

1 **SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
2 **Academic Senate**  
3 **Instruction & Student Affairs Committee**  
4 **April 4, 2016**  
5 **Final Reading**

**AS 1602**

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7 **Policy Recommendation:**  
8 **Course Syllabi**

9 Background: University Policy F06-2 was the last comprehensive revision of the  
10 syllabus policy. Since that time, the size and scope of syllabi have expanded  
11 significantly to include a variety of information of use to students. Much of the  
12 language applies university-wide and thus is more appropriately hosted and  
13 presented centrally rather than being included in every class syllabus. This policy  
14 revision creates a clear separation between course-specific and university-wide  
15 language. It also provides a mechanism for Senate review of material to be  
16 added to course-specific or university-wide materials.

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

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

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

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37 the belated imposing of requirements not originally made clear; and

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

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

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

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

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

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56 **Approved:** February 22, 2016

57 **Vote:** 17-0-0

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

62 **Absent:** None

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

65 **Workload impact:** Slight increase for I&SA committee for review of changes up  
66 to twice per year, more than offset by the reduction in  
67 general faculty time spent ensuring that they meet the  
68 requirements of the latest syllabus template. One-time  
69 modification of the syllabus template.

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## 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. 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

- 115 ● Course title, number, and section; days and times taught, location of  
116 class  
117 ● Semester and year course is being taught  
118 ● Professor's name, office number and location  
119 ● Professor's contact information, including as much information as  
120 possible and at least one direct way for students to reach the  
121 professor, *i.e.*, phone number(s) or email  
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123 NOTE: While not required, it is strongly recommended in the spirit of  
124 encouraging interaction with students, that faculty members include a  
125 statement of the method by which they prefer students to contact them to  
126 maximize successful communication between faculty and student.  
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128 b) Office hours: location, days and times  
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130 c) Course or section information

- 131 ● Description of the course from the university catalog augmented  
132 by section-specific information.  
133     ▪ Prerequisites

- 134 ● Required and recommended texts, readers, or other reading  
135 materials  
136 ● Any other necessary equipment/materials/fees  
137

138 d) Student learning objectives for the course and, if the course is  
139 GE, GE area student learning objectives  
140

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

- 143 ● Course calendar including assignment due dates, exam dates,, final  
144 exam date and time.  
145  
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147 NOTE: University Policy S06-4 states "There shall be an appropriate final  
148 examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless  
149 specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for  
150 the course."  
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152  
153 f) Grading information

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

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

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

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## 177 2. University, College, and Department Policy Information

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

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201 b) If applicable, the syllabus shall also include links to department and  
202 college-level policies, requirements and services. These links,  
203 presented in accessible format, shall be maintained by the  
204 appropriate office.

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