

Associated Students, SJSU, Board of Directors' Resolution 20-21/03
SJSU Student Demands During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Whereas, The Associated Students (A.S) of San José State University (SJSU) is the official voice for over 33,000 students in the California State University (CSU); and

Whereas, It is the mission of Associated Students to support and represent the students of San José State University by continuing the organization's legacy of student advocacy and leadership; to enhance SJSU students' education through high quality programs and services; and to prepare students as they move towards a thoughtful and purposeful life after graduation¹; and

Whereas, A.S. recognizes that a majority of instruction at San José State University is being conducted via asynchronous and/or synchronous instruction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic with limited in-person exceptions²; and

Whereas, The mandatory remote instruction is hard on students and faculty alike. Most courses are not suited for online instruction; the transition to remote learning has caused difficulty. Students should not be held responsible for conditions beyond their control; and

Whereas, In President Papazian's First Full Week of Fall Semester: Spartan Community Promise; What's Open; SJSU COVID-19 Symptom Check Tool message to the San José State campus community, President Papazian shared that, "as our community faces these multiple challenges, I want to quickly share a bit of good news...yesterday, SJSU was ranked the #1 "Most Transformative College" in the country by Money Magazine. During a transformative time in our world's history, we are also transforming the world together. And now, more than ever, we must show our Spartan spirit and come together around the common goal of having a safe, healthy and successful semester"^{3,4}; and

Whereas, During the Spring 2020 semester Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) was offered as an option for Undergraduate and Graduate Students to meet the need of maximum flexibility and understanding during the sudden change to remote instruction; and

Whereas, Academic Senate of SJSU passed a Sense of Senate Resolution entitled On Maximum Flexibility and Support of SJSU Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic which stated, "accommodations are especially needed to help students during this difficult transition"⁵; and

¹ Associated Students- Division of Student Affairs <https://www.sjsu.edu/as/>

² San José State University, Health Advisories- Teaching and Learning <https://www.sjsu.edu/healthadvisories/sjsu-adapt/plan/index.php#Teaching%20and%20Learning>

³ Money- "Most Transformative Colleges" <https://money.com/best-colleges/rankings/most-transformative-colleges/>

⁴President Papazian's Message to the Campus Community- "First Full Week of Fall Semester: Spartan Community Promise; What's Open; SJSU COVID-19 Symptom Check Tool"

⁵ Academic Senate of SJSU- SS-S20-3, Sense of Senate Resolution "On Maximum Flexibility and Support of SJSU Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic" <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/SS-S20-3.pdf>

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Whereas, There is a strong, ongoing need to accommodate for students, many of whom have or are experiencing hardships that include, but are not limited to stress, anxiety, depression, other mental health issues, unexpected disruptions in work schedules, financial difficulties, shifts in housing and study environments, and the ability to access adequate or regular computer equipment or internet service; and

Whereas, The Economic Policy Institute indicates that “the pandemic has exacerbated well-documented opportunity gaps that put low-income students at a disadvantage relative to their better-off peers. Opportunity gaps are gaps in access to the conditions and resources that enhance learning and development, and include access to food and nutrition, housing, health insurance and care, and financial relief measures”⁶; and

Whereas, The Chronicle of Higher Education, highlights a survey with more than 22,500 undergraduate students at five public research universities whose results state, “76 percent said they lacked motivation for online learning...from burnout, distraction, worry, and uncertainty”⁷; and

Whereas, A study of student basic needs indicates that a significant portion of CSU students had already faced food insecurity, homelessness, and barriers to accessing mental health counseling, with the pandemic exacerbating such struggles⁸; and

Whereas, A COVID-19 and Mental Health survey commissioned by Chegg.org, found that a quarter of students (23% college, 24% high school) know of someone who has had suicidal thoughts since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Five percent of US college and high school students surveyed also report having made a suicide attempt themselves during the pandemic⁹; and

⁶ Economic Policy Institute- “COVID-19 and student performance, equity, and U.S. education policy” <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-consequences-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-for-education-performance-and-equity-in-the-united-states-what-can-we-learn-from-pre-pandemic-research-to-inform-relief-recovery-and-rebuilding/>

⁷ The Chronicle of Higher Education- “The New Rules of Engagement” https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-new-rules-of-engagement?bc_nonce=e9ch467q2a7eop7q0dmqwo&cid=reg_wall_signup

⁸ The California State University, Basic Needs Initiative- Study of Student Basic Needs https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/student-success/basic-needs-initiative/Documents/BasicNeedsStudy_phaseII_withAccessibilityComments.pdf

⁹ Businesswire- “Nearly a Quarter of US College and High School Students Know Someone Who Has Had Suicidal Thoughts During Covid-19 Pandemic, According to New Chegg Surveys” <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200910005349/en/Nearly-a-Quarter-of-US-College-and-High-School-Students-Know-Someone-Who-Has-Had-Suicidal-Thoughts-During-Covid-19-Pandemic-According-to-New-Chegg-Survey>

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Whereas, the same source states that another key finding of the Chegg survey is, “1 in 5 college students have experienced more financial pressure since the pandemic started”⁹; and

Whereas, The conditions and impacts of COVID-19 change immensely day to day, with significantly different circumstances from Fall 2020 to Spring 2020. This includes, but is not limited to, facing a global pandemic and the fear of contracting COVID-19, the loss of loved ones, the ongoing troubleshooting due to a remote learning environment, being physically and socially isolated, civil unrest due to police brutality and systemic racism, threats to international students, women’s rights being up for question, wildfires throughout California, power shutdowns, and a presidential election; and

Whereas, the repercussions of such circumstances are not within a student’s control and therefore they should not be penalized due to the ongoing public health crisis, and the inequities and disparities that are exacerbated by the pandemic socially, economically and politically; and

Whereas, San José State conducted a Student Success Survey in Spring 2020, and among their key findings found that, “nearly one-third (30%) of undergraduate students, and 20% of graduate students report that they do not have regular access to an appropriate space for studying and completing coursework”¹⁰; and

Whereas, the same source among their key findings regarding academic success found that, “more than half (57%) of undergraduate students and 42% of graduate students reported that stress and anxiety had impacted their academic success ‘a lot’ in Spring 2020” and “significant numbers of students reported that family responsibilities, work responsibilities, physical health, and other issues impacted their academic success in Spring 2020”¹⁰; and

Whereas, the same source asked questions regarding plans for Fall 2020 and found that, “among students planning to continue in Fall 2020, and those not sure if they would continue, the top three concerns were online courses, academics, and finances”¹⁰; and

Whereas, The California State Student Association (CSSA) passed a resolution entitled “Alternative Grading Resolution” which was approved by the body with a majority vote. Where among the 23 CSU campuses, many have modified or are in the process of modifying their University policies to offer maximum flexibility and compassion when it comes to addressing student needs; and

¹⁰ SJSU, Institutional Research- “SJSU Spring 2020 Student Success Summary Report”
http://ir.sjsu.edu/Surveys/Surveys/student_success_2020//index.php?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiWXPpBeE1EYzBZVEZrWXPGayIsInQiOiJvTytEMCtvWjIldE1CRW5GQWorV3BPRXRnT01qNEk5V2VRXC91djdpSzlDQTlsMFVpc01Fc2dJTWxJcTFjYj01ySVVLMSStORDBcL29GVdV2NWJNMXIwZk9GTDdDN2J5NDZhRTlFK1VWRjlmQ0FyYjBXZ0JYQjJwdWldko0RElpXC84MCJ9

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Whereas, California State University, Chico has modified its grading policies for Fall 2020 so that students “will be permitted to drop/withdraw individual courses without chair or dean signatures and without ‘serious and compelling reasons’ until December 11, 2020”¹¹ ; and

Whereas, Fresno State University students have the option “to change their grading option to either CR/NC or a letter grade” until December 9, 2020¹²; and

Whereas, CSU Fullerton has extended the deadline for students to select the CR/NC grading basis options for eligible courses for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 terms¹³; and

Whereas, San Diego State University’s Academic Senate voted to extend the deadline to register for CR/NC grading option to December 10, 2020 with maximum flexibility on November 10, 2020¹⁴; and

Whereas, San Francisco State University students have the option to change their grading option to either CR/NC or a letter grade until December 18, 2020¹⁵; and

Whereas, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo students have the option to change their grading option to either CR/NC or a letter grade for the Fall 2020 Quarter until November 24, 2020¹⁶; and

Whereas, CSU Stanislaus’ Academic Senate passed a resolution that extends the CR/NC option to 14 days before finals for Fall 2020, Winter 2021, Spring 2021, and Summer 2021¹⁷; and

Whereas, Students’ lives, instruction, and success are all impacted by COVID-19 placing severe concerns about their academic careers due to hardships beyond their control; and

¹¹ California State University Chico, Student Records and Registration- Grading & Enrollment Updates for Fall 2020 <https://www.csuchico.edu/sro/covid-grading-updates/fall-2020.shtml>

¹² The Collegian- “Fresno State extends credit/no credit option for fall semester” <https://collegian.csufresno.edu/2020/08/fresno-state-extends-credit-no-credit-option-for-fall-semester/#.X76J4GRKi3L>

¹³ California State University Fullerton, Titans Return: COVID-19 Recovery- Academic Year 2020-21 Credit/No-Credit Grading Basis for CSUF Students <http://coronavirus.fullerton.edu/academic-year-2020-21-credit-no-credit-grading-basis-for-csuf-students/>

¹⁴ San Diego State University, Office of the Registrar- Grading Basis: Credit/No Credit https://registrar.sdsu.edu/students/academic_status/grading-basis-credit-no-credit

¹⁵ San Francisco State University, Registrar’s Office- Fall 2020 Dates & Deadlines <https://registrar.sfsu.edu/deadlines>

¹⁶ Cal Poly, Academic Programs and Planning- Credit/No Credit Grading <https://academicprograms.calpoly.edu/content/academicpolicies/cr-nc-grading>

¹⁷ Academic Senate of CSU Stanislaus- “Temporary Modification to University Grading Policies as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic” https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Academic%20Senate/documents/30-as-20-uepc_temporary_modification_to_university_grading_policies_as_a_result_of_the_covid-19_pandemic.pdf

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Whereas, Offering a flexible grading consideration like Credit/No Credit alleviates a key burden on students during these unprecedented stressful times, allows them to focus on learning, and gives them a choice to meet their individual needs and struggles; and

Whereas, San José State University must inclusively meet the needs of all students to advocate for educational equity and facilitate students' success in their coursework by thoughtfully modifying their policies; therefore, be it

Resolved, That San José State University extends similar guidance as provided in Spring 2020 on options for grading flexibility in campus grading systems as long as the pandemic and the effects felt from the pandemic are ongoing in terms of remote instruction, within the constraints of Executive Orders and the Title 5 Administrative Code of California; and further be it

Resolved, That San José State University offers opt-in Credit/No Credit with an extended deadline to allow students the choice between CR/NC and a letter grade; and further be it

Resolved, That there be a transcript notation for the Fall 2020, Winter 2020, Spring 2021, and Summer 2021 semesters specifying that COVID-19 pandemic was taking place; and further be it

Resolved, That academic disqualification be suspended for as long as the pandemic and the effects felt from the pandemic are ongoing; and further be it

Resolved, That there be further flexibility surrounding the add and drop dates for courses for future semesters; and further be it

Resolved, That there be additional language to the syllabus template informing students about the COVID-19 modifications as it relates to their academic career and on-campus regulations for as long as those adjustments are in place; and further be it

Resolved, That there be a greater amount flexibility with withdrawals by requiring no documentation nor serious or compelling reasons, and extending the deadline to submit the petition; and further be it

Resolved, That faculty be encouraged to assign Withdrawal Unauthorized (WU) rather failing a student; and further be it

Resolved, That there be further flexibility with retroactive withdrawals and forgiveness with WUs; and further be it

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Resolved, That San José State Students would be recommended to consult with their advisors and/or department chairs thoughtfully and carefully when making any decisions on grading option changes to identify potential benefits and risks when it comes to their unique academic careers and learn about campus resources that can support their cumulative experience; and further be it

Resolved, That there be additional support for the Office of the Registrar and Student Success Centers to address the increased workload; and let it be finally

Resolved, That Associated Students will make this document public and will forward this resolution to the following parties, including, but not limited to: President Papazian, members of the President's Cabinet, Academic Senate, and California Student State Association, and The Spartan Daily.

Respectfully submitted by:

Anoop Kaur, A.S. Director of Academic Affairs

Zobeida Delgado, A.S. President & Chief Executive Officer

Supported by:

**Passed and Adopted by the Associated Students of San José State University
Board of Directors at a special meeting held November 30, 2020 by a vote of
9-Yea 0-Nay 0-Abstention 2-Absent**

DocuSigned by:

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Brendan Quock, Vice President and Chair
Associated Students, SJSU

11/30/2020

Date

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