

Resolution in Support of Equitable and Accommodating Academic Grading in Light of the Unprecedented COVID-19 Emergency

WHEREAS, the sudden nature of our university's shift to online instruction and the lack of access to campus by many students means that there will certainly be deep inequities in our students' learning outcomes over the duration of this semester;

WHEREAS, many of our students lack broadband access entirely or are attempting to complete a full course load of online instruction while they are sharing close quarters with family members;

WHEREAS, many of our students are also taking on additional childcare duties, caring for sick family members, or facing their own health problems;

WHEREAS, many students, whose social lives and economic livelihoods have been completely disrupted by this crisis, now face serious anxiety about their academic performance in their coursework;

WHEREAS there is no systematic way of knowing whether a student's academic work this semester is due to their underlying performance or due to broader detrimental conditions out of their control;

WHEREAS we hold an important responsibility, as the faculty of the university during an unprecedented crisis of this nature, to mitigate these inequities while maintaining appropriate rewards for exemplary performance;

WHEREAS, mitigating these inequities is vital in ensuring students' access to higher education is not detrimentally interrupted by this crisis;

BE IT RESOLVED that as a faculty, we will take the maximum steps allowed by our discretion to recognize the nature of the above circumstances by adjusting our grading standards—for this semester only—to be as accommodating to students as possible;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that whereas no faculty are required to do any of the following, some of the steps they might consider include (but are not limited to):

- 1) Establishing a minimum passing grade in a course that is higher than what is offered by our grading scale
- 2) Curving upward all passing grades in a course by an entire letter grade
- 3) Offering students a choice of different concluding assignments and making sure that students have ample time in advance to work on a final assignment
- 4) Giving students the choice of more heavily weighting their performance from the first half of the semester when in-person instruction was available

Faculty Senate New Business 5a 4/8/2020