

MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS & GRADING SUBCOMMITTEE OF
THE ACADEMIC SENATE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO
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April 7, 2017

Members Present: Katie Dyer (Chair), Luke Pryor, Steve Chung

Members Absent:

Guest Present: Alex Gallo

1. Consent Calendar
 - a. Minutes of 3/8/17 meeting
 - b. Agenda of today's meeting
2. New Business: APM 339 – Policy on Final Exams
 - a. Student Council has asked us to propose a revision to the policy on final exams
 - i. Current policy (APM 339-1) states: "Illness, accident, or other contingencies may prevent a student from taking the final exam at the scheduled time. In such cases, the instructor should assign a make-up examination or, if appropriate, a grade of incomplete."
 - ii. The final exam schedule says: "You may avoid the possibility of three or more final examinations falling on the same day by checking your program with the schedule printed below. You should be aware of potential conflicts between one-day and two-day a week classes. Consult with the instructor."
 - iii. No direction is offered for when students have multiple classes on the same day. The policy is vague and does not imply that students have any right to even inquire about rearranging exams for a better schedule.
 - iv. The University of Oklahoma, the University of Missouri, and the University of North Texas all have policies about multiple exams on the same day that they would like us to consider.
 - v. So long as we are considering the issue of multiple finals in a day, could we also address the issue of how students should request to take an exam early and under what conditions that should be allowed, and the rules and procedures around make-up final exams?

b. Considerations

- i. Student performance: Are students injured by this requirement? Do they do poorly on exams when the exams are on the same day? If so, we should act to prevent this.
- ii. Preparation for life: If a college education is partly about learning content knowledge, and partly about learning how to manage the demands of the work world, then we may be taking away an opportunity to learn about life by artificially constructing an easy out.
- iii. Prevalence: How often does this happen? Most faculty at the meeting have never had students report this as a problem. That could be because it's not very common, or it could be because students are afraid to ask so they suffer in silence. If it is very common, then it's a big problem, but it will also be very difficult to resolve.
- iv. Practical Issues: Some final exams consist of oral presentations to the class which cannot be meaningfully rescheduled. Or they might consist of an activity such as critiquing a video presentation, which cannot easily be rescheduled.
- v. Faculty workload: Faculty workload is a serious problem at Fresno State. Requiring faculty to offer alternative exams might mean requiring them to prepare the exam early, have less time to grade, and possibly the need to create an extra version of the exam to reduce the possibility of cheating.
- vi. Test Center: The test center might facilitate the administration of make-up exams if we adopt a policy like this. That can help reduce the burden on faculty.
- vii. Flexibility: Right now, students and faculty have maximum flexibility to address situations as they choose. A policy will standardize this, which is good for some, but will be bad for others.
- viii. Slippery slope: This happens with midterms too. Are we willing to consider the scheduling of regular exams?

c. Action Plan

- i. Each member should ask faculty in their departments or otherwise within their acquaintance so that we can get a sense of what other faculty think.

- ii. Dr. Dyer will talk to Bernadette Muscat about whether the Academic Test Center could be used for make-ups.
- iii. Dr. Fu will ask OIE to determine how frequently this happens.