

**SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY  
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE  
SAN JOSÉ, CA 95192**

**S16-9, University Policy, Course Syllabi**

**Legislative History:**

At its meeting of April 4, 2016, the Academic Senate approved the following policy recommendation presented by Senator Kaufman for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee. University Policy F06-2 was the last comprehensive revision of the syllabus policy. Since that time, the size and scope of syllabi have expanded significantly to include a variety of information of use to students. Much of the language applies university-wide and thus is more appropriately hosted and presented centrally rather than being included in every class syllabus. This policy revision creates a clear separation between course-specific and university-wide language. It also provides a mechanism for Senate review of material to be added to course-specific or university-wide materials. S16-9 was approved and signed by Interim President Susan W. Martin on April 5, 2016.

At its meeting of March 12, 2018, the Academic Senate approved Amendment A to S16-9 presented by Senator Laura Sullivan Green. The current syllabus policy does not require that faculty members follow accessibility guidelines as shown in the syllabus template, and WASC requires a statement indicating the expected hourly commitment for each unit of credit in the syllabus. Amendment A addresses these concerns. Amendment A was signed and approved by President Mary A. Papazian on April 3, 2018.

**Rescinds: F06-2 and S12-3**

**University Policy  
Course Syllabi**

**Whereas:** Syllabi provide an opportunity for faculty to openly communicate with students so that students more thoroughly understand the course requirements; and

**Whereas:** Syllabi uphold professional responsibility by providing full information to students to increase student success in the classroom; and

**Whereas:** As stated in University Policy S99-8 Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility, "Professional responsibility is the natural complement of the academic freedom essential to the university's mission. Through their responsible professional conduct, faculty members promote and protect academic freedom;" and

**Whereas:** Responsible professional conduct includes announcing course requirements in a timely fashion, explaining how course grades are determined, assigning marks based only on criteria providing dependable evaluation of academic performance, and prohibiting the belated imposing of requirements not originally made clear; and

**Whereas:** Much of the information that is currently included in syllabi applies university-wide and/or is in response to external mandates, and is more appropriately published and maintained centrally; and

**Whereas:** Regular review of the information required in the syllabi is a Senate responsibility; and

**Whereas:** Maintaining a central repository for university-wide information will allow curriculum review committees to focus on course-specific information; and

**Whereas:** Maintaining a central repository for university-wide information will ensure that this information is kept up to date; therefore, be it

**Resolved:** That University Policies F06-2 and S12-3 be rescinded and replaced with the attached policy.

Approved: February 22, 2016

Vote: 17-0-0

Present: Brooks, Bruck (non-voting), Rees, Sen, Campsey, Walters, Medina, Branz (non-voting), Kaufman, Sullivan-Green, Sofish, Medrano, Khan, Wilson, Simpson, Nash, Amante, Abukhdeir, Gay

Absent: None

Financial Impact: Potential savings from shorter printed syllabi and less faculty and curriculum committee time spent on compliance

Workload impact: Slight increase for I&SA committee for review of changes up

to twice per year, more than offset by the reduction in general faculty time spent ensuring that they meet the requirements of the latest syllabus template. One-time modification of the syllabus template.

# Syllabi

Introduction: Course syllabi enable students to better understand and fulfill their responsibilities as learners in courses. They are a necessary tool in higher education to enable students to take part in the learning process through knowing what is expected of them and what they can expect from the course. Student success is aided by students knowing in advance as much as possible about the course requirements so that they can plan their study time and coordinate work on assignments from multiple courses. Student success is also aided by encouraging students to contact their professors and providing information about key university policies to which they are subject. In addition, syllabi provide an opportunity to model thorough, clear, professional communication. Some of the modifications in this new policy are designed to separate overarching university-level policies and other requirements (e.g., federal law) that transcend particular courses from course-specific information. As such, university-wide policy language should be maintained in a central location (i.e., a university-managed web page), with modifications reviewed and approved periodically by the appropriate Senate committee. See Section 2 below.

## A. General syllabus procedures

- Each member of the faculty at San José State University shall provide a syllabus to each student in every class, to be available no later than the first class meeting. Faculty members shall follow accessibility guidelines provided by the University to create their syllabus. If the faculty member chooses to make the syllabus available only online and not distribute hard copies to students, it must be available online no later than the first scheduled day of class. The faculty member shall provide an electronic or hard copy of the syllabus to the department office for department files on or before the first day of class.
- The syllabus shall include statements about learning goals, grading, expectations, content and other course-related information. While the syllabus may be changed as the semester develops, any changes shall be communicated to the students in writing. In general, changes to the syllabus should be made by the last day to add classes; if changes must be made later in the semester, timely notice and due consideration shall be given to students.

## B. Each syllabus shall include, at a minimum, the following items.

### 1. Course Information

#### a) Basic information

- San José State University
- Course title, number, and section; days and times taught, location of class
- Semester and year course is being taught
- Professor's name, office number and location
- Professor's contact information, including as much information as possible and at least one direct way for students to reach the professor, *i.e.*, phone number(s) or email

NOTE: While not required, it is strongly recommended in the spirit of encouraging interaction with students, that faculty members include a statement of the method by which they prefer students to contact them to maximize successful communication between faculty and student.

b) Office hours: location, days and times

c) Course or section information

- Description of the course from the university catalog augmented by section-specific information.
  - Prerequisites
- Required and recommended texts, readers, or other reading materials
- Any other necessary equipment/materials/fees

d) Student learning objectives for the course and, if the course is GE, GE area student learning objectives

e) Course requirements, *e.g.* papers, projects, exams, quizzes, homework, laboratory work, fieldwork, participation.

- Course calendar including assignment due dates, exam dates, final exam date and time, and any other relevant information.
- The following language must be included in the syllabus:

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

NOTE: University Policy S06-4 states “There shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for the course.”

f) Grading information

- A statement of how grades will be determined for the course, including
- +/- grades if they are used.
- Extra credit options, if available.
- List of the percentage weight assigned to various class assignments.
- Penalty (if any) for late or missed work.

NOTE: According to University Policy F15-12, "Students are expected to attend all meetings for the courses in which they are enrolled as they are responsible for material discussed therein and active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit to all class members. In some cases, attendance is fundamental to course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with others in the class. Attendance is the responsibility of the student. Participation may be used as a criterion for grading when the parameters and their evaluation are clearly defined in the course syllabus and the percentage of the overall grade is stated."

- Since attendance per se may not be used as a criterion for grading, if grading is done on the basis of participation, which is permitted, an indication of how participation will be assessed must be included.

2. University, College, and Department Policy Information

- a) Each syllabus shall contain a link to the university-level policy language, presented in accessible format, regarding such topics as academic integrity, accommodations, and services available to all students (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources). The precise contents of this page shall be reviewed each semester by the members of the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee (I&SA) of the Academic Senate. On each syllabus, the link will be preceded by the statement: **"University Policies: the link below contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc."** The review shall be completed in November for changes to take effect the following spring, and April for changes to take effect the following fall; this will allow faculty and students time to become familiar with upcoming changes to the required language. Authority for approving these changes rests only with I&SA which shall work with Graduate and Undergraduate Programs (GUP) to communicate any changes to faculty in a timely manner. GUP shall be responsible for hosting the link. Efforts shall be made through appropriate student communication channels to emphasize that the policies and services compiled on this link apply to all students in all university courses.
- b) If applicable, the syllabus shall also include links to department and

college-level policies, requirements and services. These links, presented in accessible format, shall be maintained by the appropriate office.

3. Archiving: Each department shall maintain an archive of syllabi from all sections for no less than 10 years.