Academic Policy Modifications - Spring 2020

I.   Background/Process/Executive Summary

This document outlines a series of temporary modifications to Spring 2020 academic dates, deadlines and policies in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Chancellor's decision to suspend face-to-face instruction beginning on March 23, 2020.

These temporary policies have been developed in consultation with the Academic Senate, faculty, staff and students.

We recognize that the move away from face-to-face instruction, along with Governor Pritzker's shelter-in-place order and other circumstances, places considerable stress on students, faculty and staff. Our goal is to facilitate the delivery of course material, and to support the continuity of instruction and student academic progress as much as possible.

The academic timeline and grading modifications are being implemented in order to support students and faculty through this unprecedented period. Our goal with these modifications is to provide students with the maximum flexibility to continue their coursework through the Spring 2020 semester.

The deadline to drop courses will be delayed until April 30. The credit/no-credit (CR/NC) option is expanded such that any courses students elect to place on CR/NC status will count for a student's major, minor and General Education requirements. These changes are intended to allow students flexibility to continue courses and achieve learning outcomes without the pressure of worrying about grading details.

In recognition of the fact that some courses that cannot be assessed and graded in a fair way without face-to-face interaction (*e.g.*, performance courses), we have also introduced a temporary pass/no-pass option. Instructors of courses in this category will continue to teach students and share course material; students will achieve the learning outcomes associated with the course. Thanks to the input from the Academic Senate, we are moving to limit this option to courses where online assessment is especially challenging.

We recognize that no solution is perfect for everyone; this policy is an attempt to allow students to choose what is best for them. Based upon input from the Senate, we will develop messaging to help students understand the issues associated with these choices.

II.   Introduction

This document describes revisions to academic dates, deadlines and policies for the Spring 2020 semester. These changes are in response to the move away from face-to-face instruction, beginning March 23, 2020. The changes are informed based upon input from the University of Illinois Academic Senate through communication with the Senate Executive Committee.

The Spring 2020 academic calendar remains in effect:
- Conclusion of 1st eight-week courses: March 13, 2020
- First day of instruction after Spring Break: March 23, 2020
- First day of 2nd eight-week courses: March 23, 2020
- Last day of instruction: May 6, 2020

- Final exams: May 8-15, 2020.

III. Registration dates for Summer 2020 and Fall 2020
- Time-ticket distribution to students is delayed by 2 weeks and the deadline has been moved from March 23 to April 6.
- Registration for Fall 2020 delayed by 2 weeks and the deadline has been moved from April 6 to April 20.
- Registration for Summer 2020 delayed by 2 weeks and the deadline has been moved from April 6 to April 20.

IV. Drop, Credit/non-credit, grade replacement deadlines for Spring 2020 courses:
- 1st eight-week courses:
  - All dates and deadlines associated with 1st eight-week courses are unchanged.
- Full-semester courses:
  - Deadline to drop a full semester course (without a grade of W) was originally March 13, will now be April 30.
  - Deadline to choose credit/non-credit (CR/NC) for a full-semester course was originally March 13, will now be April 30.
  - Deadline to select or rescind a full-semester course for the Campus Grade Replacement option was originally March 13, will now be April 30.
- 2nd eight-week courses:
  - Deadline to drop a 2nd eight-week course (without a grade of W) was originally April 17, will now be April 30.
  - Deadline to choose credit/non-credit (CR/NC) for a full-semester course was originally April 17, will now be April 30.
  - Deadline to select a 2nd eight-week course for the Campus Grade Replacement option was originally April 17, will now be April 30.

V. Grading modifications for Spring 2020 in effect for all full-semester and 2nd eight-week courses
- Credit/non-credit (CR/NC)
  - Course assessment for CR/NC will be performed as outlined in the Student Code.
    - Instructor submits a grade for every student in the course as normal.
    - For students that have selected CR/NC, a grade of C- or better is automatically converted to CR, a grade of D+ or below is automatically converted to NC.
    - A course graded as CR/NC does not enter into a students' grade point average (GPA) calculation.
  - Deadlines to select CR/NC, outlined above, will now be April 30, 2020.
  - For Spring 2020 only, courses graded as CR/NC can be utilized for major, minor and General Education requirements.
  - Online and graduate courses are included in this temporary CR/NC modification.
  - Any number of courses may be selected for CR/NC grading.
  - The Provost's office, working with the Colleges, will develop messaging to help students understand the benefits and drawbacks associated with selecting courses as CR/NC.
  - Reminder of grading process: Students select CR/NC grading for the course. This selection does not require instructor approval. Pursuant to the Student Code, the instructor does not know if a student has selected CR/NC grading. The instructor

assesses all students and submits grades as usual. For students that have selected CR/NC grading, the letter grade is automatically converted to CR (for C- and above) or NC (D+ or below.)

- Pass/no-pass
    o In rare cases where the move away from face-to-face instruction requires a significant shift away from the original assessment strategy, a course may be approved to switch from the standard grading system to a pass/no-pass option.
    o If the pass/no-pass option is requested and approved, all students in the course would be assessed and graded with a grade of PA (pass) or NP (no-pass). Conceptually, this is similar to the existing S/U grading rubric.
    o **This option should only be exercised in cases where the modification in course assessment makes it extremely difficult to fairly follow our standard grading system.**
    o With the addition of Proctorio™ as a campus-wide option for online exam proctoring, we believe that the number of courses required to strongly modify assessments will fall within limited categories.
    o For courses graded as pass/no-pass, there will be no option for students to select standard grading.
    o Courses approved for deferred (DFR) grading cannot be approved for pass/no-pass.
    o If a course has multiple sections, we strongly recommend that pass/no-pass be implemented the same across all sections.
    o An instructor's proposal to switch to pass/no-pass grading will require a description of the need to modify the assessment strategy and require the explicit approval of the department head/chair and the dean. The process to identify a course as pass/no-pass will be provided soon.
    o Faculty should consider a move to pass/no-pass as a last resort for course assessment. Courses assessed as pass/no-pass will not affect student GPA. This could be detrimental to students who were expecting to earn a high grade in the course. Programs with licensure requirements might be affected by pass/no-pass grading.
    o The institution guarantees that students will not be penalized by pass/no-pass courses (*e.g.*, intra/inter-collegiate transfer, academic probation, scholarship maintenance.) Although we have indications that external stakeholders (employers, graduate schools) will not penalize students for pass/no-pass, we cannot guarantee that this will be universally true.
    o The Provost's office, working with the Colleges, will develop messaging to help faculty and students understand the benefits and drawbacks associated with pass/no-pass grading.

VI.   Exclusions

Students in the following professional programs are excluded from these temporary policy modifications:

- Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Students in the College of Veterinary Medicine
- Students in the College of Law
- Students in the Carle Illinois College of Medicine.

VII.   Discussion of grading modifications

We recognize that the move away from face-to-face instruction, along with shelter-in-place and other circumstances, places considerable stress on students, faculty and staff. Our goal is to facilitate the

delivery of course material and support the continuity of instruction and student academic progress as much as possible. In consultation with the Academic Senate, faculty, staff and students, these temporary grading modifications are implemented in order to support students and faculty through this unprecedented period. Our goal with these modifications is to provide students with the maximum flexibility to continue their coursework through the Spring 2020 semester.

The late drop date and the expansion of the CR/NC option is intended to allow students flexibility to continue courses and achieve learning outcomes without the pressure of worrying about grading details. We recognize that no solution is perfect for everyone; this policy is an attempt to allow students to choose what is best for them. Based upon input from the Senate, we will develop messaging to help students understand the issues associated with these choices. We have verified that CR/NC and PA/NP grading will not affect student financial aid status.

The pass/no-pass option is in recognition of the fact that some courses must modify their assessment strategy in significant ways. These courses can continue to distribute course material and achieve learning outcomes, but the modification in assessment might make standard grading difficult to administer fairly. Thanks to the input from the Senate, we are moving to limit this option to courses where online assessment is especially challenging.