On March 13, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 health crisis, Thacher School closed its campus, with plans to begin our Spring Trimester via online learning on March 26. Additionally, committed to supporting our students and their learning during this unprecedented pandemic, Thacher’s Academic Council, with approval from our Head of School, made the decision to move to a 'pass/no pass' grading system for the trimester.

Like many boarding schools, Thacher has students from across the country and the world, who pursued their online schooling in very disparate environments. Our pass/no pass grading system acknowledged the different situations our students found themselves in at home or away during the pandemic; it ensured that no students were unduly penalized for those situations, time zone differences or technology struggles beyond their control. We consulted colleagues at colleges and universities across the country and made the change confident that it would not have a negative impact on our students as they moved through the college admissions process.

In temporarily moving to pass/no pass we joined a large network of both peer independent schools and colleges and universities that adjusted their grading practices to appropriately respond to students and families during the COVID-19 health crisis. We are happy to answer any questions about this change in our grading practices or to provide you with more information. In the meantime, below are some additional details that we hope will be helpful.

**Calendar**: March 26 - May 29, 2020. We celebrated graduation on May 30. Our total instructional days for our spring trimester remained consistent with previous years.

**Graduations Requirements**: Thacher’s graduation requirements did not change. All Seniors completed their Senior Exhibition Projects and presented the results of their research via Zoom on April 30 and May 1. Freshman, sophomores and juniors were expected to participate in a minimum of 9 presentations during those two days.

**Daily Schedules and Course Offerings**: With careful consideration of the most effective use of screen time with our students, classes started at 9 am and ran until 12 noon each day, followed by 2 hours dedicated to individual work with teachers as needed and/or co-curricular activities. These included current event discussions, residential gatherings, affinity group meetings, physical fitness offerings. We also hosted Colum McCann (award-winning author) and Nadya Okamoto (founder of period.org).

Our courses did not change, but faculty adjusted their curricula to provide students with 2 hours of synchronous instruction along with 2-4 hours of asynchronous learning per class per week. This did not include additional review and support during office hours.

**Grading scales and policies**: To earn a Pass, students had to complete all formative and summative assignments and demonstrate proficiency. Faculty continued to maintain a gradebook for critical assignments related to the student’s final grade. They relied on Thacher’s traditional 4.0 scale:

\[
A = 4.0, A- = 3.667, B+ = 3.334, B = 3.0, B- = 2.667, C+ = 2.334, C = 2.0, C- = 1.667, D+ = 1.334, D = 1.0, D- = 0.667, F = 0
\]

Given the limitations of online learning, summative assessments shifted away from formal examinations to final projects.

Dr. Tracy Miller  
Director of Studies  

Maria Morales-Kent  
Director of College Counseling