

April 10, 2020

Department Chairs  
Program Directors  
College Provosts

**Re: Replacement of Missing Grades from Fall 2019 and Winter 2020**

Dear Colleagues,

At the request of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (VPDUE), the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed the current situation with missing grades from Fall 2019 and Winter 2020. Last term, CEP released letters outlining how grades could be submitted for [Fall 2019](#) and [Winter 2020](#) courses for which grading materials were missing. In our letters, we tried to provide course-sponsoring units with a pathway by which they could submit all missing grades while preserving the integrity of the grading process.

We are pleased to see that instructors and course-sponsoring units have made great progress in reducing the number of missing grades. According to the VPDUE, approximately 97% of Fall 2019 undergraduate grades and 95% of Winter 2020 undergraduate grades have been submitted. That this has been accomplished in the midst of the turmoil caused by the precipitate transition to remote instruction is even more of an achievement.

And yet, for any student who is missing a grade in a course, the entire grade is missing, not 3% or 5%. In our previous [letter](#), we outlined various ways in which the absence of grades is harmful to both undergraduate students and the academic processes of the University. While we recognize and appreciate the commitment to provide grades for any student who requests them, this does not address the problem fully. First, expecting students to ask for something they are entitled to, and providing it to only those who ask, is inherently unfair. There is the danger that students who are most sensitive to the power dynamic between instructors and teaching assistants, on the one hand, and students, on the other hand, will not seek grades that they need. Second, compromising academic procedures may harm students in the long run. That is, altering these procedures (e.g., academic standing reviews, reducing enforcement of prerequisites, etc.) will not lead individual students to request grades, but since these procedures are intended to ensure that students do not enroll in courses in which they are unlikely to succeed, suspending them harms students later. Finally, the “one student grade at a time” approach imposes an enormous burden on the Office of the Registrar, college and departmental advisors, and the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office. This is not sustainable.

The financial aid aspect of this problem, which was not discussed in our previous letter about the impacts of missing grades, has been brought to our attention by the VPDUE. For those recipients of federal financial aid who do not make sufficient progress in a term, the federal funds have to be returned through a process that starts early in the following term. The missing grades from Fall 2019 caused the University to have to return approximately \$25,000 to the federal government, and some students had to be provided financial support from University funds that are otherwise used to provide for other students. Although the amounts involved are not large, this was only the result of an amount of effort on the part of the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office that cannot be expected on a regular basis.

Accordingly, CEP has decided that for undergraduate grades from Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 that are missing, students will be given the benefit of the doubt, and the missing grades will be **replaced with**

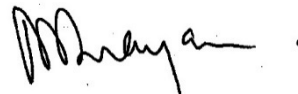
**P grades on May 1, 2020.** Instructors and course sponsoring agencies have until April 30, 2020 to submit the grades for these courses, if they are able to. After P grades have been entered, instructors will retain the ability to replace them with letter grades for 365 days after the grade submission deadline for the relevant term<sup>1</sup>. However, **instructors will not be able to replace them with an NP grade, or a grade of C- or lower**, without being liable to a grade grievance.

For subsequent terms, i.e. Spring 2020 and thereafter, course-sponsoring agencies should expect that any missing grades will be converted to P grades **approximately 30 days after the grade submission deadline**, after the instructor, course sponsoring agency, and the supervising dean have been informed in a timely manner. The details are being worked out between CEP and the VPDUE, and will be announced soon.

Mirroring the process when the Academic Senate awards a student a P grade as a result of a grade grievance, any P grades that replace missing grades will not affect the student's ability to progress in their major or graduate under letter grade requirements. Also, to mirror the grade grievance process, an instructor may ask that their name be removed from a student transcript if a P grade has been inserted by CEP and the Office of the Registrar.

We take this decision reluctantly. Since the beginning of the strike, we have striven to ensure that grades are a true measure of student performance. In our most recent letter about P/NP grades in Spring 2020, we outlined how letter grades are important for some students, for whom a P is a poor substitute. If course sponsoring agencies face impediments to filling in missing grades, such as a lack of resources needed to complete the grading work, we will do our best to help if we are informed. However, in cases where the problem cannot be resolved by April 30, we have to keep the interests of the students in mind and enable them to move forward. It is our hope that, for most departments, missing grades will be eliminated by April 30, and no action will be needed from us.

Sincerely,



Onuttom Narayan, Chair  
Committee on Educational Policy

cc: Kimberly Lau, Chair, Academic Senate  
Lindsay Hinck, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction  
Don Smith, Chair, Graduate Council  
Divisional Deans  
Richard Hughey, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education  
Stacey Sketo-Rosener, Assistant Vice Provost of Undergraduate Advising  
Tchad Sanger, University Registrar

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<sup>1</sup> Beyond 365 days, the Committee on Courses of Instruction (CCI) must approve any change.