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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** August 4, 2020

**To:** Provosts and Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs  
Vice Presidents of Student Affairs  
Vice Presidents of Business and Finance  
Dr. Robert Keith Collins, Chair, Academic Senate, CSU

**From:** Alison M. Wrynn, PhD  
Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Programs, Innovations, and Faculty  
Development

**Subject:** Assessment of Student Learning in Fall 2020; Remote Proctoring Services

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance to CSU campuses regarding assessment of student learning in fall 2020.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of CSU fall 2020 instruction will be delivered virtually. With virtual instruction, physically administering an exam with a proctor watching over the students in person and collecting their exams is no longer possible.

CSU's online degree programs have successfully used online proctoring services for many years, including Proctor U, Respondus and others. Remote proctoring requires the student to look straight at the camera without looking away. As a result, this requires each student to have a computer with a microphone and camera (and sometimes more than one camera), strong and reliable Wi-Fi, a quiet room to be alone for the duration of the exam and no interruptions in order to best replicate the experience of a proctored exam in a classroom. These considerations apply equally to faculty proctoring the exams via Zoom.

Not all students will be able to create this environment from their remote testing location. For this reason, campus leaders are asked to review plans for fall 2020 course offerings with the goal of thoroughly addressing the following four issues related to assessment of student learning:

**CSU Campuses**  
Bakersfield  
Channel Islands  
Chico  
Dominguez Hills  
East Bay

Fresno  
Fullerton  
Humboldt  
Long Beach  
Los Angeles  
Maritime Academy

Monterey Bay  
Northridge  
Pomona  
Sacramento  
San Bernardino  
San Diego

San Francisco  
San José  
San Luis Obispo  
San Marcos  
Sonoma  
Stanislaus

1. Alternate Assessments
2. Equity
3. Privacy
4. Disability Accommodation

### *I. Alternate Assessments*

While remote proctoring may be used in connection with virtual instruction during fall 2020, campuses are strongly encouraged to consider, evaluate and discuss alternate methods of assessment. Alternate assessments include timed exams, open book exams, projects, papers and presentations. Another option is electronic portfolios that may be used to promote comparison and/or synthesis of student academic work. It is expected that all departments and disciplines will think carefully and creatively about whether and how alternative assessment strategies may be used during fall 2020 to assess student learning. See Appendix A for additional resources.

### *II. Equity*

Where courses are virtual and student learning is assessed via an attempted re-creation of the traditional proctored exam, each CSU campus should carefully consider ways to ensure that financial constraints, lack of resources, housing insecurity and/or crowded living conditions do not impact a student's academic performance. Considerations may include loaning resources for students to use at home (computers and other hardware, MiFi devices, etc.) or making safe, accessible spaces available on campus where students can complete the exam without disruption while remaining physically distant from others. If remote proctoring services are going to be used, strong efforts need to be made to ensure that resource issues (e.g. technology hardware/software, accessibility, finances) do not impact students' ability to perform and be assessed and graded in the course.

### *III. Privacy*

There has been recent media coverage of student perceptions that remote proctoring services are an Orwellian invasion of student privacy. (See, for example the recent *New York Times* article, [Keeping Online Testing Honest? Or an Orwellian Overreach?](#)) Students may be concerned about being recorded themselves, for disability-related or religious reasons, or concerned for other family members, including children, who live with them in close quarters. The privacy of a student's home life and access to a room for privacy should not be a barrier to a student's assessment in a particular course. Campuses should think carefully about how the privacy rights of students in their own homes can be respected, while still assessing student mastery of course material in a valid way.

*IV. Disability Accommodation*

In all courses, virtual or in-person, students with disabilities who have interacted with the Services to Students with Disabilities (SSwD) center on campus and have been granted accommodations for testing must be accommodated. Campuses should ensure that communication channels are in place for faculty to let SSwD know the options for assessing student learning that will be in place for their courses for fall 2020. Students with disabilities must be granted accommodations to which they are entitled for tests. The remote proctoring software may be inappropriate for some of these students; in that case, other options must be available to support the student and the faculty.

If possible, it is recommended that the use of proctored, high-stakes examinations, whether virtual or in-person, be minimized. However, we recognize that this is not always possible due to accreditation or licensure examination requirements. We ask that you reflect on the above listed considerations if you do choose to utilize proctoring software. If you have additional questions or suggestions, please contact me at [awrynn@calstate.edu](mailto:awrynn@calstate.edu).

c: Dr. Loren J. Blanchard, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs  
Dr. Luoluo Hong, Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs and Enrollment  
Management  
CSU Chief Information Officers

## Appendix A

### *RESOURCES AND TIPS*

#### [Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Assessment for Virtual Instruction](#)

This page provides information on options for virtual assessments and promoting academic integrity on out-of-class assignments, as well as links to several sites listed below.

#### [Rutgers University Tips for Exams and Alternative Assessments](#)

This site includes:

- 10 Alternatives to Exams
- Special Advice for Open-Book Assessment in Quantitative Courses

#### [UC Berkeley Alternatives to Traditional Testing](#)

This site includes a list of alternatives similar to that provided by Rutgers.

#### [IU Bloomington Alternatives to Traditional Exams and Papers](#)

This site includes questions to help focus in on the skills and knowledge an assessment should include.

#### [UC Davis Exam Options](#)

A chart listing assessment options and their potential impact on student performance and well-being.

### *RECORDED WORKSHOPS*

#### [Ohio State University Alternatives to Exams and Finals Workshop](#)

CSU Monterey Bay provides an outline of a recorded presentation created by The Ohio State University that links to sections of interest. Topics include limitations for students, possible modifications, possible exam structures, deciding what to test, alternatives to exams, and alternatives to performances.

#### [How Can Students Generate Evidence of Their Learning in a Remote World?](#)

Recording of the April 2020 Meetup led by the Association for Authentic, Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning that addressed how students can generate and show evidence of learning through ePortfolio approaches, even without an ePortfolio tool. Site includes links to resources shared by participants.

### *ARTICLES AND VIEWS*

#### [Tips to Transition to Online Exams](#)

SJSU's Mary Poffenroth, faculty member in the Department of Biological Sciences, addresses concerns about and offers strategies for moving quizzes and exams online.

#### [CSU Channel Islands Resilient Teaching @CI Interview Series](#)

- Chemistry professor [Blake Gillespie](#) discusses a [blog post about meaningful assessment](#).
- Sociology professor [Luis Sanchez reconsiders assessment and student learning](#) during the pandemic.

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#### [A Different Kind of Final](#)

An article from 2013 on having students create concept maps instead of taking a traditional final exam.

#### [What Do Final Exams Mean During a Pandemic?](#)

An April 27, 2020 article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, featuring a chemistry professor who allowed students to complete a take-home final, write an essay on what they learned in the course and during the pandemic, or propose their own final project.