

GUIDELINES FOR SINGLE-INCIDENT DISRUPTIONS OF CLASSES
COMMITTEE ON COURSES OF INSTRUCTION
MARCH 2013

The Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) has developed guidelines to inform faculty decision-making with respect to one-time events or disturbances. The following guidelines are offered with the following two caveats:

1. The decision to close all or part of the campus, or to advise people on campus whether or not to cancel ongoing activities is a matter for the appropriate administrative authorities. Some confusion may arise when the decision to evacuate is left up to those individuals who are informed via the existing campus systems, while many other individuals on campus, tourists, for example, are not informed at all of some potential danger, but this disparity, too, is in the administrative realm.
2. With respect to arrangements for missed academic exercises, it is COCI's view that elaborate rules are hardly necessary for brief shutdowns or evacuations since individual missed classes are now, and always have been, dealt with informally as a matter of course during every semester. We thus offer the following guidelines, but strongly advise against producing new regulations about a matter that is best handled according to custom by individual instructors, who will know best how to insure that required instruction takes place across the entire term. With these considerations in mind, we offer the following observations.

ONE-TIME EVENTS LASTING ONE DAY OR LESS

- A. Evacuation: Clearly both students and faculty members must obey instructions for mandatory evacuation, abandoning whatever classes or lab sessions are going on. In the event of voluntary evacuation, both faculty members and students must (as now) be permitted at their discretion to continue a class or lab meeting or to leave as individuals or as a group.
- B. Missed Class Time: In such a one-day-or-less event no student will have missed more than a single class meeting in each subject. While perfect attendance is desirable, in reality most students miss one or more class sessions during a semester and make up the work easily by borrowing notes and/or talking to the instructor. Instructors often miss a day or two of class owing to illness or conflicting university obligations. In such cases, conscientious instructors find ways to make up or substitute for the missed meetings to make sure that they have covered the expected syllabus. Some are able to schedule extra meetings, or to provide exercises for the students outside of class, or have a suitable substitute instructor offer the missed class. There seems to be no reason to alter this set of practices merely because a class is missed or cancelled for a single day (or even a single week) as a result of a bomb scare or false alarm rather than owing to illness, overbooking, classroom mix-ups and the like.

- C. Examinations: Similarly, midterm examinations or other such mandatory exercises can, if disrupted for one or two class sessions, easily be rescheduled. As a principle, if one student wishes to leave a midterm or other such exercise owing to an announced threat, it should be incumbent upon the instructor to reschedule it for another day, or to offer the student(s) who leave an alternative time or equivalent exercise. For closures during final exam week, the campus will obviously have to open for an additional number of days to accommodate missed final examinations. In the event of the physical destruction of a large portion of the campus during examination week, the provisions for grading outlined in the COCI “Pandemic Guidelines” of February 2007 will have to be followed.
- D. Scope: Obviously, an event affecting only one building, or even one area of the campus, will call for less rescheduling overall. The principles outlined above should hold even for an evacuation of the entire campus, though everyone will have to be more patient and creative in the rescheduling process, particularly with respect to labs and other space-intensive classes.

EVENTS LASTING MORE THAN ONE WEEK

For events requiring the canceling of classes across the whole campus for more than one week, or requiring cancellation of more than half the campus for a similar length of time, we recommend that blanket approval for classes to continue in their assigned classrooms during RRR week be issued to allow for make-up of lectures and exercises cancelled during the term.

EVENTS LASTING MORE THAN TWO WEEKS

Any event that requires the cancellation of more than one-third of classes for more than two weeks should trigger the February 2007 COCI “Pandemic Guidelines” regardless of the cause of the closure.