Currently, there is no COVID-19 testing, vaccination, social distancing, or masking requirement to visit, live, work, or study on campus. However, students are still encouraged to quarantine if they have cold symptoms or have been exposed to Covid and have not yet been tested. This creates something of a predicament when it comes to attendance.

While some instructors have gone back to their pre-pandemic attendance policies, pandemic teaching conditions have led many to maintain flexibility in ways that are equitable by easing attendance policies and/or developing other ways for students to access class content (e.g., posting class presentations or recording lectures so students can watch them later). That said, many students have a competing need for accountability.

So... for students who need to miss class, think about offering alternative ways they can engage with the material (e.g., by submitting a brief written response to that day's discussion questions). If opting to post recorded lectures, consider asking students to contact you prior to class if they will need to access the recording, or to provide documentation in the case of an excused absence. You might also have students verify they have watched the recorded class session by completing a short quiz of the content.

Of course, having students in the classroom and actively participating is the goal. But while we work to manage ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, finding ways to accommodate necessary student absences is the best possible option.

“Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid written excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.” – FSU Attendance Policy
Are you preparing to graduate and enter the job market? Great! However, you may be unsure of how to go about writing documents like teaching philosophy and diversity statements. While in the past these were uncommon asks for hiring committees, they’re incredibly common in today’s job market, and knowing how to write them well can make the difference between being passed over and being invited for an interview.

Luckily, PIE’s got you covered: our PIE associates are ready and able to help you get started on drafting and revising these materials. Simply navigate to the TA Community Support Site and you’ll see not only a cornucopia of resources on developing DEI and teaching philosophy statements, but also a module where you can upload drafts of your personal DEI and teaching philosophy statements for evaluation by members of the PIE Services Committee. You may also schedule a consultation with a PIE associate to discuss the rubric we use to evaluate these documents by utilizing the Open House Hours on Canvas.

Keep an eye on your email, FSU TAs! We’ll also be holding more yet-to-be-announced workshops next semester that address professional development-related topics. Come on by not only for the scintillating presentation(s), but also for free coffee and gourmet pie.

Interested in our TA Community Support Canvas Site?
As highlighted in the previous columns, our TA Community Support Canvas Organization Site contains a plethora of services and resources that you have free access to as an affiliate of FSU. You may self-enroll into the Canvas site via this link: https://canvas.fsu.edu/enroll/JB4D8K

Check www.pie.fsu.edu soon for information about upcoming PIE events for the Spring!
Jacob ben Widmar is a second-year MFA in the School of Theatre. He directed and choreographed *Dragons Love Tacos* at the Fallon Theatre in the Fall of 2020 (Fine Arts Building). Before coming to FSU, Jacob performed on Broadway in many shows, including *Book of Mormon*, *Xanadu*, and Irvin Berlin’s *White Christmas*. He also originated the role of Will Scarlet in *Hood*, and the role of Bobby Sherin in *Mrs. Miller Does her Thing*. Most recently, he appeared as a Broadway Guest Artist in the role of Olaf for the Disney Wonder in *Frozen*! He is now studying to be a director here at FSU.

As an instructor and TA, Jacob's goal is to build a community in each classroom. He actively strives to include every engaged student, with a focus on making sure their uniqueness is celebrated. He believes in committing to the uncertainty of learning concepts and works to help others find their own answers.