

University Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 23rd, 2021, 1:30 – 4:30 pm, Zoom

Attendees

Co-Chairs: John Walbridge, John Watson, Joe Wert

Officers: Yu Kay Law (secretary) Rachael Cohen (parliamentarian)

Ex Officio: Michael McRobbie, John Applegate

UFC Office: Elizabeth Pear, Sarah McCammon, Karen Lee

Members: Keith Anliker, Mark Baer, Kelsey Binion, Rebecca Carlton, Paul Coats, Paul Cook, Ange Cooksey, J Duncan, Charlie Feldhaus, Pnina Fichman, Philip Goff, Lucia Guerra-Reyes, Diane Henshel, Debora Herold, Israel Herrera, Bernie Jessie, Jiliang Li, James Marrs, Lindsey Mayo, Shawn Nichols-Boyle, Yusuf Ahmed Nur-Baadi, Harold Olivery, Scott Opasik, Megan Palmer, Sameer Patil, Angie Raymond, Cate Reck, Kristoffer Rees, Elaine Roth, Steve Sanders, Angad Sidhu, Marietta Simpson, Monica Solinas-Saunders, Melida Stanely, Lisa Thomassen, Crystal Walcott

Guests: Kip Drew, Jeff Johnston, Alex Tanford

Approval of Minutes

- Correction: in the section for the Questions/Comments period, “non-tenure track representatives” are the ones who are added to the University Faculty Council for the first time.
- Jiliang Li moved to approve the minutes. Lindsey Mayo seconded. The minutes were approved as corrected.

Executive Committee Business

John Watson: On behalf of the Climate Action Task Force, he reported that they have been meeting regularly to develop plans for a long-term task force. This task force has most recently been deliberating about the membership. It is expected that there will be faculty, staff, and student representatives on the task force, with a focus on having members with expertise in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Faculty representatives, who will include both tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty, will be appointed by the UFC. Representatives will include the UFC Co-Chairs and Directors of Sustainability for Indiana University and IUPUI. There will be two representatives from each of the IUB, IUPUI, and Regional Climate Resilience Committees.

Question: Are these representatives from each Climate Resilience Committee separate from the UFC Co-Chairs and Directors of Sustainability?

Diane Henschel: Yes, they will be separate. Andrew Predmore is the University Director of Sustainability; he is physically based at the Bloomington campus but is responsible for all campuses except for IUPUI. He coordinates with Jessica Davis, the Director of Sustainability at IUPUI.

Joe Wert: The Regional Faculty Caucus will be hosting a regional campus wide discussion on the post-COVID regional campus. 125 faculty members expressed interest in this event. This is a part of a series of discussions that will continue in the next academic year.

Presiding Officer's Report

President McRobbie was not available at the time to deliver his report. EVP Applegate did not have a report to deliver.

Questions

Israel Herrera: For the dual credit item on the budget request announced last Thursday, is the amount for 2022-2023 the same as that in previous years?

EVP Applegate: Yes, we are hoping that budget will remain constant.

Israel Herrera: What is the timeframe for the new hospital being built in Bloomington?

EVP Applegate: No authoritative answer, but it would be over a number of years/phases.

Joe Wert asked John Applegate to address the questions Israel Herrera asked over email.

EVP Applegate:

- Israel asked about policy PSO-3 regarding weapons on campus. Applegate noted that IU generally prohibits them except for law enforcement officials. In terms of Israel's inquiry about signs regarding the no-weapons policy, Applegate stated that generally signs are limited for landscaping reasons and he was not aware of reasons that would require emphasizing the rules. Regarding suggestions to the wording of the policy, Applegate believes that the policy can be left as-is.
- It was noted that off-duty police officers are permitted to carry weapons. The reasons are partly prosaic since officers need to be able to get to/from their duty stations. In addition, state and federal law permit off-duty officers to carry weapons. It is unlikely that the state would go in the opposite direction.
- In term of the definition of dangerous articles and substances, the preference is to keep the definition general as otherwise we may end up leaving out things we haven't thought up.

Diane Henschel: Texas recently passed a law allowing carrying weapons on campus. Can IU override the state if it came to pass? Faculty felt uncomfortable and powerless about this there.

EVP Applegate: No. It would not be possible to sue the state over this. IU is aware of the issue. It speaks to the respect of the government relations team and the law enforcement teams at the state level that this isn't the case in Indiana at this point.

Joe Wert: What if faculty refuse to meet a class if someone has a gun?

EVP Applegate: It would depend on the language in the state law involved!

Yu Kay Law: What if you decided to bring a gun and point it at students?

EVP Applegate: Pointing would be assault.

Israel Herrera: Concerns here are similar to those at the University of Michigan and elsewhere. Notes difference between possession and carrying at the federal level. Given that there is now a no permit law in Michigan, given the reciprocity of gun permits the permit would be meaningless for people bringing guns for sports events and so on from out of state. The other concern is lawsuits based on the second amendment rights. Suggests reviewing PSO-3 to make it more specific to avoid lawsuits.

EVP Applegate: Suggestions taken. As laws change things will be reviewed.

Proposed Amendments to ACA-55, Undergraduate Intercampus Transfers

Alex Tanford (Chair, Policy Review Committee): This is a routine update that came from the Assistant Vice President in charge of the University Transfer Office. At the last UFC meeting, protocols for transferring credits from outside the university (ACA-56 and ACA-82) were updated. We need to ensure that these policies are aligned for transfer credits within the university. It doesn't change any substantive policy particularly about 100/200 level courses or the appeals process.

It comes moved and seconded from the Policy Review Committee.

EVP Applegate: Alex's description is quite credit. We are seeing more transfer credit and want to be welcoming within those rules. However, it makes no sense to make it harder for people to move within IU than to transfer in.

Comments/Questions: None

Approved by voice vote unanimously.

Proposed Amendments to ACA-47, Leaves for Academic Appointees

Alex Tanford: Last meeting, when the updated leaves policy (ACA-47) was passed, it created three types of family related leaves. For medical leaves and family formation leaves, the tenure clock was stopped automatically. However, this was omitted from family support leaves. It was proposed that this be rectified. The Vice-Provosts and Vice Chancellors in charge of the process were consulted, and agreed that it was appropriate and in accord with extant administrative practice.

He thanked the Bloomington Faculty Benefits Committee for pointing this out – it is useful when faculty read policies carefully.

This comes moved and seconded from the Policy Review Committee

Questions/Comments: None

Approved by voice vote.

Proposed Consolidated Grading Policy ACA-66, Grading System [Discussion Item]

Alex Tanford: This project started two years ago with the goal of consolidating seven grading policies into a single one. It has involved a committee of six faculty from four campuses, a student representative, Rachel Applegate (AVC for Faculty Affairs at IUPUI) and Kip Drew (Chief Policy Officer). Registrars have been consulted and a fair bit of feedback was obtained from them.

The UFC Executive Committee was concerned with the speed and technical aspects raised by registrars and authorized a small task force to work with Kip Drew to ensure that input from everyone was dealt with. Technical issues were flagged. Now we're in for a last innings of this long game.

The past 1.5 years flagged a number of controversial issues that are being submitted for further discussion. Input is requested, with understanding that there will be things that are not universal across campuses, leading to some basic issues that need to be resolved today. It is hoped that there would be sufficient feedback to put together a final action proposal for the April UFC meeting.

Presiding Officer's Remarks

President McRobbie: Apologized for late arrival as he was meeting with the Medical Response Team (MRT). With respect to the pandemic situation, he hoped that people are receiving the communications that have been sent out. Governor Holcomb is making a pronouncement about public health (e.g. masking) and vaccination this evening. The MRT will review and take into account the Governor's pronouncement.

Proposed Consolidated Grading Policy ACA-66, Grading System

[Discussion Item – Continued]

Alex Tanford: Roadmap for how the policy evolved from those that from which each part originated shows why a red-line version was not possible, and illustrates how nothing was forgotten. Some of this was based on federal and state law and cannot be changed.

J Duncan: As co-chair of EPC in Bloomington, he has 50 pages of comments from constituents. How would Alex wish to proceed?

Alex Tanford: These have generally been sent to him in bulk and can be responded to. He can also filter them as we go through. Faculty are critically interested and anticipates this document, and he anticipated lots of questions. Comments can be filtered and can be sent in bulk. Same goes for everyone else. Nobody wants to go through this exercise again. However, there may be fundamental disagreements that may be hard to get right and it is the role of the UFC to vote on this. But that would be next time.

Diane Henschel: At the end of this, could a copy with revisions be sent out so we can consult with our colleagues?

Alex Tanford: Yes; he has already received some comments from registrars and IUPUI based on this draft. Will try within the next couple of days to add to this document additional comments and questions that were raised.

Section B: GPA Calculation: A+ Grades

Alex Tanford: Current practice is that while an A+ exists it only counts as a 4.0. There are three different positions taken:

- An A+ counts as 4.3 GPA points.
- An A+ exists, but only counts as 4.0 GPA points.
- A+ is not part of the grading scale.

Feedback thus far has eliminated the possibility of there being no A+ grade; most commenters believe it should be kept at 4.0.

Sameer Patil: Why bother?

Alex Tanford: Students like it (similar to awards); looks good on transcript (no practical effect).

Mark Baer: Many admissions committees for graduate and professional schools recalculate GPAs based on own standards from what is on the transcript; taking away A+ grades may be detrimental in this regard.

J Duncan: Feedback indicates 4.3 GPA points would be grade inflation and increase pressure on instructors by students.

Alex Tanford: This coincides with most of the feedback.

Section C.1: FN

Alex Tanford: Federal loan regulations require that last date of participation is documented. For in person classes this is class attendance. For online classes, this is more difficult; the compromise approach is to cross-reference

the USSS-10 *Unofficial Withdrawal* policy and leave it there. For this part deference was given to Jeff Johnson (University Registrar).

Section C.3: Incompletes

Alex Tanford: Some of it was rewritten but really didn't change things. Some potential changes to this part of the policy from the discussion draft were highlighted.

Israel Herrera: IX is currently allowed at Bloomington campus (not sure about other campuses). He had two cases where an extension was approved by the registrar and the instructor had to assign an IX notation to the student indicating that the student has not completed the course after one calendar year but has been given extra time.

Alex Tanford: F is done automatically by registrar one year after the incomplete is assigned. There's a grade change process later on that would allow the F to change to a letter grade. But an IX would not work, as X means that the course is erased and retaken. It cannot be used as a temporary marker.

It is recognized that to some extent that implementation and interpretation will occur at campus level. Campuses may have additional designations indicating an extended incomplete; this is however not what an X means. Urge the use of a different letter; however, there's nothing stopping a campus from doing this.

Cate Reck: Suppose someone has a final project to complete after the end of term, and receives an incomplete. The student receives a zero on the project, but that might only end up having the student earn a C. Would the instructor then have to submit that as a C so it doesn't become an F. Can it be done so that the default grade can be set to not an F so that if the work is not completed it defaults to this letter grade rather than an F (for a student who doesn't follow up).

Alex Tanford: F is something assigned by registrar who need fixed rules to govern that. It does say in (d) that each unit and at the campus level can figure out an internal way how to handle the incomplete if it is not finished. But that is handled not at the registrar's office, but rather at the Chair's office or the administrative office of the unit.

Harold Olivey: This policy specifies that as long as a student has performed at a "satisfactory" level that they can be given an incomplete. His colleagues (NW) have a concern regarding what is considered satisfactory. Could more precise language like "passing" be used instead? Is it intended to require a higher level of performance than a D? There is a difference between satisfactory versus a pass in the course. Is this intended to be tougher than that – like needing a C or C- for an incomplete.

Alex Tanford: Half the time where this occurs there is no interim/midterm/tentative grade that can be assigned. There is no specific grade or comment. It is the judgment of the instructor that determines if they are in good standing and has earned the right to an incomplete or fail the course.

Cate Reck: Was told when switched to S/F grading in Spring that an S was anything that wasn't an F. Also heard an opposite description from what Harold said. Never really understood satisfactory vs passing. Had implications in the spring and fall because a lot of students received S grades out of a class who didn't have the necessary competency to proceed. Could there be a clarification?

Alex Tanford: That is an emergency policy that is not being carried over as written. It was passed as we were trying to patch together a policy to help students. That policy did not distinguish between Ss from Ps. Will get to that later.

A question that had to be addressed: why do we have both an S and a P that both stand for pass? But there are reasons for this distinction, one of this is raised by Harold: some S/F courses require more than a D to pass. A student who individually opts for a pass would not be identified to the instructor; the P grade is assigned automatically by the registrar to anyone with a grade above an F. In an emergency that distinction is not maintained. Propose extending emergency provisions but making a more nuanced distinction for what is being said.

Section C.4: X Grade

Alex Tanford: This drew a fair amount of both discussion and agreement about the old FX policy that allowed an F grade to be changed to an X. This is now changed to allowing any grade being replaced; this matches practice at all campuses and most units. Not concerned about abuse because each campus may continue to limit the number of courses or the number of credit hours retaken, so a student who retakes (say) three courses in which they received a B then they have used up their retake options even if they receive an F in the next course. There was fairly strong agreement about this.

J Duncan: Registrar suggested that striking the original grade from the transcript would lead to GPA calculations that look broken to those that don't treat that the same way. Also language in (f) led to concern that students might be required to invoke this policy for at least three courses.

Alex Tanford: On the first, understood concerns of registrar and have been in discussion with them. For some cases, the response is: you got to reprogram the computer. It was the unanimous opinion of the Policy Review Committee and almost everyone except registrars that this defeats the purpose of a retake policy if the F continues to appear on the transcript. We don't want it to be a problem for students when they are recalculated by graduate or professional programs who recalculate their own GPAs. This is particularly important for campuses other than Bloomington where they are first generation without much background or experience in the academic process who struggle their first year and really need the retake option to succeed. Jeff Johnson has assured that this can be done.

J Duncan: In part (d) it says that the previous grade should be retained by the unit and the campus registrar. The registrar was confused as to why the unit should retain that separately from registrar. They had concerns with "shadow systems" at individual programs that may not be correctly in sync with official records.

In part (f), the policy was specified as determined by the campus where the course is retaken. It is a concern that this will drive students to use policies of more flexible, online campuses rather than the policies of the campus where they are degree seeking students. Might encourage students to not take courses at IUB but rather take online courses from other campuses.

Alex Tanford: (f): the final provision was suggested by registrars such that each campus registrar has control; it is that registrar that has to do that. The problem is what happens if one campus says 3 courses and the other campus says 12 units. Thinks situation would be rare.

With policies no one has looked at in 20 years. Once we put them all together and get people working with them it is undoubtedly the case that some small problems that will need to be corrected by amendment similar to the consolidated leaves policy.

Harold Olivey: One of his colleagues that works with pre-professional advising says they require students disclose grades from all course taken, and all attempts of the course. Concern is that if we don't include the original grade on the transcript we may be giving our students an unfair advantage over universities that are open. Concerned it could affect IU students being as competitive for professional/graduate schools.

Alex Tanford: Does not care if it gave our students an advantage; concerned about disadvantage the students. Otherwise we disadvantage our students against those that don't put the grade on the transcript. If one is to err one way or the other we'd err on behalf of the student.

Harold Olivey: Has anyone from any of the admissions committees from the professional schools at IU been consulted on this?

Alex Tanford: No

Harold Olivey: Strongly suggest that this be done, since the risk that is run is that you ultimately disadvantage our students by inflating their GPA. Other campuses with reputations for this face a disadvantage in competing with peers from other institutions and other systems.

Yu Kay Law: How many campuses allow more than 15 credits or five courses?

Alex Tanford: None. Most are 3 courses or 10 credits; this lets campus set its own. Asks Harold to send an email reminding him of this. It is a good suggestion.

Elizabeth Pear: Asks for raised hand to allow one to be called on in order.

Israel Herrera: Do all the other Big Ten universities use the satisfactory or Pass/Fail or S/F grades?

Alex Tanford: Please hold on as he hasn't gotten to the comment on section (d) regarding the extended X.

Regarding retention of underlying (original) grade by the unit: it is in the existing policy and didn't see reasons to change it. It may matter e.g. since each unit can define for itself what constitutes departmental honors or for eligibility for advanced courses or majors; these records may need to be factored in and there are reasons why units may want to retain original grades other than calculating GPA.

Yu Kay Law: Do the other Big Ten schools have the unqualified X or do they have CX/DX/FX?

Alex Tanford: We have a set of comparable universities that we compare ourselves to. It is remarkably difficult to find written grading policies for any of them. There is no agreement on the grading system to begin with, and much appears to not be written down. The question cannot be answered. But he'll check this along with checking with professional schools admissions offices. At least now with specific questions like the X and the retake option it ought to be relatively easy to find from comparable institutions.

Another question is regarding the option to retake. Carried over from existing policy is a requirement for the principal administrator of the unit to grant permission. Several questions came up:

1. Relationship between instructor who gave the original grade and the principal administrator – who has ultimate responsibility in the unit to approve the retake. The recommendation given (with disputes, since some believed instructors should be able to veto a retake if (e.g.) a student just goofed off all semester and did no work. The concern of the Policy Review Committee was with the student who went to the Chair or Dean and alleged discrimination, sexual harassment, or an instructor who requested sex for grades, and got a D as a result. The committee felt that the instructor should be consulted but cannot (consistent with harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination policies) have a veto power over the student's request to retake the course. Hence the decision is with the principal administrator who has to consult with the instructor when feasible.
2. Dispute over students who take courses in different units. For example, the Kelley School might have a fairly strict policy about if students can retake (if at all). The student takes a course at the College of Arts and Sciences in Bloomington, gets a low grade, and retakes the course with the approval of the unit that offered the course. This, however, undermines the policy of the unit in which the student is trying to earn his/her major. Some wondered if consultation with the administrator of the student's unit should also be required. The objection there is that it creates additional bureaucracy over what should be a simple problem.
3. Can you retake a course multiple times? Some were concerned that gave students too many bites at the same apple. Others thought it didn't matter as long as the total number of attempts were capped; who cares if the retakes were for the same course or not. The approach taken here was that when in doubt the break goes to the student. Comments are solicited.

J Duncan: Agreed as long as it is clearly communicated to students. It needs to be equally enforced across campuses to prevent students shopping for different rules.

Alex Tanford: Agreed

Yu Kay Law: The main place where we can see discrepancies is the discretion over which principal administrators would approve grade replacements.

Alex Tanford: Agreed. Will revisit.

S/F and P/F Grading Systems

Alex Tanford: The committee considered whether we needed both S/F and P/F systems. Most commentators said yes since in some units S indicates a higher grade than a bare pass, whereas a P indicates a bare pass or above, which helps with keeping track. Within a unit there might be a reason why those have to be distinguished and helps with people keeping track of grades; there may be a stigma who opts for a P (as it is an individual student choice) versus an S (since everyone in the class is graded S/F). As a policy review committee: if it ain't broke, don't fix it, so it is carried over.

J Duncan: Asks him to back up to 5 (R: Deferred Grades). Registrar had concerns about the term "Regular Grade". Suggested changing this to "quality grade".

Alex Tanford: Thanks for flagging that. We will go through this with a fine-tooth comb on definitions.

J Duncan: Is the S+ gone?

Alex Tanford: Yes. That was his off the wall idea and not a single person affiliated with the university likes the idea.

J Duncan: Good. It was strongly not favored by his constituents.

Alex Tanford: S means that the course was offered to all students on an S/F basis. Only unit able to do that is the unit offering the course. Question: any concern that this would be abused or used inconsistently or any reason to micromanage the approval process for S/F at the campus level.

(b) got some feedback. We use S/F in two contexts. (a) course graded on an S/F basis because it doesn't lend itself to letter grading (e.g. internships, group projects, experiential courses). (b) S/F grading for academic requirements based on courses but not examinations (e.g. required recital or performance requirements in the School of Music). For credit by examination, the policy always said that superior performance can be marked with an A. Unclear as to what impact that A had on grading. Committee thought that since the next best student doesn't get B+, giving the person who gets an A credit for that would change the nature of the pass/fail system. For graduate schools and others, this can be recalculated as needed by the admissions committees. However, for internal purposes, it is like an "A+": an honorarium that doesn't factor into the campus GPA. A couple expressed concern about this. Any thoughts?

[crickets]

(c) is the carryover policy from last year's COVID policy; courses that were supposed to be graded A-F can be convert to S/F. This can be done at different levels: university of university; chancellor/provost for a campus; unit administrators can decide some or all courses be graded S/F. Students need to be notified of the change and given the opportunity to withdraw from the class or they can request a letter grade instead of an S/F; it preserves that option.

Questions:

1. Do we keep this option? Policy Review Committee says yes; the future is unpredictable.
2. Should students have the option to request an incomplete? Lots of feedback indicated they always can request an incomplete and it doesn't have to be written into this particular part of the policy.

Israel Herrera:

1. Is there a standard requirement for all the campuses on what courses can be assigned S/F?
2. A student can ask for an I based on their course grade at the moment. But should a request for pass/fail grading be something that is mentioned at the beginning of the course? Or can they request this at any time?

Alex Tanford: Individual students cannot ask for S/F grading; this is a provision for the entire course being converted to S/F. Students within that course can request an incomplete like they do for any course; however, it is the instructor's determination whether they've done enough work up to that point to determine if they can get a pass, an incomplete, or a student can request "have I done enough work to get a letter grade" and the instructor may or may not be able to do that. That's all that is included in the emergency S. Students requesting a pass grade is removed from the emergency provision and went down to the pass/fail (P/F) section.

Lucia Guerra-Reyes: Concern about delegation of S/F possibility in individual units. It would bring a lot of complications if in an emergency some units did S/F and others didn't.

Alex Tanford: It is not clear that all schools can grade that way. There are a number of situations where units for their own purposes that they need everyone to be letter graded. The Chancellor/Provost may or may not be willing to negotiate this; it may or may not be delegated to a unit. There are enough possibilities where a chancellor or provost may wish to distinguish some units from others.

Yu Kay Law: Can easily see how individual units may need flexibility to grade S/F. For example: a study abroad trip that was impacted by COVID or a course based undergraduate experience where it may not be reasonable to grade people on a letter grade at that point. Or an internship.

Alex Tanford: Agrees that delegating to units should be the most likely situation. But can see how a regional campus in particular where the Chancellor believes that letter grading would defeat the purpose of closing the campus and providing support services to students and help them through a very stressful time for one or two units to require students to take the regular course and be graded accordingly.

Withdrawals

Alex Tanford: Most of these are fairly straightforward. The main question is that of approval for something that is sort of like an "X": it gets a student out of the situation. The concern is that students discovering they are doing poorly will try and get out of their burden. The other question is: what is the relationship between the instructor and the Chair/Dean? What's the relationship between the administration of the department that offers the course and the student's department, that may – for its internal purposes such as rules about honors and advanced courses – have more restrictive rules about withdrawals. We decided to take the most common procedure: after the withdrawal period, this is primarily an instructor role; if the instructor denies this request, then (for similar reasons as denials of incomplete requests) the right of appeal lies to the administrator of the course offering units.

J Duncan: Received a lot of information about this.

1. Enrollment changes are important and the principal administrator for the student's unit should have input as they oversee degree progress.
2. Giving instructors the sole pathway would be problematic in that students may be treated differently in different sections. The student's school's principal administrator may fix this as they are aware of their unit's rules on Ws.

Request that there is a closer alignment to current pathways.

Alex Tanford: There is no current policy/pathway. Registrar notes that there is a difference between *notification* and *approval*. The form currently used to process late withdrawals includes the student's own unit among the people who are notified, but they are not given authority over whether the student is allowed to withdraw.

The other aspect is if a student in one unit is being discriminated against or harassed by an instructor in that unit and wants to withdraw. If the Dean of the course offering unit approves it, it is presumably because the Dean is aware of the eccentricities of the instructor involved. The student's own unit doesn't have the power to say "no, you can't withdraw, you must deal with the harassment". Policy Review Committee was adamant that student's own unit would be notified and the registrar assured that they would be without giving them any power.

J Duncan: Less of a concern with veto and more of a case of allowing withdrawal where there has been a veto.

Alex Tanford: That's similar – someone from a different unit ordering me to allow a student to withdraw from my class. It struck us as fundamental to the academic relationship that the instructor is the person that grades the class; the instructor is responsible and should have an ordinary and continuing history of communication with his/her own Dean. But you can't let somebody from across campus come and interfere.

The comments made by Duncan were voiced by a substantial minority; it was not an area of universal agreement. A number believed that there should be involvement from the student's unit's principal administrator, but haven't articulated a mechanism by which that would work.

J Duncan: If two instructors teach the same course in a program, and one gives a W and the other does not, it is the responsibility of the Dean to ensure the same practices are carried out in both classrooms? Or does it devolve to instructors to say that they have sovereignty within their classroom and can choose different policies based on our opinions?

Alex Tanford: In the first instance, it is the instructor. There can be two different instructors that set very different classroom cultures about e.g. race or gender or policies. Student's requests to withdraw from two sections are not equal; they are not necessarily based on the same thing. This was not a concern.

As for making it consistent, this is why the principal administrator has the power to allow the withdrawal over the objections of the instructor or deny it if other students aren't getting it. The primary responsibility is the instructor; the Chair/Dean is responsible for keeping policies within the unit consistent.

Pass/Fail (P/F) Grading

Alex Tanford: Entire thing is red-lined. First thing is whether S/F is separate from P/F, which there is a need for as addressed before.

P is an individual request. Two possible reasons:

The first is enrichment for a student who have met their course minimums and want to be able to take additional subjects they're a bit uncertain about. A unit can, for example, give all students the option to take an extra 1-2 classes on a pass/fail basis to encourage exploration. Or an individual student who for personal reasons wants to be able to take 1-2 courses on a pass fail basis. (Example: a student whose uncle was murdered on the streets of Chicago, and said to him at the beginning of the semester that he can't afford to drop out but would be distracted going back and forth to home to help his parents, and so wanted pass/fail grading). It is intentionally a flexible system.

Question: does there need to be more rigid control over how and the circumstances under which this is allowed. Also, does it need to be determined at the campus/university level whether the pass/fail option must be chosen at registration at the beginning of the semester or can it be given as an option later into the semester. Since there is no strong policies or agreements at a campus/university level, it left it to the units (sort of how it is phrased currently, as a procedure adopted by a unit). Does that need to be more specific?

Lisa Thomassen: (Replacement for Israel) Reported typo corrections suggested in chat. Suggested "D- or higher" to refer to passing grades.

Mentioned that for Big Ten schools, six don't have an A-. Of the six that do, all have A+ as 4.0. One school doesn't have +/- at all. Glad to hear that people aren't supporting the grade inflating 4.3 for the A+.

Alex Tanford: A thing that has to be done before this is finalized is a definition of the different letter grades (mentioned earlier). A lot of definitions to get clear. The more people can bring these to our attention the better. Too many letter combination. Like "D- or higher".

J Duncan: Strong preference by people he talked to that there is a deadline so units don't adopt policies that allow students to see some grades in a class and decide to switch to P/F as a fallback. While he personally thinks it's good to allow discretion where possible it may be needed for things to be uniform so students can understand this and so people are treated fairly across the units.

Alex Tanford: Some feedback regarding the same concern was heard. Definitions are a problem (e.g. auto-withdrawal periods). Need to define this in a way that says you've got to opt for this in a way that prevents students from seeing some of their grades and then decide to switch to pass/fail.

J Duncan: For part (b) the registrar felt that there was a lack of distinction between S and P under this policy. Personally he felt that there was a strong distinction between S and P in practice – which is that everyone understood how P works but nobody understood how S was going to work. Intent acknowledged and may want to separate the execution of that intent. Nervous about S being our sole "in case of emergency" position unless units take initiative to strongly define "S" within each unit for each campus.

Alex Tanford: Original and emergency versions called everything on us. What was done then was considered not a great solution by all; it was just cobbled together quickly. This again maintains the distinction between S and P – so it's pretty clear.

Part (b) – state of emergency – same as the one for S and carries over. It distinguishes between S (applies to everyone in a class either by initial designation or a disaster, with some individual students having some leeway to try and opt out). P works in the opposite way; in an emergency, individual students may request a pass because of an emergency even though the rest of the class is graded.

Yu Kay Law: Some of the regionals had S vs P vs F possibility for students during COVID. S was allowed to proceed, while students with P may not be allowed to proceed. If that's not possible, it may be worth having (2) specifically authorize units to consider letter grades for purposes such as prerequisites for carry-over courses and so on.

Alex Tanford: Agreement. Units can have different rules and lots of different situations. Similar questions raised about units keeping a record about X separate from the registrar. This is where units need to be able to keep some of their own records separate from the registrar – there are all sorts of situations where units need to make distinctions about who was doing well enough to carry on and who is not.

Non Credit

Alex Tanford: Notation for an audit; carry over from existing policy.

Asterix (*) Grade

Alex Tanford: Does not currently appear in any policy, but apparently widely in use. Appended by instructor to indicate the grade was a result of academic misconduct. This indicates that the student cannot withdraw or replace this grade with the "X" grade by retaking (and erase this grade).

J Duncan: Thanks for codifying; he uses it extensively. It is very helpful on a variety of reasons and impactful when discussing misconduct with students. It is a particularly useful stick. The more we can use this the better.

Asked about (11) (NR grade) and whether or not it is contradictory with E-3.

Alex Tanford: Registrar asked for this to be spelled out in case students see this. Same with MY (usually sued for overseas courses/experiences on different academic schedules, where it is not known whether they completed the course). These are really registrar notations.

Midterm Grades

Alex Tanford: Existing policy required midterm grades. Nobody encountered actually believed this was anywhere near the case; lots of courses where this is not possible. Changed existing policy to reflect current practice and necessities of system: midterm grades are not required.

However, there is fair amount of sentiment that students deserve some feedback somewhere along the semester. That was therefore delegated to the campus, which may delegate it to the unit to figure out the procedures/processes to give students ongoing feedback about progress, which matched the purpose of the original requirement for a midterm grade.

Submitting Grades

Alex Tanford: (1) existing policy did not require submission of grades. This is now taken care of. (2) the process for turning in grades has gotta be a campus decision. The only real question here is whether or not the campus and/or the unit (for undergraduate grades) should be allowed to set their own deadlines. Registrars didn't like it because they like everything dealt with in one convenient package. There was quite a bit of feedback from a fair number of faculty who thought the current 48 hour grading period was anti-intellectual and interfered with how they wanted to teach classes, particularly 300/400 level classes where they wanted non-multiple choice exams, and wanted papers, projects, essay exams, and conferences, and other things that could not be conveniently graded within 48 hours. Others said "buck up and do the grading".

The need for rapid turnaround (particularly between the fall and spring semesters, due to prerequisites for advanced courses or the ability to continue in a program) and for graduating seniors regarding their honors, distinctions, and graduation. It was split 50-50, and as a policy the committee kicks it back to the campus. So do people see the need for a university-wide deadline for undergraduates (graduate and professional schools can always set their own deadlines).

J Duncan: 48 hour deadline has been problematic. The registrars have mentioned the importance of deadlines. Cate Reck noted that the real deadline is likely the Monday after final exams and it wouldn't matter if everyone gets it turned in till then. Why not state this so that we don't have a policy that's broadly noncompliant for almost everybody. A deadline of some kind is needed.

Alex Tanford: Does it need to be set uniformly for all seven campuses? Or do we leave it up to individual campus discussions with their registrars.

J Duncan: I don't believe it needs to be university wide in terms of policy, but a default should be set.

Alex Tanford: Default deadline across the university right now is 48 hours after the exam? Bloomington registrar sets deadlines based on when the exam is given. Does anyone has any thoughts on whether there must be a reasonable deadline set by campuses or whether it should specify a default deadline (48 or 72 hours)? Any thoughts?

Cate Reck: People are saying in the chat that the deadline would be 48 hours after the final exam but no later than that. She shoots for Monday noon because there's still processing time during the day. Some classes it is impractical to meet the 48 hour deadline. There are people who can and do meet the 48 hour rule. Most people are conscientious and don't wait till the following Monday to post grades for a Monday exam that was multiple choice. Not sure this is an issue.

Alex Tanford: Suggested that faculty governance organizations on each campus shall in consultation with campuses set a deadline, which should in most cases be 48 hours.

Diane Henschel: Interesting statement coming from a lawyer from the law school where the deadline is two weeks after the exams.

Angie Raymond: Right. We often talk about family friendly policies that promote work-life balance. She has to give exams on a Thursday. Monday at noon means that she grades like a fiend all weekend while the family hides away from her. These do not reconcile. She understands the registrar's need but it passed by too fast. It probably dates from when someone actually sat and entered these grades, which isn't the case anymore. If committed to family friendly policies, then we need to be committed throughout which includes a reasonable length of time to grade in whatever form is appropriate for the class. Even scantrons have been backed up over the last couple of years. Suggest we be much stronger than this. Could be that if an exam is given on Wednesday then you can have three business days, but 48 hours has an interesting interpretation that usually includes grading like a fiend on Sunday. This is out of step with all other messaging?

Someone: Students push to have papers in a little later and so papers arrive on Saturday and Sunday nights. And they take time to grade. Agree it should be three business days or longer. Couldn't see why it can't be a whole week – split the difference with the Law School.

Alex Tanford: Law school is not an undergraduate program and is required by accreditation standards to give essay exams. It does take him a week to grade 150 essay exams. The rigid deadline eliminates the possibility of an essay exam at the undergraduate level and dumbs down the education process by forcing people to adopt multiple choice exams. Huge amount of evidence that these are most susceptible to cultural bias.

Sameer Patil: Agrees with everything Angie and Alex said. There are also other things in life: hit by a bus, get sick – what happens? People are not teaching only one course – NTT teach four courses. Can't imagine grading four courses over 48 hours. And what about people with young children grading over the weekend – who is taking care of these children? Lots of considerations to take into account. There are registration deadlines and dependencies that may mean adjusting the calendar appropriately. Not a good idea to squeeze grading into a 48 hour deadline. If the technology can't handle the load, we should be able to invest in the technology that allows grades to be submitted.

Alex Tanford: There are other options: in the law school one gets a notice that says a given list of (say) three people need grades in within two days. People who particularly need it (graduating students, say) can have it flagged to the instructor and these can then be flagged as whether they passed, and this would satisfy graduation requirement. What this says is that it policy should not set a university wide deadline – there are just too many units with different practices – or should it set a university deadline and make it a week?

Angie Raymond: If we left it to units, we would be stuck to 48 hours for various units. We're saying we should set a minimum and it should be longer than 48 hours. It's insane right now. A school doing this work and is committed to robust grading and attention to pedagogy should be at least somewhat encouraging people to pay attention to grades. And the work-life balance. So yes, there should be a minimum. Somebody has to take a stand for faculty, and this is where we do it.

Alex Tanford: Will have to go back. Various arguments made by people deeply entrenched in the bureaucracy as to why this is impossible. Some linked it to NCAA eligibility requirements, scholarship recipients, and other specific things. There may have to be an escape clause that allows some opting out with consultations as needed. But that should be easy enough to do. But he will check to see if World War III will start if the grades aren't there.

Someone: Isn't the better option to say that here's a general policy and if there's a special case that requires 48 hours then carve out an exception ahead of time. There might be 10% of students who are exceptions, but the policy is set for that 10% of cases rather than the other 90% who can tolerate the more lenient approach.

Alex Tanford: We'll get this done

Yu Kay Law: Of that 10%, how many just need to know they're passed?

Alex Tanford: We'll try to find out. Expect we'll end up with something that delegates exceptions to the individual campuses and units to work out with registrar.

In existing policy, in (5), question came out about student privacy rules and releasing grades to students, instructors, and university administrators. Question is whether this should be allowed for other purposes like letters of recommendation. For example, he often writes letters that said a given student took three courses from me and earned really good grades; a technical reading of this policy would prohibit that. Assumes that there should be additional escape clause for legitimate purposes

Angie Raymond: How about with the permission/consent of the student?

J Duncan: Concern by registrar that this traditionally applied to posting grades but not grades being viewed by people who need information to complete their jobs, who may or may not be administrators.

Alex Tanford: Maybe "university officials".

J Duncan: Agrees

Changing Grades

Alex Tanford: First question is regarding different rules in different units when incompletes are converted to withdrawals. When the student takes a course outside their unit, and one has a more restrictive withdrawal/grade change policy than the one in which the student took the course. Because the withdrawal may affect a student's academic progress, must the principal administrator of the student's unit be consulted? Registrars thought this would be handled in the routine computerized notice. The question is, what unit must be noticed. The student's unit of enrollment may have a more restrictive withdrawal policy that allows less withdrawals. Does the student's unit need to be consulted or merely notified? Notification was used since it is hard to enforce consultation. Expectation is that the advisors will notify the students; trust students/units to take care of the problem without being involved in the discussion.

J Duncan: Student's unit was called out as important here because of the potential enrollment status change and it would affect satisfactory academic progress. However, as long as notification is there they can work with it.

Alex Tanford: This is why shadow grades are allowed to be kept.

Diane Henschel: Language of consultation with the student's academic unit elsewhere in this policy. If it's problematic here, it's problematic there, and vice versa.

Alex Tanford: Try not to increase levels of bureaucracy; would rather remove consultation earlier than incorporate it here.

Diane Henschel: We just added consultation elsewhere?

Alex Tanford: It was notification

Diane Henschel: No. Was it the withdrawal. Anyway, one of them has consultation.

Alex Tanford: If it's today, all of it would be taken into account by notification. If it was something before, there was a specific reason. Cross-unit consultation is just hard.

Diane Henschel: Requests double checking

Alex Tanford: Yes

Old policy required that grade changes must be reported to all faculty within a unit. This is now prohibited by student privacy laws and silly. These are not a concern for your colleague next door. Assume no one cares.

Other Parts

Alex Tanford: The other old policy, that units must periodically for the benefit of new appointees discuss their grading policy. This is a trustees resolution and we can't touch it. It is a good idea once in a while for new faculty.

The other part – retention. Lots of back and forth feedback on the retention of materials. To some extent that it doesn't matter since we're all using Canvas and students are submitting things to us electronically and are therefore saved. There are still a number of situations where it matters, such as art projects and lab notebooks where the materials are physically turned over to the instructor.

The university did a massive revision of its retention policy a couple of years ago. It provides for one year for the retention of exams and papers, and five years for the retention of the gradebook. This is retained here since there is no other consensus; we appeal to higher authority (university's record retention policy). If it can't be retained, you may return the photograph of artwork for example

What about adjuncts? Do we need a policy on how to deal with visitors or adjuncts who have left and will not return? Can we assume that departments/units will figure this out? Or should units be obligated to retain graded materials for instructors who have left?

J Duncan: Strongly support one year limit across all units. Mentioned a double period. Legitimate interest for record retention be managed by the unit for departing faculty (retirees or adjunct faculty) and falls within best practices for keeping critical data. The unit should handle proper disposal if not returned. This should be codified in policy.

Alex Tanford: Easy enough to do. There is default language in the records retention policy that can be borrowed.

Angie Raymond: Suggested "retain in perceivable form"

J Duncan: Reasonable accommodation

Alex Tanford: What would be the alternative.

Angie Raymond: Cloud service for which the record was not migrated

J Duncan: Box

Alex Tanford: Anyone has students submit things to Box? They keep getting notices.

Hear the concern. That's it for items of his concern. There were some concerns as they started to work on definitions and how to handle this. Making language consistent is a task for next week. But it will be done.

Any further comments/thoughts.

Angie Raymond: Chat box is filling up with thank you notes and the incredible work done by Alex Tanford and the committee.

Alex Tanford: In many years around the UFC rarely has the body gone into a discussion of this depth about a policy, and comments have been greatly helpful.

President McRobbie: Expresses appreciation for outstanding job done by Alex Tanford.

Diane Henschel: Requests that everyone is notified if there are changes to fall in case of COVID variants causing another major outbreak.

President McRobbie: Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 pm.