

March 20, 2020

PRADEEP KHOSLA
Chancellor

ELIZABETH SIMMONS
Executive Vice Chancellor

SUBJECT: Spring 2020 Exceptions to San Diego Senate Regulations on Pass/No Pass Grades and Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grades and Enrollment Deadlines

Dear Pradeep and Elizabeth,

Thank you for your continued partnership with the Academic Senate on matters pertaining to educational continuity in Spring Quarter 2020 due to the rapidly evolving situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Senate Council convened an emergency meeting on March 19, 2020 to discuss a proposal from the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) to temporarily suspend San Diego Senate Regulations relating to the Pass/No Pass (P/NP) and Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grades and to consider temporary extensions to the deadlines for adding, dropping, and withdrawing from courses and changing a course grading option.

Below is a summary of actions approved by Senate Council, on behalf of the San Diego Division of the Academic Senate, as limited-term exceptions for Spring Quarter 2020. Actions approved by the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils related to course grade options and recommendations from Senate Council to mitigate unintended consequences and to promote consistency across campus are also provided. Senate Council's actions follow consultation with the systemwide Academic Senate's University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) and University Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction (UCRJ), as well as our divisional Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction (CRJ).

On behalf of Senate Council, would you please convey the outcome of the Academic Senate's deliberations to administrators, faculty, staff, and students and work with the relevant administrative offices to implement these temporary changes? In addition, the Academic Senate will be sending a follow-up message to Senate faculty about these recent decisions and encourage faculty to use a pragmatic and compassionate approach to instruction in Spring Quarter.

Pass/No Pass and Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grades and Extending the Deadline for Changing the Grading Option

1. Both EPC and Senate Council do not support approving any blanket exceptions that would require all undergraduate and graduate courses to be offered on a P/NP or S/U basis in Spring 2020. There is too much variation across disciplines, degrees, and student needs to advance a uniform policy.
2. Both EPC and Senate Council support providing more flexibility to students who would prefer taking their courses on a P/NP or S/U basis in Spring Quarter based on the circumstances.
 - a. San Diego Senate Regulation 500.D.1. states, "*Consistent with college policy, an undergraduate student in good academic standing may elect to be graded on a P/NP basis in a course. With the exception of units earned in independent study courses (numbered 199), no more than one fourth of an undergraduate student's total UCSD course units may be in courses taken on a P/NP basis. Departments may require that courses applied toward the major be taken on a letter grade basis.*"

- Senate Council approved EPC's proposal to grant an exception to San Diego SR 500.D.1 to exempt all courses taken during Spring 2020 from the 25% limit on the number of UCSD units that undergraduate students are allowed to complete on a P/NP basis. Pass/no pass courses completed during Spring 2020 should be removed from both the numerator and denominator when calculating the percentage of courses taken on a pass/no pass basis.
- b. San Diego Senate Regulation 500.D.2 states, "*Registration on a P/NP basis must take place before the end of the fourth week of the quarter.*"
 - Senate Council approved EPC's proposal to grant a one-time exception to San Diego SR 500.D.2 to extend the deadline for undergraduate students to register on a P/NP basis to the end of Week 10 in Spring 2020.
 - c. San Diego Senate Regulation 500.E.6 states, "*Registration on an S/U basis must take place at the beginning of the quarter.*" (Note: in practice the deadline for graduate student enrollment has aligned with the end of the fourth week deadline for undergraduate students.)
 - Senate Council approved EPC's proposal to grant a one-time exception to San Diego SR 500.E.6 to extend the deadline for graduate students to register on an S/U basis to the end of Week 10 in Spring 2020.
3. Course grading options for individual courses are under the purview of the Undergraduate Council (UGC) and Graduate Council (GC), as the committees charged with authorizing and supervising all courses of instruction. UGC and GC authorized allowing departments and colleges to offer undergraduate and graduate courses approved with the grading option of "Letter Grade Only" on a P/NP or S/U basis. This is a one-time exception for Spring 2020.

Extending the Deadlines for Adding, Dropping, and Withdrawing from Courses

Faculty have been encouraged to employ a "soft-start" to Spring Quarter, with the first week primarily focused on measures to help students familiarize themselves with remote instruction tools and making review and introductory material available. Therefore, Senate Council approved extending some of the deadlines in San Diego Senate Regulation 501. *Adding and Dropping Courses and Withdrawal* to support this recommendation and provide additional time to students to make decisions about adding, dropping, and withdrawing from courses.

1. San Diego Senate Regulation 501.A states, "*A student may add a course before the end of the second week of instruction of a quarter, and with the approval of the instructor and department add a course to the class list before the end of the final week of instruction.*"
 - Senate Council approved a one-time exception to San Diego SR 501.A to extend the deadline for both undergraduate and graduate students to add a course to the end of the third week of instruction in Spring 2020. Students are still permitted to add a course to their class list before the end of the final week of instruction if approved by the instructor and department.
2. San Diego Senate Regulation 501.B allows an undergraduate student to drop a course before the end of the sixth week of instruction and allows a graduate student to drop a course before the end of the ninth week of instruction.
 - a. Per Section B.1, a course dropped before the end of the fourth week of instruction will not be entered on the student's transcript.
 - b. Per Section B.2, for a course dropped after the end of the fourth week of instruction, the Registrar will assign a final grade of W to that course.

- Senate Council approved the following one-time exceptions to San Diego SR 501's drop/withdrawal deadlines for Spring 2020:
 - Undergraduate students may drop a course before the end of the seventh week of instruction;
 - A course dropped before the end of the fifth week of instruction will not be entered on the student's transcript, for both undergraduate and graduate students;
 - For a course dropped after the end of the fifth week of instruction, the Registrar will assign a final grade of W to that course;
 - The same rules noted in 1-3 above apply to students withdrawing from the University in Spring 2020 (Section C of SR 501).

- c. The following requirements specified in SD 501 are in effect for Spring 2020:
 - The deadline for a graduate student to drop a course remains the end of the ninth week. Petitioning requirements for graduate students requesting to drop a course during Week 10 for emergency reasons remain unchanged.
 - The deadlines for laboratory courses approved by EPC for an early drop deadline remain unchanged.
 - An undergraduate student may petition to drop a course or withdraw from the University for emergency reasons after the end of seventh week of instruction and before the end of the tenth week of instruction. For such petitions, approval may be granted by the appropriate provost for undergraduate students.

Mitigating Unintended Consequences and Promoting Consistency Across Campus

Senate Council approved these temporary measures in an effort to mitigate stress and anxiety among students and faculty that may result from moving to remote instruction in Spring Quarter amidst a rapidly evolving situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, Senate Council would like to ensure that the following are considered and conveyed widely across campus as these measures are implemented:

1. In all communications, it should be made clear that students should consult with their department and college advisors and financial aid advisors about their individual circumstances prior to any final election for their grading options or course schedule. Many students will be making decisions under extreme stress and we need to ensure that students are informed about the full implications of their choices.

2. Many departments and colleges require courses applied to the major or general education requirements be taken on a letter grade basis. It is up to the individual departments and colleges to decide whether to relax their requirements and allow courses taken on a P/NP or S/U basis to apply towards major or degree requirements.

Senate Council strongly supports administrative efforts to encourage departments, programs, and colleges to relax letter grade requirements for major courses, degree requirements, and prerequisites during Spring Quarter 2020. While the Academic Senate supports allowing departments and colleges to retain the authority over their own major and degree requirements, it is important to encourage as much consistency as possible across campus. Senate Council would appreciate being informed of the information collected by Academic Affairs on department and college plans to accommodate P/NP and S/U grading options in Spring 2020 so that the Academic Senate may be aware of potential impacts downstream.

3. Senate Council's approval to relax the current requirements for using P/NP grades is not a license for an instructor to insist that all students must register for their course for a P/NP grade. It should be made clear to instructors that these accommodations were made to afford flexibility to students. Any sort of blanket requirement imposed by instructors is detrimental to students and cannot be allowed if the course also affords the option to complete it for a letter grade.
4. As the quarter progresses, faculty must be mindful about providing feedback to students at multiple points during the quarter so that students are able to make informed decisions.
5. Members of Senate Council asked about the University's contingency plans if there are internet access issues for faculty or students during the quarter. Any information on backup plans to maintain educational continuity in the event of outages would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Maripat Corr, Chair
San Diego Divisional Academic Senate

cc: J. Antony, Dean of the Graduate Division
A. Burr, Chair, Undergraduate Council
S. Constable, Senate Vice Chair
R. Continetti, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor
G. Cook, Chair, Educational Policy Committee
J. Gattas, Associate Chancellor/Chief of Staff
L. Hullings, Senate Associate Director
C. Lyons, University Registrar
J. Moore, Dean of Undergraduate Education
R. Rodriguez, Senate Director
L. Russell, Chair, Graduate Council
A. Sanders, Assistant Vice Chancellor
J. Serences, Chair, University Committee on Educational Policy