

March 27, 2020

SPECIAL FACULTY MEETING

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Committee Business: COG and CAP : Motion to endorse grading guidelines for courses taken in D-term (included below)
4. New Business
5. Adjournment

Motion: The Committee on Governance (COG) and the Committee on Academic Policy (CAP) recommends and I move to give undergraduate students the option to receive a Pass/NR grade for any course taken in D-term 2020, as described below.

Description of the proposed modifications:

This motion ONLY applies to undergraduate students completing a course in D-term 2020.

1. Students will have the option until Thursday May 21st 5:00 EDT to request that their grade for an individual course would be either P (Pass) or NR. This means grades of A/B/C would become P. Courses assigned a P grade will count towards degree requirements.
2. The current “Grade/Change” process/paperwork shall disallow any attempt to have a faculty member change for D-term 2020 an existing grade to a P or to change a P grade to an A/B/C grade.

Rationale:

All courses during D-term 2020 are offered in distance learning format as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While all faculty members are committed to offering high quality remote courses, most have not received the extensive training usually associated with offering remote courses. Students, however, did not choose to take their courses remotely. Most have been displaced from their WPI residence (whether on or off campus), and most will not have the same learning environment they have grown accustomed to at WPI. Furthermore, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, students are more likely to become sick or have family members or friends stricken with this disease. In consideration of these changes, students should be provided with options allowing them to continue to learn without having to worry about their grade.

Other colleges around the country are devising different strategies to address the concerns of students forced into an academic class conducted using online course delivery.

- Smith College is adopting a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) system where grades are recorded by faculty as before, but students can request letter grades for professional programs, employment or graduate studies. These grades will not affect GPA.
- Duke University is transitioning all spring 2020 courses to S/U grades though undergraduates could apply to the registrar to receive letter grades. Students can indicate by April 22nd whether they would prefer to receive an actual letter grade. Grades S and U are not factored into GPA. An S grade is assigned for C- grades or higher. Dean’s list is being suspended.
- MIT has shifted to “alternate grades” or PE/NE/IE where PE reflects a grade of an A/B/C where an NE grade indicates which will not appear on an external transcript and IE refers to Incomplete due to disruption.
- At CMU, all faculty will submit their course grades (A-R) to the registrar’s office. Students will have 7 days after the date on which final grades are posted to choose to move courses to pass/no-pass grading. In recognition that each course’s learning experience will be different,

there is no limit on the number of courses students can convert to pass/no-pass grading. Students can make the decision on a course-by-course basis.

- Lehman College (CUNY) will allow students 20 days after they receive their spring term grades to decide if they want to convert the letter grades they earn in their classes to credit/no credit (CR/NC) grading. CUNY will supply students with pertinent information about the impact of CR/NC on their financial aid and academic progress.

We have tried to craft a student-centered policy that adopts the following principles

- The student has the right to choose whether to be graded as “Pass/NR” or “A/B/C/NR” for any undergraduate course
- Faculty will continue to grade undergraduate students using A/B/C/NR grading scale.
- The P grade has no known numeric equivalence. It means the student received at least a C grade.

Students that elect the Pass/NR option cannot receive an Incomplete grade.

The registrar’s office will set up a system for students to record their intentions and will announce to the campus when the system is ready to be used. This motion ONLY applies to undergraduate students completing a course in D-term 2020.