the library.

9. You can put your name on a file cabinet drawer and keep items in that drawer.

10. There is a code required to enter the adjunct office. Contact the appropriate division administrative associate for the combination:

   **General Studies/Health Sciences/Trades Admin. Associate:**
   Jeni Luft 406-771-4350  jeni.luft@gfcmsu.edu  R234

   **Dental Admin. Associate:**
   Terri Jarvey  406-771-4364  terri.jarvey@gfcmsu.edu  R180
Appendix I

TRAVEL PROCEDURES

Before booking any travel, review travel policies 503.1, 503.2, and 503.3.

The division administrative assistant can help you make arrangements and use a college purchasing card (p-card). Below are a few critical highlights from the policies:

- All travel must be approved in advance by your division director. **A travel pre-approval form must be completed and approved in Chrome River (the MSU purchasing software) prior to any expenditure on travel.**
- The number of personnel attending a given function requiring travel should be held to the absolute minimum.
- Reimbursable travel expenses include only those expenses incurred while traveling on official college business. These expenses include:

  TRANSPORTATION:
  - Commercial Airfare: required to use college issued p-card to purchase airfare
  - College-owned vehicle: always the first choice if available when traveling by car; vehicle reservations can be made through Denise Ostberg, 406-771-2271, denise.ostberg@gfcmsu.edu
  - Rental Car: the college has a contract with Enterprise – see your division administrative assistant
  - Personal Vehicle: mileage reimbursement rate vary. See policy 503.3 for more details

  MEALS: meals are paid on a per-diem basis and **should not be charged to a p-card.** Meals for in-state and out-of-state travel are paid at different rates. Chrome River will calculate per diem amounts for you automatically based on travel times input on the reimbursement form.

  LODGING: reimbursed at maximum **state-rate or out-of-state rate.** **Always ask for a state/government rate when making reservations.** Additional approval is required if actual rate is higher than established in-state/out-of-state rates.

  REGISTRATIONS: actual cost is reimbursed – work with your division administrative assistant to use the college p-card to register for events

  MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES (airport parking, parking meters, etc.): reimbursed with receipts

Note: **Chrome River Quick Help Guides** are available. There are numerous step-by-step guides, including how to complete travel pre-approvals and expense reimbursement requests. You will need to log in with your Net-ID.
Appendix J

High-Impact Educational Practices

First-Year Seminars and Experiences
Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members’ own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences
The older idea of a “core” curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

Learning Communities
The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with “big questions” that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link “liberal arts” and “professional courses”; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses
These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice “across the curriculum” has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects
Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

Undergraduate Research
Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. Strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students’ early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning
Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore “difficult differences” such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
In these programs, field-based “experiential learning” with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships
Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects
Whether they’re called “senior capstones” or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they’ve learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of “best work,” or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.