Closure of Semesters and Academic Year, 2019-20

Mumbai is currently a SARS-CoV-2 hotspot in the country. The current trend of outbreak in Mumbai and across India makes the return of the students to the IITB campus in the coming weeks and the resumption of the spring semester 2019-20 highly unlikely. Some of the key challenges among many will remain even with the gradual ease of lockdown as:

1. Travelling of students from different parts of the country to IITB will be difficult for quite some time.
2. Hostels and other facilities at IITB will require to be made ready to handle unexpected situations with all students in campus [a committee, appointed by the Chairperson Senate, is working on this].

Notwithstanding above, final year students have to graduate yielding places to the new, the semester has to end at some time without too much inconvenience to all, and the academic calendar has to be maintained with as little disturbance as possible. Meanwhile, many of the universities in the USA and Europe have already made appropriate arrangements for the delivery of instruction, evaluation and closure of the semester. It is understood that an extraordinary situation like this calls for taking up extraordinary decision(s).

In view of the above, an e-Senate was conducted on April 24, 2020 and subsequently, on May 11, 2020 to discuss various issues related primarily to the closure of academic year 2019-20, in particular, Spring Semester 2019-20. To realize the important issues and their impact, and to consider the opinions of all the stake-holders of IITB, two surveys - one for the faculty members and one for the students - were conducted and presented at the Senate. Over and apart from several motivations, the decisions of the Senate are guided by the spirit that IITB protects the freedom of an Instructor in conceptualizing and delivering a course as well as in performance evaluation, and at the same time, IITB is always open to the needs and aspirations of the students. Accordingly, the final decisions of the academic senate of IIT Bombay are as follows:

[A] Spring Semester 2019-20 will be closed without requiring the students to return to IITB. Final grading of all courses (incl. Theory / Lab / Seminar / Projects) will be completed latest by June 30, 2020. A time-window for on-line grading will soon be declared.

[B] Final grading of Theory and Lab courses will be based on the evaluation, which has been completed till (and inclusive of) the mid-semester examination.
Instructors may decide for an additional evaluation using a suitable on-line mode for a maximum weightage of 20%, provided all registered students can avail the same. Instructor may also consider to provide a likewise opportunity to students who might have missed the mid-semester examination for genuine reasons. While Instructors will generally be lenient on these issues, the final decision will remain with an instructor only.
Lab and Theory course(s) with inadequate in-semester evaluations will be considered ungradable and removed from the credit requirement for that batch and their transcripts – following DUGC/DPGC recommendations. However, due efforts will be placed to consider all aspects towards grading each course.

[C] Students can DROP a course till May 30, 2020 without W appearing in the transcript.

[D] The grading will be done for the full credit of a course. Students will have an option to opt for a special **satisfactory ("S") grade** to replace an awarded letter grade (AA to DD). The “S” grade is a place-holder and depicts notionally a PASS in a course, which will contribute to the credit but will not be used for SPI/CPI calculations.
An instructor will decide to follow either (a) a reduced scheme of grade [i.e. S and FF] or (b) a full-fledged letter grades [AA to DD, and FF]. "II" and "FR" grades are considered not applicable for spring semester 2019-20.
Students awarded a letter grade from AA to DD in scheme (b) will be eligible to opt for the “S” grade in one or multiple courses. A “FF” grade cannot be converted to “S” grade.
A student, who is awarded “S” grade through grading scheme (a) or opted for “S” grade in scheme (b) in a course, will get ONE chance later to improve the "S" grade to a letter grade [AA to DD], if s/he so
desires, by appearing in an 100 marks examination for the same course. The 'ONE chance' refers to a course-specific single examination and not student-specific multiple examinations for a single course. Efforts will be made to conduct this examination as early as possible and latest by the end of spring semester 2020-21.

Important to note that students, appearing for the 100 marks examination to improve the “S” grade in a course, have to accept the final letter grade, which will be based on the performance in the 100 marks examination. In contrast, the "S" grade, which a student will not attempt to improve to a letter grade by taking the 100 marks examination, will be *suo moto* converted to a PP grade. For graduating students, the "S" grade in a course will be *suo moto* converted to a PP grade in case the 100 marks examination cannot be organized prior to their graduation. The PP grade counts only to the credit requirement and is not used for SPI/CPI calculations. Therefore, the ‘S’ grade is not a terminal grade and is rather designed to provide an opportunity to the students to improve a grade considering the difficulties they have gone through.

Students with a “FF” grade in a course, awarded either in scheme (a) or (b), can also appear in the 100 marks examination. Important to note that the "FF" grade can improve to "DD" or become "FR" based on student’s performance in the 100 marks examination. In case a student does not appear in the 100 marks examination for a course, in which s/he is awarded “FF”, the same will be *suo moto* converted to "FR" grade.

[E] Evaluation of all credit seminars and project-based courses will be undertaken over VC mode and completed latest by June 30, 2020. Students requiring a little extension to complete a project may approach Heads of individual academic units. Students cannot opt for the “S” grade in seminars and project based courses.

[F] PhD students, who have joined in the Academic Year 2019-20, will be allowed to complete their credit / qualifier requirements by Autumn Semester 2020-21, if required. A natural extension of the APS cycle July - September, 2019 may be considered till November 30, 2020, if required. However, all opportunities are now created for remotely using the IITB library facilities, online submission of presynopsis and thesis, as well as defence examination over VC mode. PhD students, who are desirous to avail these facilities, should actively consider the same in consultation with their supervisors and RPC members.

[G] The currently running summer term (2019-20) courses, exclusively for the final and extension year students, shall continue to run in parallel in online, self-study mode. Final grading of all summer courses is extended from May 31, 2020 to June 30, 2020.

[H]. ***Instructors will make appropriate instructional contents for the remaining syllabus in a theory class or a lab and shall upload on moodle or appropriate platform for students to go through them on a self-learning mode as some of them may be the pre-requisite for a subsequent course. This is a special request from the Senate to all instructors to help the registered students to steer through the uncovered syllabus of the courses irrespective of the grading scheme or allotted grades as well as the students to take this opportunity to follow the instructions provided over VC modes diligently.

[I] For any further unforeseen academic issues, The Chairperson, Senate is permitted to take appropriate decisions on case by case basis.

[J] The starting of the Autumn Semester 2020-21 and the related academic calendar will be discussed in a following Senate meeting in consultation with the Chairperson, Senate.