8 April 2020

Dear Colleagues,

In an effort to address the challenges and complexities faced by our students during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CA&ES) has reviewed the College major and minor requirements related to Pass/No Pass grading (CA&ES Bylaws, Section 23A and 26A).

As detailed below, for Spring quarter 2020, the FEC has approved to waive the requirement that courses within the majors and minors offered by the CA&ES must be taken for a letter grade. For Spring quarter 2020 only, students can elect for courses that satisfy major or minor requirements in CA&ES to be graded on a P/NP basis. Courses graded P/NP will not be factored into a student’s GPA calculation. This exception to policy applies to students in good academic standing.

Please note that each college is responsible for P/NP policies for their majors and minors. Students should check with major/minor advisors in other colleges to learn about their relevant policies and deadlines.

We encourage students to carefully consider any decision to take courses in a major or minor for a P/NP grade. Students are strongly encouraged to seek out additional advising support when making these decisions so they can be fully versed about any and all implications.

Some factors that students should consider can be found here, and include:

- A “P” is equivalent to a letter grade of C-minus, or better.
- P/NP grades are not used in GPA calculations.
- Taking a course P/NP could have important implications for future graduate and professional school admissions. Graduate and professional schools may have prerequisites that require letter grading. If a student has applied to a graduate or professional program for fall 2020, they should check with that program for information on how P/NP grading might affect their application.
- No course units are awarded for a “NP”. If a student receives a “NP” grade, they might then drop below minimum progress, or it may affect their academic probation status. A “NP” could also negatively affect the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) calculation, which determines eligibility for future financial aid. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with a Financial Aid officer before electing to take a course P/NP.
- Veterans who receive financial assistance may be motivated to take classes for a letter grade, because a grade such as a “NP” can retroactively impact financial aid. Some branches of the Armed Forces require that students maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher, or that they make progress toward degree completion; the P/NP option may hinder the ability to meet this threshold. These are complex issues. Students should consult closely with their advisors or the UC Davis Veterans Success Center.
- The Academic Senate requires that all students must be in good academic standing to opt-in to P/NP grading (UC Davis DDR 545A).
The Academic Senate has exempted units in spring quarter 2020 from the one-third limit on units for graduation requirements (https://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/academic-policies-operating-status).

We encourage students to consider the implications of their performance in courses during Spring 2020 for successive quarters, particularly if a course is part of a sequence or is a prerequisite for subsequent classes.

We recommend students select a balanced schedule of courses and avoid taking high unit loads during this time. In particular, there can be the need for adjustments to online learning. Students should not expect that course expectations will change with this opportunity for P/NP grading.

Decisions about switching from letter grading to P/NP grading (and vice versa) can be made until the last day of instruction for spring quarter 2020 (Thursday June 4, 2020).

Students should work closely with their instructors and consult the appropriate syllabus to ensure they fully understand the requirements that contribute to the calculation of grades in each course before electing P/NP grading.

Information on how to opt in for P/NP grading or to revert back to letter grading through Schedule Builder is available at the link here on the Registrar’s site: https://registrar.ucdavis.edu/registration/schedule-adjustments/pass-nopass

The decision to elect P/NP grading can be a complex, individualized decision. We encourage students to consult with advisors as they are making this decision. Questions about requirements for majors and minors should be directed to major advisors in the departments. Advisors in the Dean’s Office are also available to support students.

- CA&ES Major Advisors
- CA&ES Dean’s Office Undergraduate Academic Programs

During this time, advisors are available remotely and appointments can be made through the online appointment system (https://appointments.ucdavis.edu). After students make an appointment, an advisor will reach out to the student to connect by phone or Zoom.

With best regards during these challenging times, and with thanks for supporting our students

Sincerely,

Russ Hovey
Professor, Animal Science and Chair, CA&ES
Faculty Executive Committee

Sanjai Parikh
Associate Professor, LAWR and Secretary, CA&ES Faculty Executive Committee

Jorge Rodrigue
Associate Professor, LAWR and Vice-Chair, CA&ES Faculty Executive Committee

Gregory Pasternack
Professor, LAWR and Chair, CA&ES Rules and Jurisdiction Committee