

**Subject: Disposition of Classes for Emergency Shutdown of the College**

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**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide the framework by which the academic mission of the college will be met should a catastrophic event occur causing an extended emergency shutdown of Tidewater Community College.

In its 40-year history, no catastrophic event has caused an extended emergency shutdown of Tidewater Community College or any of its campuses. Nevertheless, considering the college’s geographic location, the chance of a natural disaster such as a hurricane or similar weather event must be acknowledged. Similarly, and as recent history has shown, the possibility of a flu or other infectious disease epidemic must also be recognized as real. Other unexpected or unforeseen emergencies could also force the closure of the college. In such a situation, students’ learning and the college’s academic integrity cannot be left to chance. Chance favors the prepared college.

**2. Policy**

Tidewater Community College shall effect an early end to an academic semester or term only under the most extenuating, catastrophic circumstances. Such an emergency shutdown shall be based on sound academic principles that take into account individual course pedagogy and structure.

In general, the college shall use the completion point of eighty-five percent for declaring that the academic objectives for a given semester or term have been met. Faculty shall subsequently compute the final grades of students based on coursework completed at that point.

In those instances where faculty have pre-determined that an eighty-five percent completion point is academically insufficient in their respective program or discipline, faculty shall have developed an approved alternative plan for course completion that has been disseminated to the students through their course syllabi.

The college shall address completion points of less than the threshold eighty-five percent on an incident-by-incident basis, weighing such factors as actual completion time, extent of the catastrophic event, and available resources for instructional delivery.

### **3. Responsibilities**

The Vice President for Student Learning and Chief Academic Officer, in consultation with the faculty, shall be responsible for developing and maintaining procedures that are consistent with this policy and that have a strong pedagogical focus.

### **4. Procedures**

In the event that an extended emergency shutdown of the college is necessitated by catastrophic circumstances, the following procedures will be followed for addressing the college's academic program:

- 4.1. If less than eighty-five percent of the term has been completed, the college leadership will determine how best to address it, weighing such factors as actual completion time, extent of the catastrophic event, and available resources for instructional delivery.
- 4.2. If the term meets the eighty-five percent threshold for completion, and the course has not been pre-approved for an alternative plan for completion, faculty shall subsequently compute the final grades of students based on coursework completed at that point.
- 4.3. In those instances where faculty have pre-determined that the eighty-five percent completion point is academically insufficient in their respective program or discipline, faculty will develop an alternative plan as follows:
  - 4.3.1. Working with the appropriate college-wide discipline chair, faculty will develop a written alternative plan for the specific discipline or academic program.
  - 4.3.2. The plan will include the rationale for a completion threshold of other than eighty-five percent (e.g., documented best practices and compliance with accreditation standards), the specific means for students to complete the course in an extended emergency shutdown of the college, and the statement that the faculty member will include in his/her course syllabus outlining the terms of the plan itself.

- 4.3.3. To ensure consistency, the plan must be agreed to by a simple majority of the full-time faculty teaching in the course discipline or academic program college-wide, with documented input of adjunct faculty.
- 4.3.4. The plan must have the endorsement of both the appropriate college-wide discipline chair and the Vice President for Student Learning and Chief Academic Officer, the latter of whom will forward approved plans to the provosts, academic deans, and center directors for implementation.
- 4.4. All faculty will include the following statement, or the statement developed under 4.3.2. above, in their course syllabi to address how students will be graded and/or complete a course for a grade in the event of an extended emergency shutdown.
- In the event of an emergency shutdown of the college, the president and her executive staff may elect to conclude the term in session if eighty-five percent or more of that term has been completed. If the term in session is concluded, faculty shall compute final grades of students based on coursework completed at that point.*
- 4.5. All courses will have course shells in Blackboard that can be activated in the event of an extended emergency shutdown.

## **5. Definitions**

Not applicable.

## **6. References**

No references are associated with this policy.

## **7. Review Periodicity and Responsibility**

The Vice President for Student Learning and Chief Academic Officer shall review this policy at least annually on the anniversary of its approval and, if necessary, recommend revisions.

## **8. Effective Date and Approval**

This policy is effective upon its approval by the College President on July 14, 2011.

Policy Approved:

Deborah M. DiCroce  
President

Procedure Developed:

Daniel T. DeMarte  
Vice President for Student Learning  
and Chief Academic Officer

**9. Review and Revision History**

This is the first version of this policy.