April 6, 2020

Dear KO Community,

As we all navigate COVID-19, it seemed appropriate to address our current academic and grading policies.

While online learning is up and running and we have had some good success to date, learning and receiving feedback (on the student side) and crafting instruction and assessing work (on the faculty side) in a totally online system is still new. Put simply, this is not the system that students and faculty are used to. And new problems may crop up that interfere with learning. Some students may struggle with connectivity, technology, and learning through a screen. Additionally, factors in the home environment (e.g., caring for younger siblings, medical issues) may also prove challenging for our students. So we have to acknowledge that some of our students may struggle to learn and demonstrate their learning this quarter, through no fault of their own. As in everything we do, we encourage students and families to reach out to their advisor during this time. We want to continue partnering with families to help create the best plan for success for each individual student. And as in normal class time, if a student will be absent or late, families should contact Ms. Perkins and/or Ms. Dix or the child’s advisor.

At the same time, some students may do very well in the online environment, or even thrive. Academically, these students may do even better in the fourth quarter than they did in the third; they will hit their stride, understanding the material better, showing more creativity, and engaging more deeply with class projects. For these students, we need to honor and affirm their academic growth in the online environment. We must ensure that our grading policy supports students who, despite the challenges of the online environment, are able to grow and improve upon their academic skills at this time.

Given these dual principles, students’ grades in the fourth quarter will be treated accordingly:

- Accessibility/connectivity to the internet will not be counted against a student.
- As in normal times, students are expected to complete their work to the best of their ability and attend class. Advisors and teachers will work to support students if they struggle with attending class and completing course work.
• A student with extenuating circumstances due to COVID-19 should communicate with their advisor. In these special instances, absences, lateness and class participation will not be counted against a student.
• Students will be graded on demonstrated learning in the class.
• Faculty will continue to give detailed feedback to students on their performance to support learning.
• If a student improves their grade from the 3rd to the 4th quarter, the quarters will count equally for the semester grade calculation.
• If a student’s grade falls from the third to the fourth quarter, the third quarter grade will serve as the semester grade, as long as the student has completed all major assessments to the stated expectations.
• Students who do not complete major assessments in a given class to the stated expectations will be awarded an incomplete (I), and a plan will be put in place for them to complete those assessments in the summer. Students with incompletes for the fourth quarter will not be able to revert to their third-quarter grade.
• As in normal times, students may have extenuating circumstances that are not discussed here, and these will be addressed on an individual basis.

All the best, and stay healthy.

Ann Sciglimpaglia
Head of the Middle School

Dan Gleason
Head of the Upper School