A March 24, 2020, directive from the Maryland Commission on Higher Education stated that “any non-essential face-to-face interaction with students and the public should cease” (Letter is posted on Learning Intranet COVID site). Hence, in your planning, please understand that AACC will not be offering in-person proctoring of tests in spring 2020. For many disciplines, this is a hardship.

Anticipating that AACC may not be able to offer face-to-face online proctoring, and the hardship it may cause in disciplines that rely on proctored testing, I initiated a conversation with Online Policies and Practices and E-Learner Success Committees, as well as TFO and Academic Council Leadership Thursday, March 18th. These groups quickly rose to action. Together, administration and faculty on these governance committees have worked to develop solutions that honor the MHEC’s mandate.

The committees discussed the complications of ensuring the integrity of tests in the context of COVID-19. They collectively underscored the necessity of ensuring the integrity of tests. Recognizing the difficult situation faculty and students are placed in during the outbreak of COVID-19, and also that there is not a uniform solution to ensuring tests’ integrity as a result of the diversity of learning outcomes and disciplines at in academia, faculty discussed many alternatives that could, at least for the period of time that social distancing is required, serve as a stand-in for face-to-face proctored testing. These include but are not limited to:

1) The math department is exploring the ability to have students connect to Zoom while taking their tests and be monitored by a faculty member. (Professor Jennifer Birdsell jlbirdsell@aacc.edu is the head of this approach and welcomes questions from departments that would like to learn about the pilot she is helping to perform this week).

2) Make a percentage of a test/assignment predicated on students’ uploading their work or notes along with an exam/assignment.

3) For certain disciplines, faculty might consider removing time constraints or changing quizzes or tests to be open-book, as well as changing questions to be more research-based or demonstrative. Canvas offers a myriad of ways to test a student’s knowledge that do not need to follow traditional, standardized testing methods. Professor Jennifer Schuster, jmschuster@aacc.edu, in Visual Arts would be happy to discuss some of the methods she’s used.

4) There are methods in Canvas that allow you to: a) shuffle questions; b) shuffle answers; c) serve up a variety of question types (like short answer and essay); d) require that all browsers are locked down; e) show questions one at a time; and f) limit the amount of time students have to take tests.

5) Instructors can also ask students to take the exam at a certain time and check in with the instructor prior to taking the exam online. This can even be done in Yuja conferencing where the instructor can see and hear the student to confirm they are the right person.
6) Professors are also using Canvas tools to limit the amount of time students have to take tests.

7) There are some professors who are going to rely on research-driven assignments rather than tests. AACC Librarians are eager to assist you. Please contact Brandy Whitlock (bmwhitlock@aacc.edu) to discuss successful assignment and assessment strategies for your online research project.

8) Tips for faculty concerned about test integrity should visit Canvas Quiz Settings to Maximize Security section of Remote Learning. Go to the portal, Click on My Courses, Scroll Down to Faculty Resource Community, Scroll down to Teaching Remotely, Under Canvas Resources, find Canvas Quiz Settings to Maximize Security.

The College is working on finding third-party vendors for proctored testing. However, some of these vendors have also been shut down, so our ability to purchase new licenses or software is limited. We will be in touch within the week about testing options for DSS students, and Zoom, again, is a tool that is being explored.

Final Exams

If you had face-to-face classes, you do not need to adhere to the final exam schedule published as your exams may, if you wish, be asynchronous. Grades for courses are still due 48 hours after the exam is given.