

Memo

To: Adjunct math faculty
From: Natalie McGathey, Department Coordinator
Subject: Welcome Back!
Date: January 4, 2019

Welcome back from Winter Break. Please take a few minutes to read over this brief memo to catch up on the latest news in the math department.

Please read the following carefully, and keep this memo so that you can refer back to it when necessary. **This memo has been revised; even if you have been teaching for us for several years, please read everything.**

1. A wide variety of information, both course-specific and department-wide, can be found on our department website at www.prairiestate.edu/math by clicking on “[For Instructors.](#)” Make sure you are reading that information at least every semester so that you are updated on the latest policies, procedures and other information.
2. A shared folder on the “X” drive has been created for Math Faculty. From any campus computer, go to the X drive, select Shared_Data, and select Math-Faculty. There are semester reviews, course objectives, guided notes and activities for select classes for your use. If you do not have access to this drive, please let me know and I can get that taken care of.
3. We are **required** to list the College-wide General Education Learning Outcome that corresponds to our classes on each syllabus. Please check to make sure your syllabus includes the following statement:

College-wide General Education Learning Outcomes

Prairie State College’s general education outcomes encapsulate the core knowledge and skills that we believe equip students to develop personally, as critical thinkers, and as global citizens. The specific general education learning outcome for this course is:

Problem Solving: Students will locate and identify information, determine what problem exists, develop solutions, evaluate results, and extend results to new situations.

4. If you are teaching Math 085/090/095/151 you must use the multiple choice final exam provided by the department in Fall and Spring. Additionally, **you MUST get your final exams graded by the ITR department.** **This is not optional!** We use this data for outcomes assessment purposes.

5. In Math 085/090/095/151 the common final exam must be worth 15 – 25% of the final grade, and all questions must be counted towards their grade. Note that you are free to have your students do additional problems, such as adding a free response portion to the test.
6. In classes where departmental final exams are given (Math 085/090/095/151), **old final exams should never be distributed as review material**. The department has review packets available on our website, or you can make up your own.
7. **All final exams must be cumulative and given when scheduled according to the college master schedule**. You can find the college's final exam schedule on the Prairie State website by searching for "final exam schedule." In the very rare case where you believe it is more appropriate to schedule your final early, you must speak to the department chair regarding the issue. In any case, school policy requires you to meet with your class during the regularly scheduled exam period.
8. Please make sure your syllabi have a professional appearance (including being type-written) and adhere to the guidelines Kate, our Department chair sends out each semester.
9. Your syllabus should include your contact information, including your Prairie State email address (per the contract, this is the only email address you should be using to communicate with students). We strongly advise you not to give students a personal phone number such as your home or cell number.
10. Please be sure your students have a copy of your policy concerning make-up work. Once again, this should be part of your syllabus.
11. Make sure your classes meet for their entire periods. Even though students may seem to enjoy getting out early, believe it or not they often end up complaining about it. In fact, this is the biggest complaint that we hear about math faculty.
12. When you distribute student evaluations, please follow the directions carefully. You must not be in the room during the evaluation process and you must not come into contact with the completed evaluations. You will be given the completed evaluations after the semester ends.
13. Keep in mind that we have FREE tutoring available in the student success center. Encourage your students to take advantage of this service. Students can schedule appointments by emailing Lisa Hansen at ahansen@prairiestate.edu. Also, as we hire students on as peer tutors, encourage your excellent students to apply for a position as a peer tutor at prairiestate.edu/stem or you can send them to the coordinator, Natalie McGathey nmcgathey@prairiestate.edu

14. If you need to cancel your class/classes:

FIRST call the Welcome Center at 708-709-3600. **Their office is open at 7:00am.** Give them your course and section, room number, time and your name so the class can be posted on the monitors in the atrium.

SECOND have them transfer your call to **Rosalva Mendoza at 708-709-3543**. If she is out of the office or in a meeting, the Welcome Center can post the cancellation sign.

THIRD Submit your absentee/leave request form to either Mail Box #16 or Room 2121 next time you are on campus.

Emails will not be accepted if you are cancelling your class or running late that day.

If you plan a scheduled absence, please contact the Coordinator, Natalie and she will do her best to get you a substitute.

15. Do not leave student rosters, student papers, or other private information in classrooms. Also, do not leave test banks or tests taken from published test banks lying around in the classrooms. Also, try to keep a neat classroom: anything of value left in a classroom should be taken to the Welcome Center's lost and found, and anything of no value should be thrown away!

Please glance through your Adjunct Faculty Handbook at least once per semester. See the Coordinator, Natalie McGathey, or Rosalva Mendoza if you need a copy of the handbook.

The full-time faculty appreciate your hard work and dedication. We want you to feel welcome in the department, and whenever possible, we'd like you to be involved in departmental activities. Our meetings are scheduled for the 2nd Wed of each month at 2:30, and you are welcome to attend (but not required to do so).

Finally, please demand high standards! Grade inflation is a serious problem at PSC. Make sure that passing students are adequately prepared for the next level. In particular, please be cognizant of final exam scores in Math 085/090/095/151—remember that 25% is equivalent to random guessing and means the students has not demonstrated any knowledge.

Last, please contact me if you have any questions regarding your course, the department, or the college. You can reach me at nmcgathey@prairiestate.edu

I hope you have a wonderful semester!

Natalie

Memo

To: Math faculty
From: Natalie McGathey
Subject: Student placement/re-placement
Date: January 4, 2019

As always, student placement is an issue that deserves our attention at the beginning of the semester. Many students are quick to tell their instructor that they do not belong in the math class in which they placed. While most students are correctly placed, there are a few who would benefit greatly from being moved up a course. We should all do our best to ensure that our students are placed into the highest level courses in which they can be successful.

We have Math 085 and Math 090 pretests available that you can give your students to make sure they are correctly placed (if you so choose). If you need a copy of the test, please let Kate know. If a pretest shows that a student is capable of doing higher-level work (perhaps you could use a cut-off score of 75%), please send them to Natalie or Kate and we will consider placing them into a more appropriate course. **Please do not tell students that they may be able to move up to the next course; we don't want them to get their hopes up.**

For other courses, when students tell you they have been incorrectly placed we give them two options (described below). If students approach you with placement issues, please feel free to share this information.

Option #1 (Recommended option) - Completely bypass the Math Department and retake the placement assessment (ALEKS). Your ALEKS fee covers a study module and 5 attempts at placement. If you are unhappy with your placement, simply use the study module to work on your skills, then re-take the placement test. In fact, on Fridays, Steve Cole is available in room 3290 to provide assistance to students working through these modules.

Option #2 - Bring transcripts, placement test scores, and other documentation (e.g. ACT or SAT scores) as evidence of incorrect placement to the Coordinator, Natalie McGathey (nmcgathey@prairiestate.edu; office 2304) or Department Chair, Kate Sims Drew (ksims@prairiestate.edu; office 2106). If appropriate, a written placement test will be scheduled. However, you must have evidence to support your case, and students exercising this option will not be allowed to move up more than one course. Students who have already taken a class without passing it with a C or better will not be advanced past the class by using this option. **If you were incorrectly placed, you may have been unprepared for placement testing or you may have misunderstood the consequences of incorrect placement. Please don't make the same mistake twice. Be prepared.**