

July 10, 2020

PROFESSOR MARIPAT CORR, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Emergency Waiver of Policy on Distance Education Requirements for Remote Instruction –
Winter, Spring, and Summer 2021

The Educational Policy Committee (EPC) reviewed Chancellor Pradeep Khosla's June 30, 2020 request for a one-time emergency exception to the Educational Policy Committee's Policy on Distance Education Courses to allow for the use of remote instruction for the duration of Winter, Spring, and Summer terms in 2021 due to the current public health emergency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, EPC approved the following requests:

- A. An emergency limited-term exception to implement a flexible plan for Winter Quarter 2021 incorporating educational approaches ranging from fully in-person, to blended in-person/remote, to fully remote.
- B. An emergency limited-term exception, such that if at any time between now and the end of Winter Quarter 2021, a heightened state of emergency associated with COVID-19 makes in-person teaching infeasible for Winter Quarter 2021, the campus may return immediately to fully remote instruction for Winter Quarter 2021.
- C. An emergency limited-term exception to implement a flexible plan for Spring Quarter 2021 incorporating educational approaches ranging from fully in-person, to blended in-person/remote, to fully remote.
- D. An emergency limited-term exception, such that if at any time between now and the end of Spring Quarter 2021, a heightened state of emergency associated with COVID-19 makes in-person teaching infeasible for Spring Quarter 2021, the campus may return immediately to fully remote instruction for Spring Quarter 2021.
- E. An emergency limited-term exception to implement a flexible plan for Summer Session 2021 incorporating educational approaches ranging from fully in-person, to blended in-person/remote, to fully remote.
- F. An emergency limited-term exception, such that if at any time between now and the end of Summer Session 2021, a heightened state of emergency associated with COVID-19 makes in-person teaching infeasible for Summer Session 2021, the campus may return immediately to fully remote instruction for Summer Session 2021.

All members of EPC supported approval of requests A-D, noting that faculty, departments, and students will benefit from advanced notice about the University's instructional plans for the full academic year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). A majority of members supported requests E and F for Summer Session 2021 for the same reason. A minority of members expressed support for holding off on approval until Fall Quarter, after more information is available about the student and faculty experience during Summer Session 2020. There were concerns about the quality of summer instruction in a remote mode, given the compressed five-week schedule, and the reliance on the use of emergency waivers to continue offering traditional courses remotely in Summer Session without an articulated plan to encourage departments to develop R-designated courses.

All members of the Committee are in agreement that there is a clear distinction between temporarily delivering the content of traditional courses remotely, which is necessitated by the current public health pandemic, and thoughtfully developing remote or online courses designed to meet the quality standards for distance education courses. Concerns were expressed that this distinction is becoming increasingly blurred. If there are long-term plans to offer more distance education courses in future Summer Sessions to encourage student enrollment, EPC strongly recommends that the Administration work with departments and programs to prepare course proposals requesting the R designation. The intentional design of courses for distance education is integral to optimizing student learning. As we look to next Summer and beyond, and if the situation with the COVID-19 begins to allow a return

to campus, we should be purposefully transitioning towards a return to limiting the use of distance education to R-designated courses and discontinue the emergency practice of offering traditional courses with less than 50% face-to-face student-instructor time.

EPC would appreciate periodic updates from the Administration on AY2020-2021 and Summer Session 2021 instructional planning as the situation evolves. EPC is granting the limited-term exceptions to accommodate flexibility with the assumption that information about instructional planning for Winter, Spring, and Summer will be shared in the near future with departments, colleges, faculty, and students so they have time to plan ahead. In the absence of any extreme conditions as the academic year unfolds, EPC does not plan to propose any temporary changes to San Diego Senate Regulations relating to course grading options and deadlines for adding and dropping courses or withdrawing from the University. It is important that students are provided with guidance to prepare for the upcoming year and tools for making progress towards their degrees.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Cook, Chair
Educational Policy Committee

cc: S. Constable
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