



PROVOST AND SENIOR
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TO: Lehman College Faculty

FROM: Peter O. Nwosu, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success

SUBJECT: Blackboard Outage on May 19, 2020

DATE: May 20, 2020

Dear Faculty,

CUNY's Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost, José Luis Cruz informed the college that on Tuesday May 19, 2020, CUNY experienced a Blackboard outage beginning at 8:18 am and ended at 10:49 am. Blackboard attributed the outage to a database crash at their data center and is working with CIS to determine the specific root cause.

The outage occurred during our final exams week and was clearly disruptive, especially to our students. As such, I am recommending that you accommodate students who were impacted by the outage while taking exams or submitting work. To this end, here are three recommendations we ask you to consider the following:

1. Allow students to retake exams at another time or to have extended time to submit their final assignments when they report having faced trouble accessing Blackboard due to this outage.
2. Extend final assignment deadlines if the outage could have resulted in lost student work.
3. Accommodate students for whom rescheduled exam times could be a challenge due to work, personal, or family responsibilities, and/or access to Internet or technology, and/or assistive technology or support needs. Regarding students with disabilities, when rescheduling exams, be mindful of the potential need for extended exam time as a reasonable accommodation authorized by the college office of disability services.

Students should be alerted of the accommodations that are being extended to them via email, and the information may be posted on your Blackboard course sites as soon as possible so that students are aware they will have the opportunity to complete their spring course work. If the need arises and you require assistance with Blackboard, do not hesitate to contact the college's Blackboard administrator, [Stephen Castellano](#).

The following are general guidance on how Lehman can preemptively address potential technical disruptions in the future:

1. If students are required to log into Blackboard at a specific time to complete a specific task, please log on at the same time to ensure that all interactions are accessible.
2. Identify an alternative method of contacting students directly independent of Blackboard. This will ensure continued communication with your students even when facing technical challenges.
3. Have contingency plans for completing high-stakes assessments independent of Blackboard.

Thank you so much and continue to be safe and well.