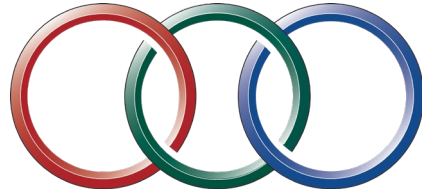


# *SMCCD Academic Senate*

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## *Taskforce for Teaching & Learning*



## Statement on Major Power Outage Guidance

Major Power Outages are an unexpected and regrettable response to emergencies. Given that they can disrupt the teaching and learning process, faculty are often in a situation of not knowing how to meet the outcomes of the class and serve students while grappling with the loss of instructional time, **no matter the modality of the course**. While there are no finite answers to these questions, the District Academic Senate has compiled a series of considerations that faculty can keep in mind when making adjustments during or after a **major power outage where students may not have access to power, WiFi, or digital communication platforms**.

Remember, these are difficult circumstances for everyone - please use grace and kindness in working with your students and colleagues.

## Preparing for a Power Outage

### Student Communication:

Before any kind of power outage or closure takes place, we suggest that you prepare for unanticipated events by:

- Communicate the possibility to students and assuring them that their safety and well being is paramount.
- Collect preferred contact information for your students in Canvas with a preferred email address and text number, if possible. At minimum, ensure that students are able to receive announcements from your Canvas page.
- Recommend students update their notifications in Canvas to “Daily” and for announcements to “Immediately.”
- Prepare a draft message ahead of time to have ready-to-send. This message can be queued up as an announcement with a delay date of 2022, which can be released in the event of an emergency.
- Encourage students to sign up for Campus emergency alerts here: [ALERTME](https://smccd.edu/alertme/) (https://smccd.edu/alertme/)

## Policy Guidelines for assignments:

In the event of a major power outage, we strongly suggest that you allow the following and inform students in advance (to reduce student anxiety):

- All assignments are automatically extended in the event of a major power outage
- All quizzes, tests, and exams are automatically delayed in the event of a major power outage
- Consider alternate assignments that do not rely on technology, such as reading ahead in the textbook, annotating a section of reading, practicing specific equations, or outlining a chapter of text.
- Consider flexible credit for some assignments
- Consider dropping some assignments

## College Communication:

- Make sure you have the contact information (email and phone numbers) for your dean and division assistant.
- Make sure you have the contact information of your VPI in case you can't get in touch with your dean.
- Make sure you have the contact information of 1-2 colleagues who live in a different area that you can reach out to in case of an emergency.
- Encourage the creation of a 'phone' tree in your division to propagate announcements, in case of server outages.

# Stage 1: Power Outage; instructor and students can access internet resources

## Student Communication:

Erring on the side of over-communication in these circumstances is likely to be seen as support and effort that students will appreciate. Also understand that if students' access has been impacted, they may not receive your messages during the power outage period.

## When the instructor does not have power:

- Send out an announcement in Canvas to let your students know that you are impacted by a major power outage, what they can expect, and how best to remain in contact.
- Encourage students to reach out to classmates for whom they have contact information to share updates.

## When some or all students do not have power:

- Consider assigning different assignments based on each student's situation.
- Ask your students the following questions:
  - Whether the circumstances of the power outage have affected them and how?

- What access to materials and technology they have?
- What supports do they need (disabilities accommodations, library, tutoring, mentoring) to be able to complete your class work?

### College Communication:

- Contact dean and division assistant immediately
- If you cannot get in touch with them, contact your VPI.
- In addition, contact 1-2 colleagues who live in a different area that you can reach out to in case of an emergency.

## **Stage 2: Power Outage; instructor and/or students cannot access internet resources**

### Student Communication:

#### When the instructor does not have power:

- Request that your dean or faculty colleague send out an announcement in Canvas to let your students know that you are impacted by a major power outage, what they can expect, and how best to remain in contact.
- Encourage students to reach out to classmates for whom they have contact information to share updates.

#### When some or all students do not have power:

- Knowing that they may not receive the message immediately, assure them that any missed assignments have already been extended.
- Consider assigning personalized assignments that are different for affected students, but still meet any needed SLOs.

### College Communication:

- Contact your dean and division assistant immediately.
- If you cannot get in touch with them, contact your VPI.
- In addition, contact 1-2 colleagues who live in a different area that you can reach out to in case of an emergency.

# Equity Considerations

Remember, if a student cannot access your class, they also cannot access any online campus resources, including computers, course-specific software, and tutoring or mentoring support. This is particularly concerning for DRC/EAC students who may not have access to their accommodations (e.g., assistive technology).

Assigning and/or assessing missed work from the closure, absent of instructional support, can disproportionately affect low-income and foster youth students and students with disabilities, creating an issue of educational equity.

**Bottom line: be kind, be flexible, and understand that we are all working in the best interest of our students.**

## Once a Power Outage is Over

Be cognizant of the fact that the impact of a power outage may outlast the actual power outage. Students' lives may have been disrupted, and it may take them a little time to get fully connected again.

### Student Communication:

Reach out to students to let them know that you are back online and available. Remind and assure them that extensions exist for any assignments that were disrupted during the power outage.

### Policy Guidelines:

#### Assigning Independent Work as Instruction or Make-up:

While college students can be expected to do a certain amount of independent work, it is unreasonable to simply assign all missed work to students upon return to class. Before creating independent assignments, faculty may want to consider the following:

- **Balance:** Consider the number of hours of a reasonable balance of workload for any student at any point in the course. Determine whether this additional assigned work could result in a barrier to success.
- **Multiple classes:** Since many of our students take two or more courses, the assigning of make-up work could cause students to face an insurmountable amount of work that could result in non-completion of one or more courses.
- **Learning Modality:** Many students' only access to online tools may be through wifi. In most circumstances, things that are already part of the course's regular operation (text chapter reading, weekly obligations online, homework problems from previous lessons, discussions, journals, etc.) can be assigned online in reasonable amounts without

undue burden on the student. Faculty are encouraged to limit requesting online catchup or independent work to the following:

- Reading ahead in the text assigned for the course
- Continuing with existing scheduled events in the course management system (i.e. weekly auto-graded quizzes or journals)
- Engaging in previously scheduled online discussion groups or most long-term, out-of- class projects

## What to do about missed assignments?

Faculty are encouraged to evaluate the missed content in terms of quality versus quantity. Faculty can focus on the learning outcomes for the course and may find ways to reduce the volume of the catch-up work without negatively impacting student learning. When making decisions about how to address the missed work, faculty should consider how to preserve continuity in the current unit without disrupting the learning process any further. Options in response to campus closures can include:

- Consider alternate assignments that do not rely on technology, such as reading ahead in the textbook, annotating a section of reading, practicing specific equations, or outlining a chapter of text.
- Consider flexible credit for some assignments
- Consider dropping some assignments
- Extending deadlines
- Working with deans to extend lab hours
- Assigning portions of work to be extra credit or optional
- Shortening, reducing, or simplifying assignments to allow students to catch up upon return
- Finding ways to assess that students have met the outcomes via integrating content, skills, or activities such as two outcomes met with one activity

### College Communication:

Inform your dean, division assistant, and 'buddy' colleagues that you are now back online and available for students.

## Other Concerns Due to Power Outages

- **Faculty compensation:** Barring unforeseen and unusual circumstances, all faculty scheduled during the power outages should expect compensation as normal; district personnel will issue statements to confirm at the time of closure.
- **Student Learning Outcomes Assessment:** Power outages that prevent faculty from completing the outcomes of the course may result in campus wide discussions on how to ensure learning outcomes. For more guidance, please contact your dean, your faculty mentor, or your Academic Senate leadership.