Dear Students,

As noted in Wednesday evening’s broadcast message, we at the Law Center continue to finalize additional details to account for our radically changed circumstances. The dynamics we contend with include alterations in our traditional class and examination contexts, not to mention life contexts, which have suddenly moved away from what we all previously prepared and planned around and into the “remote” and truly less-than-ideal world of today.

You’ve all probably heard the saying that I’ll loosely paraphrase as: “the one constant in life is change,” but I doubt the originator had in mind “change” on quite this pace and scale! (From what I know, it traces to Heraclitus, an ancient Greek philosopher, but I digress.) We have experienced a lot of change recently—and no doubt more change is to come.

Here at the Law Center, we have made some temporary policy changes this week to account, in at least some small way, for some of the changes you are experiencing. You have already learned of one change—our move to Pass-Fail grading for the Spring 2020 semester. Another change was to the way we certify or enforce our attendance policy. Those are explained in my message of April 1, which is available online if you deleted it.

Today’s message contains one reminder, and it then summarizes and explains examination and related policies for this semester. It also contains information on some temporary policy adjustments related to the move to Pass-Fail grading for Spring 2020.

Please read this email carefully. It does contain a lot of information, but that information is important to you and will answer many—although perhaps not all—of the questions that have arisen over the past few weeks.

**Reading Days Reminder:** Our spring reading days are still next week on April 9–10! There will be no “live” class or review sessions on these days. We did not make changes to the academic calendar to “make up” the lost week; we are making up lost class time in other ways and through make-up sessions on to be held on “regular” class days.

**Issues Related to Exams:**

**Examination Format:** For many years, we have used the Exam4 software to administer Law Center examinations. Our students, staff, and faculty are all familiar with this software and how it operates. We will continue to use Exam4 for Spring 2020 exams. Obviously, all examinations will have to be taken remotely this year, as we will not be able to gather in person at the Law Center for exams. Each of you will take your examinations at home using a computer. (If you need to hand write your examination answers, you should contact Associate Dean Carroll at acarro6@lsu.edu.)

There is a “take-home” mode within the Exam4 Software that provides remote-examination capabilities. Among the features of the “take-home” mode is that it allows access to an electronic textbook on the computer or the outlines you might have saved to that computer—this avoids needing the outline in print.

Several years ago, the Law Center faculty adopted a policy that all take-home examinations must be wholly open book, open material examinations. This policy avoids some (although not all) of the entirely valid student and faculty concerns about the academic integrity of a take-home examination and the materials that may appropriately be used. We have been operating under that written policy for many semesters now, and it remains the policy today.

**Taking all of this together, this means all final examinations for Spring 2020 will be take-home examinations administered through Exam4 and will be entirely open book/open material.**

**Lest anyone be confused:** Consultation with other persons, sharing information about the examination, and similar misconduct (and more) remains prohibited; the Code of Student Professional Responsibility continues to apply.
Our IT gurus will contact you soon with details and more information on Exam4—probably this Monday. We have a tutorial online for Exam4, including the take-home mode. You are advised to test the software in advance—as always. Only you will control whether you read the additional information circulated to you about use of the software in take-home mode and whether you test the software. Please do plan ahead.

**Examination Schedule:** Our examination schedule has been set for some time, with exams set for specific days. The first exams were scheduled on Tuesday, April 28, and the last exams were scheduled on Friday, May 8. But those online schedules reflect the days on which live exams were to be administered—not exams administered in this “remote” environment.

We know that for many students, taking exams in specific 3-hour or 4-hour blocks will have become much more challenging in light of responsibilities in caregiving for loved ones, caring for (and schooling of!) children, or for reason of personal illness, computer difficulties, and the like. Any or all of these may affect your ability to take an examination at a particular time at your home. Because so many of you will face such challenges in being able to take examinations on a highly constrained schedule, the faculty has modified the policy on the timing of exams.

For Spring 2020 only, all examinations will be open for at least 24 hours. Students will also be permitted to begin and end each examination at a time of their choosing during the period beginning Tuesday, April 28 through Sunday, May 10.

Whether an exam will be open longer than 24 hours will be up to an individual professor. I anticipate that most will be open exactly 24 hours, as this will help you plan your own exam schedule and keep your entire exam process on track. You are encouraged to space your examinations out across the two-week period as you would normally do. You will also be directed to time your exam submissions so that you are submitting your exams during the IT helpdesk hours in case you have any technology issues that require support. More details to come closer to the relevant time.

**Issues Related to Pass-Fail Grading:**

**Ranking of Students in 2020:** Because the spring semester will be graded on a Pass-Fail basis, coursework this semester will have no effect on previously calculated GPAs. Reissuing a rank makes no sense at the close of the spring semester, and insufficient additional information will be available until the end of the Fall 2020 semester.

*The faculty has suspended the ranking of first-year and second-year students until the end of the Fall 2020 semester.*

The faculty will address the question of honors and ranking for the graduating class at its next meeting, which is scheduled for April 15.

**Suspension of Academic Action:** In normal times (which these are not), the Law Center has policies for academic exclusion and academic suspension (collectively, “adverse academic action”), both of which utilize a cumulative 2.0 grade point average in one way or another. (The full standard policies appear at the end of this message for students who wish to read them.)

*As a result of the change to Pass-Fail grading for Spring 2020, the faculty has suspended the taking of further adverse academic actions until end of Fall 2020.* Any adverse academic actions taken at the end of fall semester will be based on all grades earned by students through end of fall semester 2020.

**Grade-Related Graduation Requirements:** Related to the fact that Spring 2020 will be on a Pass-Fail basis, as well as to the change immediately above, is one change affecting only students graduating in May 2020 or August 2020.

*For May 2020 and August 2020 graduating students, the faculty waived the requirement that students must earn at least a 2.0 on all course work undertaken during the last two semesters of study (including summer semesters).*
Law Review and JELR Independent Study Credits (5901): The work for these 5901 credits was done in the fall, with papers submitted both in December and then again in January after additional edits. For reasons too byzantine to detail here, the credit is on the transcript in the spring semester. The credit is graded as are other independent study papers. **These 1-credit independent study grades will be assigned in the usual manner; all work was complete before the end of January 2020.**

Upper-level Writing Requirement: The standard academic policy requires a 2.0 in the seminar or independent study credit (5901) used to satisfy the upper level writing requirement. Some of you are currently enrolled in your coursework that you intend to satisfy this requirement. For Spring 2020, these grades in seminars or 5901/5902 (other than as provided immediately above), will be assessed on the Pass-Fail scale approved on April 1 by the faculty. **In order to ensure that we have a record that you have satisfied the upper level writing requirement necessary for graduation, your professor will separately submit to the registrar a certification as to whether your written work satisfies the standard.**

Other Issues Arising From COVID-19 Disruptions:

Hourly Requirements for Clinics and Field Placements: Related to “stay at home” orders and physical distancing policies in order to try to avoid the spread of COVID-19, but not directly related to grading policy, is the standard faculty policy that currently requires 45 actual hours of student work per 1 credit hour in the clinic practicums and field placements. Students have made substantial progress this semester toward that number of hours, and additional meaningful work can continue and is continuing under the supervision of LSU professors away from clients and placements. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis and closures of prisons, courts, field placements, etc., however, that precise hour correlation will not be possible for most students.

*The faculty suspended the 45:1 hourly requirement for the Spring 2020 semester; students will be awarded course credit if the supervising faculty member determines that they have “substantially completed all course requirements.”*

Other: The faculty also took two steps to adjust requirements for May 2020 graduating students seeking the Certificate in Energy Law & Policy to account for Pass/Fail grading this semester and for cancellation of events related to an applied learning hours requirement. Those details will be separately distributed to students pursuing the certificate.

With this long list of policy adjustments now before you, I wish you all a good weekend. (And…wash your hands!)

All my best,

Dean Lockridge

Lee Ann Wheelis Lockridge
Interim Dean
David Weston Robinson Professor of Law
McGlinchey Stafford Professor of Law
Louisiana State University Law Center
East Campus Drive
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803
law.lsu.edu

The Law Center's Standard Policies on Academic Action (but see above re: suspension of academic action)

Probation
Upperclass students, eligible to continue at the Law Center, are placed on scholastic probation if their cumulative weighted average at the end of any semester or summer semester is less than 2.0. Students on probation must register for and complete a minimum of 14 hours, and: (1) must earn a weighted average sufficient to bring the cumulative weighted average to at least 2.0; or (2) must earn a weighted average of at least 2.2 until the cumulative weighted average is at least 2.0. The faculty may establish special terms of probation in individual cases.
Students on probation who wish to attend summer semester must register for and complete a minimum of five (5) hours that summer semester.

Students are responsible for determining their eligibility to register and the conditions under which they may register for any semester or summer semester. If grades are available in sufficient time, the Office of Admissions and Student Records will advise students of exclusion and probation action prior to registration.

**Exclusion**

Exclusion for Unsatisfactory Scholastic Performance—Students shall be excluded from the Law Center when they have:

a. weighted average of below 1.7 at the end of the first semester; or

b. a cumulative weighted average of less than 2.0 at the end of the first two semesters or a cumulative weighted average of less than 2.0 at the end of the first two semesters in all courses other than LAW 5021 - Legal Research and Writing I and LAW 5022 - Legal Research and Writing II; or

c. during any semester or summer semester while on probation, they have: (1) failed to earn a weighted average sufficient to bring their cumulative weighted average to at least 2.0, or (2) failed to earn a weighted average of at least 2.2 until their cumulative weighted average is at least 2.0; or

d. failed to earn an average of at least 2.0 in each of two successive semesters after completion of the first year or of a successive semester and summer semester, regardless of the cumulative weighted average.