

San Mateo County Community College District Academic Senate
Spring 2020
Resolution 14.01S20
Pass/No Pass Grading and Excused Withdrawals During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Whereas, the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) Academic Senate is committed to the District's Students First Strategic Plan;

Whereas, the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 (also known as COVID-19), has disrupted the lives and educational progress of the District's students due to an unforeseen move to emergency remote learning;

Whereas, the District's students, in addition to adjusting to a new instructional modality, are coping with personal obstacles, including illnesses related to COVID-19, unemployment, homeschooling children and siblings, and housing and food insecurity;

Whereas, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) has issued executive orders (2020-02 and 2020-01) suspending certain Title V regulations governing Pass/No Pass (P/NP) grading and Excused Withdrawals (EW);

Whereas, the CSU and UC systems have instituted temporary policies, in response to COVID-19, that relax limits on P/NP credits;

Whereas, it is becoming evident that the novel coronavirus was spread locally in California as early as February according to researchers at Stanford University;

And whereas, the SMCCCD faculty are, first and foremost, committed to the well-being and academic success of the District's students and to finding the most compassionate and just academic policies for our students;

Resolved, the SMCCCD Academic Senate recommends the following changes to the District's Pass/No Pass (P/NP) policies for the Spring 2020 semester for consideration by the SMCCCD Board of Trustees:

- Extend the deadline for students to request a P/NP to the final day of instruction of the Spring 2020 semester (May 22);
- Suspend the "Letter Grade Only" requirement on all CORs for the spring 2020 semester;
- Delegate to the District's admissions and records professionals the creation of easily accessible procedures through which students can request a P/NP evaluation method;
- Per the March 27, 2020, CCCCCO executive order 2020-02, suspend local policies that use the grade mark "NP" in probation and dismissal proceedings;
- Replace the grade symbol "F" with the grade symbol "NP" in the "Letter Grade" evaluation mode for the spring 2020 semester (i.e. A/B/C/D/NP);
- Disregard P/NP units earned during the Spring 2020 from the maximum P/NP unit cap for students applying for Associate Degrees and/or Certificates.

Resolved, the SMCCCD Academic Senate recommends the following changes to the District's Excused Withdrawal (EW) policies for the Spring 2020 semester for consideration by the SMCCCD Board of Trustees:

- Retroactively apply EW to any student withdrawals during the spring 2020 semester, or to the earliest date possible as allowable by the Department of Education, without a student petition, and refund the students' fees to the extent practical;
- Per District grading policy, "An 'Excused Withdrawal' will be authorized when a student withdraws from a course(s) for reasons beyond their control. A student may request to use an 'EW' for only one course or all courses in a term depending on the reason for the request. In accordance to Title 5, section 55024 (e), an EW symbol may be requested by the student any time during the semester and no later than one year following the end of the term in which the EW symbol is requested in accordance with the District grade change policy. Upon verification of the extenuating circumstance, a notation of 'EW' will be placed on the student record. Excused Withdrawals are not counted in the probation or dismissal calculations. In addition, the 'Excused Withdrawal' should not be counted towards the permitted number of withdrawals or counted as an enrollment attempt" (Skyline Catalog);
- Per the March 20, 2020, CCCC executive order 2020-01, suspend any local policies that require students to petition for an EW, and allow an EW for any reason associated with the COVID-19 crisis;
- Delegate to the District's admissions and records professionals the creation of easily accessible procedures through which students can request an EW.

Resolved, the SMCCCD Academic Senate recommends that any student interested in taking a P/NP or EW for their course(s) first speak to a counselor and financial aid professional, as this decision can impact the student's educational progress and record, including their GPA calculation, the courses' transferability, veterans' benefits, visa status, and financial aid eligibility, among others.

Passed April 13, 2020, by the following vote: 6 for, 1 abstention, 0 against