



May 8, 2020

To Vice President Beaudin and Vice President Adams:

We are writing in response to some recent messages from the college administration and to the larger issues attached to them. To begin, we would like to express our concerns with College Brief #115: "Assistance to Students (Spring 2020): Addressing Student Grade Concerns," a brief that went out to both faculty and students last week. While it may have been constructed with the best of intentions, it has been the focus of significant discussion in our departments. As our governance leaders noted last week, we were particularly concerned about: 1) students withdrawing after getting their final grades; 2) the administrative need to "encourage faculty" to grant Incompletes, when faculty members have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate great sensitivity and empathy toward students' academic and personal needs; 3) the effect of the phrase "encouraging faculty" on adjuncts or promotion candidates, who could interpret this request as mandatory and offer the Incomplete option, even if it was not appropriate for a student's specific circumstances.

In the wake of this brief, an e-mail went out to students yesterday (5/7/20) which purported to explain the differences between the INC and W option, yet which clearly presented the INC as the superior alternative, noticeably omitting the fact that the INC would convert to an F if students were unable to finish their work by the deadline.

In both cases, although these messages were designed to help students, they were sent out without any conversation between the faculty and the administration or any input from faculty. And, in the end, they could do more harm than good, if students request an option—and faculty comply—that is against their best interests.

These are extremely challenging times, times that have physically separated us, just as they have emotionally and psychologically taxed us. But our greatest strength is still what it always has been, in working together. Like you, we want the best for our students. And we believe that we can give them that by working together. We encourage you, therefore, to make use of the faculty's expertise and to solicit our input on grading issues and curricular matters moving forward—through governance, the union, and/or the department chairs—to create a unified message for the greater good of the college community.

Sincerely,

The Ammerman Campus English Department

The Ammerman Campus Social Sciences Department

The Ammerman Campus Mathematics and Computer Science Department

The Ammerman Campus Academic Literacy/College Seminar Department

The Ammerman Campus Biology Department

The Ammerman Campus Foreign Language Department

The Ammerman Campus Communications/Cinema Studies/Radio, Film, and Television
Department

The Ammerman Campus Music Department