



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

General Faculties Council  
**ACADEMIC PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE**  
Approved Minutes

Special Meeting  
December 1, 2020, 3:45 p.m.

By Zoom platform

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***Voting Members***

Dru Marshall, Co-Chair  
Tara Beattie, Academic Co-Chair  
Elena Braverman  
Nicole Culos-Reed  
Frank Finley  
Andy Knight  
Tanille Shandro  
Amy Warren  
Penny Werthner  
Barry Wylant

***Non-Voting Members***

Violet Baron  
David Stewart  
Florentine Strzelczyk  
Melanie Zimmer

***Secretary***

Susan Belcher

***Scribe***

Jaclyn Carter

***Staff***

Elizabeth Sjogren

***Guests***

Susan Barker, Vice-Provost (Student Experience) and Co-Chair, Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee  
Leslie Reid, Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)  
Angelique Saweczko, Registrar  
Robin Yates, Dean and Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies)

***Observers***

Christine Johns, Senior Director (Academic & International Strategies)

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The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 3:47 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Agenda for the December 1, 2020 Academic Planning and Priorities Committee special meeting be approved.

**Carried**

## **2. Remarks of the Co-Chair and Academic Co-Chair**

The Co-Chair and Academic Co-Chair made no remarks.

## **3. Approval of Flexible Grading for the Fall 2020 Term**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Susan Barker, Leslie Reid, Angelique Saweczko, and Florentine Strzelczyk presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponents provided an overview of the updated proposal and explained the primary changes to the original proposal, as follows: the option to take an unweighted D instead of a CR to help alleviate progression issues; that all graduate students in all programs will be offered this option to maintain equity across programs and workloads; and a delayed deadline to apply for the CR, from January 11 to January 15, 2021 to balance time for students with time for Faculties and the Registrar's Office to conduct academic reviews in advance of February conferral.
- In response to questions, it was explained that:
  - Although some Faculties and programs set higher minimum GPAs than others, the proponents felt that the best way forward this term was to provide one option for all students, and to consider the nuances of different Faculties and programs when a formal policy is created next year
  - Because there are home Faculties and teaching Faculties, issues arise with the different minimum pass requirements in each Faculty, and it could become very confusing for students when making their choice to select the unweighted D versus the CR
  - The CR is considered an unweighted grade that is not included in the GPA calculation
  - The unweighted D will be distinguished from the weighted D on the transcript with an asterisk
  - Students who have withdrawn within a specific recent time period and who wish to reverse their withdrawal to take advantage of the CR will be managed on a case-by-case basis
  - A student could feasibly choose not to sit the final exam and still take the CR, but some courses stipulate in the course outline that students must complete all components of the course to receive a passing grade
  - In cases where students have deferred term work or exams, the Registrar's Office will offer a second deadline for them to select the CR, and it was noted that this process will align with how this was conducted in the Winter 2020 term
- The Committee discussed:
  - Whether or not the unweighted D will count for the purposes of progression in professional programs, and it was explained that this will be at the discretion of the Faculty, that this was the process in the Winter term, and that the Faculties will have the ability to look at the student's entire record and make a decision as to how they will support the student going forward
  - The balance this proposal aims to strike; to offer reprieve while simultaneously protecting students from the long-term impacts of multiple CRs, which could be compounded by the CRs already taken in the Winter 2020 term
  - That in Faculties that require a C or better for students to progress, the CR will be accepted as

- constituting a fulfilled requirement; however, it was noted that that as a result of the Winter 2020 CR option, some students who progressed with the CR are struggling
- Other suggestions by Committee members, such as the option to take more than one CR, an unweighted D, and an unweighted F, or two CR options for part-time students and three CR options for full-time students. It was explained that the discussion yesterday determined that the University would not offer different grading options for more than one course this term.
  - The process for conducting academic reviews, and it was noted that if the University were to offer an unweighted F, the student would not be flagged as needing support because the grade would not impact their GPA or trigger the academic review process. It was also noted that the unweighted F could impact students for recognition, such as the Dean's List.
  - Why the option to add an "Unsatisfactory" (UNS) notation to the transcript is not feasible, and it was explained that the Registrar's Office would have to create a new notation, change the transcript paper, and change the grade scale, and that the addition of the UNS would cause confusion with other institutions that would be seeing it for the first time. It was noted that the University is trying to work within the grading structures currently in place in order to implement a change in a timely manner.
  - That graduate students consulted in the last twenty four hours expressed support for the one CR option, but weren't sure if they would take it because of the potential implications for their studies in the future
  - How some Faculties determine program placement via GPA and that having multiple CRs on a student's transcript could affect their GPA positively or negatively, therefore creating unfairness in the placement system
  - Whether letter grades could be kept on file, so that a student could reverse the CR choice in cases where the CR is detrimental to a student's future choices, which they may not be aware of right now
  - Concerns for the mental health of students, faculty and administrators, and what other supports the University can explore that don't involve students' transcripts, such as delayed or changed assignments and delayed exams

**Secretary's Note: A Committee member moved an amendment to the motion on the floor; however the motion to amend did not receive a second and so it was not considered by the Committee.**

The Committee requested that the proposal be amended to reflect that the unweighted D is applicable to both D and D+ grades.

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve that students can choose the CR or an unweighted D grade option for the Fall 2020 term, as set out in the document provided to the Committee, with the requested amendment.

**Carried**

Frank Finley opposed.

**5. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**6. Adjournment**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee adjourn the December 1, 2020 meeting.

**Carried**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

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Susan Belcher  
University Secretary