

**From: Dr. Robert Murray, Provost**  
**To: Undergraduate Students**  
**Date: March 30, 2020**  
**Re: COVID-19 Grade Policy for Spring 2020**

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### **A Revised Plan for Undergraduate Course Grades for Spring 2020**

#### **Background**

We are changing our course grade policy for this semester because we feel that the circumstances of such a sudden and unprecedented shift of our entire academic program to an online platform has undoubtedly created unusual obstacles for students. Because of this health crisis, students are not simply required to know and master the material offered by each course as delivered in the classroom; students are now expected to adapt to a variety of online services, compensate for faculty's varying levels of experience with online learning, and, of course, cope with the many other anxieties that impact us all at such an uncertain time.

In creating this policy, our goals were simple:

1. Because of the massive challenges we are experiencing, no student should have a lower overall GPA at the end of this semester.
2. However, students who do well should be able to keep the high grades they earn despite this semester's challenges.

#### **THE GRADE CONVERSION PROGRAM**

We are calling this temporary response to the COVID-19 situation the "Grade Conversion" program because after the semester's grades are posted on Banner Self Service, students will have the opportunity to convert almost any grade which they feel does not accurately represent their performance in their classes. In this way, the grading system takes into account the other factors brought about by COVID-19 that may have affected student performance.

This is the heart of the plan:

- 1) After the semester ends, students can convert any grade from A through D that is posted on Banner Self Service for Spring 2020 to a grade of Pass.
- 2) For the Spring 2020 semester only, the grade of F has been eliminated and replaced by the grade NC (No Credit).
- 3) The FX grade (see below) will remain.
- 4) Grades of NC or FX cannot be converted for reasons described in more detail below.

## HOW IT WORKS

At first this plan looks like our usual grading practice: you will be graded as usual, faculty will enter those grades into Banner Self Service as usual, and the grades will appear on Banner as usual.

**The difference this year is that we are allowing you the option to review your grades and convert those grades that do not reflect your actual potential to master the course material.**

Therefore, if you receive excellent grades that accurately represent your hard work and achievement, there is nothing for you to do. As usual, your high grades will earn course credit and will be calculated into your semester GPA to improve your overall GPA.

HOWEVER, if you receive lower grades that were impacted by the effects of COVID-19, you can convert them to a P (for Pass). **These P grades will not be calculated into your semester GPA and they will not hurt your overall GPA.** They will, however, earn you however many credits the course carries, they satisfy requirements for majors and minors, and of course they count toward the total number of credits needed for graduation.

## THE PROCESS

After the semester is over, you will receive your grades on Banner Self Service, and the grades you see will be based on our current grading system. But for the whole week following the posting of your grades, you can either keep the grades that rewarded your hard work and mastery or convert those grades that did not show your level of work properly because of circumstances that were beyond your control.

1. Grades will be posted on May 7, 2020.
2. You will have from May 7 to May 15 to view your grades and decide which to convert.
3. A Google Form for sending the Registrar your grade conversions will be available in late April.
4. Using that form, you will tell the Registrar which grades to change to a P grade.

## WHAT IS THE NC GRADE?

For Spring 2020 only, we have eliminated the F grade. Instead, the College will use the grade NC, indicating that the course earned the student no credit toward graduation in a less stigmatizing way than an F. In addition, the NC grade will not be calculated into your grade point average – it will have no effect on your GPA at all.

Note in most cases the NC grade means that you must retake the course, especially if it is a prerequisite for a higher-level course or a requirement of the major or minor. Exceptions to this part of the policy will be decided by the Dean, Registrar, and/or Provost on an individual basis.

**NC grades cannot be converted – but remember they will not be calculated into your semester GPA and so will not lower your overall GPA.**

### **WHAT IS THE FX GRADE?**

As in the past, the FX grade will be used to grade students who attended classes or participated in online classes for a period of time then stopped without notifying the College by properly withdrawing from a course. Students cannot change an FX grade, and it **will** be calculated in the semester GPA. It will not carry credit, and students will be required to repeat the course if it is part of a major or minor or other requirement.

### **REVIEWING YOUR CHOICES**

- If you receive an A or B, you may not want to convert them, so you would do nothing and those grades will remain.
- If you receive any grade from A through D that you do not want on your transcript so it won't lower your overall GPA, you can inform the Registrar that you want to convert those grades to P simply by using the form we will make available.
- If you receive a grade of NC, there is no GPA penalty; however, it may be required for the next course in the sequence or for your major. In these cases, you should speak with your advisor or professor or the Registrar about the need to retake the course.
- This policy change will not affect the use of Incomplete grades.

### ***Note about Pass Grades and Prerequisite Requirements***

In some courses, students must receive a grade of D or C- or better to be allowed to register for the next level of classes. Because choosing a P can replace grades ranging from A to D, the grade of P may not meet certain prerequisite requirements for courses in a student's program. For instance, a program may stipulate that a student must earn a C- or higher in a lower-level course to proceed to an upper-level course. Because of the unique circumstances of this Spring 2020 semester, some program prerequisites may be relaxed to allow a P, but this is not guaranteed for all courses. Therefore, if you are in this situation, prior to making your decisions about whether to convert your grades in a course with prerequisite restrictions based on a grade, you must check with your academic advisor and/or Dean to verify whether a P will be sufficient to proceed to other courses in that specific major.

### ***Note about Graduate Schools***

Some students may require traditional letter grades for applications to graduate school, professional programs, and other post-baccalaureate purposes. Students have up to a week after grades are posted to keep the letter grade or convert to a P grade. After May 15, if a student has a course in which a Pass grade was received but requires a letter grade, the student may request an official letter from the Registrar's Office indicating the original letter grade that was submitted by the faculty member.