

### **My Conversation with SGA**

By the dual request of the SGA President and Our Senate Liaison to SGA, I attended the Student Government Assembly by Zoom on Monday, April 13, 2020. The students voiced the following feedback about how their classes are going.

- Instructors are changing times of classes and not observing 10 minute passing times
- Instructors are not teaching; just sending YouTube videos and students are teaching themselves
- Instructors are not changing syllabus, and being rigid with course content vs. other Instructors being flexible and understanding
- "Net Tutor is crap."

We also discussed a suggestion given by a faculty member that repeatability restrictions might be relaxed so that students might, even if they complete their classes this semester with passing grades, take those classes again because the content has been truncated. We had a beautiful and heartening conversation (so from my perspective) about the centrality of the learning and teaching instead of the completion. I had a conversation with other senate leaders in the state including a past ACCCC president about this the next day (Tuesday, April 14) which encouraged me to pass these suggestions to the ASCCC president and to the Chancellor. The ASCCC president's answer to me is copied below. I also heard in this meeting that faculty have been told that students hate Proctorio because it is so invasive of their privacy.

#### **Takeaways:**

- We need to encourage each other as instructors, and share practices that best engage students under these circumstances
- The Side Letter produced by AFA and the district states, "Faculty members using synchronous instruction may require students to attend "real time" remote learning sessions only during those times listed in the schedule of classes."
- We need to employ our professional disciplinary expertise in nuanced and creative ways that simultaneously promote quality of learning and mercy to the students as well as to ourselves

I realize all these things will present different difficulties to different instructors according to the diversity of their disciplines and life circumstances, but it doesn't hurt to remind ourselves of these things.

- John Stankas' (President, ASCCC) answer:

The idea of re-visiting repeatability has been examined through 5C and the Chancellor's Office. The current guidance memos suspend most of the restrictions on length of term, grading policies, utilization of EW and permitting students to drop this spring 2020 term without penalty under repeatability restrictions. Repeatability was restricted during the last economic downturn when the legislature entertained the possibility of restricting the types of courses that could be claimed for apportionment. They were deeply disturbed by the wave of students unable to enroll in classes for transfer and certificate programs yet the colleges full-time equivalent student apportionment generation was not aligned with those goals. We, the

ASCCC, have consistently messaged the value of life-long learning as part of our system mission and many of those are now fulfilled through noncredit instruction where repeatability limitations do not exist.

Sorry for the short reply, I wanted you to know that I received your message and understand the concern but that doesn't seem like a viable path forward right now.

**The Board of Trustees Action on Senate Recommendations:**

The following item, copied from the Board Agenda, passed unanimously on Tuesday, April 14.

**Appendix: Board of Trustees Action on Senate Recommendation**

Apr 14, 2020 - Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Category

Action Agenda

Subject

Temporary Suspension of Board Procedure 3.10P, Section 1.A – Credit Course Limit on Pass/No Pass Grade During the COVID-19 Declared State of Emergency

Type

Action

Recommended Action

A recommendation that the SRJC Board of Trustees approve the temporary suspension of the credit course limits in Board Procedure 3.10P, Section 1.A as long as the declaration of the COVID-19 state of emergency is in place.

**Background**

The California Community Colleges Chancellor issued Executive Order 2020-02 on March 27, 2020. The executive order suspends the title 5, section 55022 requirement that students select the "pass or no pass" grading option prior to the 30% mark of the term. Additionally, the executive order suspends the requirement that units attempted for which the symbol "NP" is recorded be considered in probation and dismissal procedures. Students that attempt to continue to complete a course under the current situation, rather than withdraw, will not be negatively affected should they ultimately be unable to successfully complete the course.

On March 27, 2020, the Chancellor's Office Educational Services and Support Division issued a memo providing guidance to colleges regarding grading policies and term extensions focused on supporting students enrolled in the current environment. Colleges were encouraged to provide as much flexibility to students as possible, while mitigating against potentially adverse transfer implications of a pass/no pass grading option. In enacting any grading policy changes, the guidance notes, "colleges will need to revise their Spring 2020 catalog policies and should broadly and proactively communicate changes to students and faculty, including posting on their website where applicable," and further recommends "colleges provide written guidelines to students, staff, and faculty to ensure proactive advising and support for students.

Santa Rosa Junior College has 1,899 currently active and approved Course Outlines of Record (CORs). Of those, 163 are non-credit, 74 are pass/no pass only, 695 are letter grade only, and 967 are grade or pass/no pass. Grade options for courses are discipline determined and included in the curriculum review process.

Grading policies are one of the matters on which the SRJC Board of Trustees has agreed to rely primarily on the advice or judgment of the SRJC Academic Senate. On April 6, 2020, during a Special Meeting of the Academic Senate, a majority of the Senate approved a recommendation to temporarily suspend Board Procedure 3.10P, Section 1.A, which states, in part: "For credit courses, the P/NP (Pass/No Pass) grade option is limited to one course or 3 units per semester and subject to a maximum of 12 units for all semesters..." The Senate further recommended that the suspension continue as long as the declaration of the COVID-19 state of emergency is in place.

The effect is that Santa Rosa Junior College students enrolled in courses in which the COR permits a grade or pass/no pass option will have until the end of the semester to decide whether to accept the assigned grade or opt for the pass/no pass option. Instructors will report the letter grade earned in the class for every student. For students that have opted for a Pass/No Pass grade, the letter grade will be given in addition to a P or NP. The result will be that students may, at a later date, change the grade on their transcript according to their needs. Further, students will not be limited to the number of courses or units per semester, or to a maximum of 12 units for all semesters.

### **My report to the Board outlined the other two senate recommendations:**

“The Academic Senate recommends the implementation of a **dual grade reporting system** in which Instructors report the letter grade earned in the class for every student; for students that had opted for a Pass/No Pass grade, the letter grade will be given in addition to a P or NP; the result of this will be that students may, at a later date, change the grade on their transcript in either direction according to their needs, from a letter grade to pass/no pass, or from a pass/no pass to a letter grade. We hope that this can be effected by IT in faculty portals with linkage to Canvas. Pedro Avila, Vice President of Student Services who also oversees IT, has taken up this recommendation and is working on it. If done the way we envision, students will be able to choose the form of grade they earned down the road, according to information, for example, regarding transfer to a UC or CSU that is ever changing now, making such decisions sometimes difficult. The options will already be in the system at the conclusion of the semester, so if they want to change in six months or a year from now they will not need an instructor’s approval or input.

The third recommendation is that we not get ahead of ourselves, understand the emergency and temporary nature of the adjustments to distance learning and teaching we are undergoing now, and treat each semester separately.”

Eric Thompson