To: Clemson University Faculty, Staff, and Students  
From: John Griffin, Senior Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies  
        John Lopes, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School  
Re: Guidance Related to Class Attendance and Engagement

Attendance policies for the Fall 2020 semester were suspended to allow for increased flexibility in managing the many aspects of the current pandemic. As we move towards the start of the Spring 2021 semester in January, there have been discussions around class attendance related to creating the high level of engagement that promotes learning. Class attendance, whether in the physical classroom or online, is critical to the educational process.

Provost Jones in consultation with faculty, staff, and students, has decided to allow instructors to set course attendance policies next semester, with the understanding that COVID-19 is a serious illness that may require some additional flexibility and following the guidance below.

1. Instructors are asked to develop a clear statement on attendance following the policies set forth in the Undergraduate Catalog and the Graduate School Policies and Procedures. **This statement must be in the course syllabus and clearly communicated on the first day of classes.** Information on missed examinations and assignments should also be included.

2. Guidance on what is considered an excused absence is provided in the Undergraduate Catalog. While infection or possible exposure to COVID-19 will require a student to isolate or quarantine, students who are able are expected to continue to engage in their classes online. Students who are attending in-person classes in traditional or hybrid/blended courses and who are not approved to be online for all of their spring semester courses are expected to return to in-person attendance once cleared by the University.

3. For an absence to be considered an excused absence, a student **MUST** use the Notification of Absences form in Canvas or other preferred method detailed in the syllabus to directly communicate with the instructor.

4. To facilitate effective use of an attendance policy while maintaining a safe environment for all involved, we stress the need for 1) clear and honest communication between students and instructors and 2) consideration of the extraneous factors impacting instructors’ and students’ lives during the pandemic that may cause extended absences or online participation.

**Instructors:** Additional details will be provided in the spring 2021 Class Regulations Letter that will be sent out later this week.