

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Vice Chancellors, Associate Deans, Department Chairs and Directors

FROM: Daniel J. Bernardo, Provost and Executive Vice President 

SUBJECT: Reminders of Key Academic Policies

DATE: August 21, 2017

The onset of a new academic year is a time of excitement, hope, and aspiration. It is also a good time to acquaint oneself with, or to recall, some key policies. Policy compilations are found in the *WSU Faculty Manual* (http://facsen.wsu.edu/faculty_manual/), the WSU Academic Regulations (<http://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-regulations/>), and State of Washington Standards of Conduct for Students (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=504-26>).

Please distribute this document to faculty, instructors and teaching assistants.

Course Syllabus Policy

The instructor(s) of each course shall make available to enrolled students a course syllabus which should (a) be presented during the first week of class, (b) contain expected student learning outcomes, and (c) include information about the method(s) to be used for evaluation of student progress and determination of grades. The University, College or Academic Unit may, in published policies, specify additional information to be included in course syllabi. [*Educational Policies and Procedures Manual*, approved by Faculty Senate 2/14/13].

Please ensure that your syllabi explicitly state the student learning outcomes to be achieved. A sample syllabus template may be found at: <http://vpue.wsu.edu/policies>.

Students with Documented Disabilities Syllabus Statement

We are an institution of higher education and therefore have a responsibility to inform students with disabilities about the process for accessing reasonable accommodations. The Students with Disabilities syllabus statement is an important part of fulfilling that institutional responsibility. A syllabus statement is required for each instructor to include in every semester's syllabus for all courses at WSU. Please copy and paste either the Pullman Campus Syllabus Statement or the WSU Online Statement paragraph into your syllabus, depending upon the nature of your course. If you have any questions, please contact the Access Center (formerly the Disability Resource Center, DRC) at 509-335-3417.

Syllabus Statements

Pullman Campus Syllabus Statement

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities or chronic medical conditions. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center website to follow published procedures to request accommodations: <http://www.accesscenter.wsu.edu>. Students may also either call or visit the Access Center in person to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. Location: Washington Building 217; Phone: 509-335-3417. All disability related accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center. Students with approved accommodations are strongly encouraged to visit with instructors early in the semester during office hours to discuss logistics.

WSU Online Course Syllabus Statement

Reasonable accommodations are available in online classes for students with a documented disability. All accommodations must be approved through your WSU Disability Services office. If you have a disability and need accommodations, we recommend you begin the process as soon as possible.

For more information contact a Disability Specialist on your home campus:

- **Pullman or WSU Online:** 509-335-3417,
<http://accesscenter.wsu.edu>, access.center@wsu.edu
- **Spokane:** 509-358-7534,
<https://spokane.wsu.edu/studentaffairs/disability-resources>
- **Tri-Cities:** 509-372-7352,
<http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/disability/>
- **Vancouver:** 360-546-9138,
<http://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/student-resource-center/disability-services>

Academic Freedom

WSU supports the faculty's academic freedom, right to freedom of expression, and responsibility to fulfill course objectives that are approved by the Faculty Senate. This is fundamental to who we are as an institution. Along with these rights comes the responsibility to protect the freedom of expression of all members of our community, including students. The same is stated clearly in our own policies and procedures, including the Faculty Responsibilities section of the WSU Faculty Manual:

"As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly standards of their disciplines. They demonstrate respect for the student as an individual and adhere to their proper role as intellectual guides and counselors... They protect students' academic freedom."

We also want to emphasize the importance of protecting freedom of expression in the classroom. Section IIB of the Faculty Manual (page 14) covers freedom of expression and accompanying responsibilities:

"Freedom of expression is recognized as one of the essential elements of academic freedom. On a healthy campus, there is respect for the dignity and worth of all members of the campus community and a concern for the rights of others. ...It is the policy of Washington State University to support and promote the rights of all individuals to express their view and opinions for or against actions or ideas in which they have an interest... The above rights exist in equal measure for each member of the University community."

We recognize that faculty have a strong interest in promoting respectful dialogue in the classroom. Speech and conduct that disrupts the educational process and creates a hostile environment, as that term is defined in WSU's non-discrimination policy (Executive Policy 15), is not protected. If concerns arise, faculty should consult the WSU's Office for Equal Opportunity at 509-335-8288 or oeo@wsu.edu.

We must aim to protect the freedoms and rights of every member of the WSU community, and to promote learning about diverse perspectives while ensuring that students experience a safe, constructive learning environment.

Student Records

Please review information about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) at the following website: <http://www.ronet.wsu.edu/Main/Apps/FerpaInfo.ASP>. Each department is responsible to maintain the confidentiality of student records in accordance with FERPA. Questions regarding the access to or release of student records may be referred to the Registrar's Office at 509-335-5346.

AWARE Network

The AWARE network is a resource for faculty, TAs, and others who are concerned about a student's well-being, behavior, or health. If you are worried about a student's academic performance, or behavior in or out of class, you may send an AWARE Network report at <http://aware.wsu.edu/>. You may also contact the Dean of Students directly at 509-335-5757.

Disruptive Student Behavior

Occasionally faculty or teaching assistants will experience disruptive or threatening student behavior. The Dean of Students has compiled a handbook to assist with responding to students who behave in unusual or unpredictable ways and to help with protocol and referral procedures. With adequate preparation beforehand, the chances of disruption may be lessened. Everyone who teaches should be familiar with this document: <https://aware.wsu.edu/media/119921/handbookforrespondingtodisruptivestudents.pdf>.

Service/Emotional Support Animal Guidelines

Please review the campus policy on [service/emotional support animals](#). Pets are not allowed on campus and service animals must be registered with the WSU Access Center. Please contact the Access Center at 509-335-3417 with any questions.

Academic Integrity Policy

Washington State University, a community dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, expects all students to behave in a manner consistent with its high standards of scholarship and conduct. Students are expected to uphold these standards both on and off campus and acknowledge the university's authority to take disciplinary action. The purpose of these standards and processes is to educate students and protect the welfare of the community.

University instructors have the authority to intervene in all situations where students are suspected of academic dishonesty. In such instances, responsible instructors retain the authority to assign grades to students considering, from an academic standpoint, the nature of the student action. The consequences for such actions should be spelled out beforehand in the syllabus. More information regarding responding to academic integrity violations can be found at: <http://conduct.wsu.edu>.

Feel free to contact the Office of Student Standards and Accountability (509-335-4532) if you would like more specific information about the process. The Writing Program (509-335-7959) can assist with proactive assignment design that minimizes intentional or unintentional academic dishonesty.

Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (*Faculty Manual*, p. 31).

This policy expresses WSU's commitment to maintaining an environment free from discrimination, including sexual harassment. This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, or others having an association with the University.

Policy on Faculty-Student Relationships (*Faculty Manual*, p.35)

As a matter of sound judgment, faculty, graduate teaching and research assistants, residence hall officers, and other supervisory employees in the University community accept responsibility to avoid any apparent or actual conflict of interest between their professional responsibilities and their personal relationships with students or those whom they supervise, evaluate, or exercise other relationships of power or authority. To ensure that the advising, mentoring, evaluation and supervision of students or subordinates is conducted fairly, romantic or sexual relationships between faculty and students, and supervisors and subordinates is prohibited as set forth in this policy.

Academic Policy Reminders Pertaining to Courses

The following are reminders about academic policies intended to create clear communication between faculty and students, and fair and equitable conditions of teaching and learning. The full text of all academic rules is available at: <http://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-regulations>.

Class Attendance and Absences (Academic Regulation 72)

Students are responsible for ensuring that they attend all class meetings and complete all in-class and out-of-class work as assigned by the instructor. Students are also responsible for communicating with the instructor should they need to be absent.

- **Attendance Policy:** The instructor is responsible for determining the attendance policy and for making decisions regarding the policy, including the consequence of missed classes, within guidelines established by the academic unit. The instructor is responsible for communicating the policy to the students, both in the classroom and on the course syllabus.
- **Administrative Drops for Non-Attendance:** Students who have not attended class meetings (including lectures, laboratories, and other meetings) during the first week of the semester or according to a prorated schedule for shorter sessions may be dropped from the course by the department. Students enrolled in online classes may be dropped if they have not logged into the class during the first week. Students should not assume that they have been dropped without checking their class schedules.
- **Absences:** Students should make all reasonable efforts to attend all class meetings. However, in the event a student is unable to attend a class, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor as soon as possible and make arrangements for any missed work. Missing class meetings may result in reducing the overall grade in the class.

University Sponsored. Any student who is required to participate in off-campus, university-sponsored activities such as field trips, musical performances, judging teams, intercollegiate athletic events, etc., should obtain an official Class Absence Request form from the faculty or staff member supervising the off-campus activity. The form must contain specific information concerning the activity and date, be signed by the supervising faculty or staff member, and be submitted by the student at least one week in advance to the individual instructors of the student's classes. It is recommended, but not required, that a student not be penalized for absence from class provided a properly signed Class Absence Request form has been filed with the instructor prior to the absence. These university-sponsored absences are subject to an instructor's attendance policy and are not intended to imply additional acceptable absences. In all instances, it is the student's responsibility to make up all work missed.

Military Service Members. Students who are members of the National Guard or a reserve branch of a military service are occasionally required to miss class for weekend drills, active duty, and related responsibilities. In such a case, instructors should not penalize students for the absences and should allow them to make-up the missed work. In each instance, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of the duty before the absence and complete the missed work as soon as reasonably possible.

Flexible Attendance as an Access Accommodation. Due to certain disabilities or chronic medical conditions, flexibility with attendance may be regarded as a reasonable

accommodation. In these situations, instructors will receive notification of approved accommodations and procedures from the Access Center. The Access Center also provides accommodations on a temporary basis for injuries such as broken limbs or concussions but does not provide accommodations for acute illnesses.

Other Absences. Students must sometimes miss class meetings, examinations, or other academic obligations affecting their grades due to personal circumstances. It is the responsibility of the student to provide a written explanation for the absence to the instructor as soon as it is reasonable to do so. When possible, students should provide appropriate documentation for their absence but instructors cannot require written excuses from health care professionals.

As long as such absences are not excessive, it is recommended, but not required, that the instructor provide and document reasonable arrangements. Determinations regarding the acceptance of an absence are the discretion of the instructor based on the attendance policy as stated in the class syllabus.

Students who attempt to gain advantage through abuse of this policy (e.g., by providing an instructor with false information) may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action.

Emergency Notifications. While the Office of the Dean of Students does not excuse or verify student absences, in the event a student is going to be away from class for an extended period and is unable to contact the instructor in a timely manner, the Office of the Dean of Students may provide an emergency notification on the student's behalf to the instructors, informing them of the student's absence and the planned duration of the absence. An emergency notification should not be required or used to excuse a student's absence.

It is the responsibility of the student to make contact with their instructors as soon as possible to make arrangements for missed work. It is up to the instructor to determine what if any arrangements will be made for the student based upon the attendance policy as stated in syllabus.

Request for Consideration. The Office of the Dean of Students and/or the Office for Equal Opportunity may contact instructors on a student's behalf when the student's involvement in a matter implicating the WSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct, Executive Policy #15, is having a significant impact on the student's academic progress. In such cases, the instructor is strongly encouraged to work with the student to address the student's needs without compromising learning objectives.

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor to make these arrangements.

Students who are dissatisfied with the instructor's arrangement regarding missed work may follow the Academic Complaint Procedure, Rule 104.

Religious Holidays (Academic Regulation 82)

Washington State University requires that reasonable accommodations be made in regard to religious holidays.

Correction of Grade Errors (Academic Regulation 98)

An instructor may not change a grade after it has been filed with the Registrar, except in the case of clerical error, which the instructor may correct by so certifying to the Registrar. Such change must be approved (signature required) by the chairperson of the department in which the course was offered. Grade corrections must be processed within one year of the end of the term for which the original grade was given. In extenuating circumstances, or when prompted by an academic integrity violation, exceptions to the one-year limit for correction of grade errors may be considered by petition to the Registrar's Office.

Final Examinations

The final examination schedule provides for the orderly administration of two or three-hour final examinations outside the regular class period.

Closed Week (Academic Regulation 78): No examinations or quizzes (other than laboratory examinations, make-up examinations and make-up quizzes) may be given during the last week of instruction. Paper-proctored exams given for Global Campus courses are exempt from this rule, only if scanning and emailing the completed exam is not possible due to lack of equipment or infrastructure.

Three or more in one day (Academic Regulation 77): During final examination week, if the scheduled arrangement results in students having three or more examinations scheduled for any one day, any one of their instructors is authorized to excuse the students from the regularly scheduled examination and give a final examination to the students during the special exams time blocks. In cases of difficulty in arriving at a solution, students shall refer the matter to the chairpersons of their departments or to their academic advisors.

No Early Examinations (Academic Regulation 79): A student will not be granted special examinations for the purpose of leaving the institution before the close of the semester.

Any departure from rule 78 or 79 should have the prior written approval of the area dean and should be reported in writing to the Office of Provost before closed week. Departures from rule 78 or 79 that are not so approved are serious violations of the academic regulations.

No regulation requires a final examination and no policy prevents the introduction of new material during closed week.

Retention of Final Examinations, Final Projects, and Final Papers (Academic Regulation 93)

Final examinations, final projects, and final papers are university records which must be maintained for one year after the end of the term, unless they are returned directly to the student. Department chairs or directors are responsible for identifying appropriate storage location, which may include the instructor's campus office. Both the chair or the director or their designees and the instructor shall have ready access to these final examinations, final projects, and final papers.

Academic Complaint Procedures (Academic Rule 104)

Instructional faculty, chairs, deans and students should be thoroughly familiar with academic complaint procedures.

A student having complaints about instruction or grading should attempt to resolve those issues directly with the instructor. If that fails, the student should send an email to the instructor using his or her official WSU email account no later than 20 business days following the end of the semester. This email should briefly outline the complaint and be copied to the chairperson of the academic department.

If the complaint is not resolved with the instructor within 20 business days of sending the email, then the student may work directly with the chairperson of the academic department in which the course is offered. The chair's decision shall be rendered within 20 additional business days.

After the chair's decision, the student or the instructor may appeal to the academic college Dean's Office. Complaints must be presented in writing to the college dean within 20 business days of the chair's decision. The written statement should describe the complaint, indicate how it affects the individual or unit, and include the remedy sought from the college dean. The decision of the college dean is the final step and shall be made within 20 business days.

At the campuses other than Pullman, the procedure is identical except that the program leader shall substitute for the department chair, and the campus chancellor or his or her designee shall substitute for the college dean, if the department chair and/or the college dean is not located on that campus.

Key Policies Reminder
August 21, 2017
Page 9

The University Ombudsman is available at any stage for advice or assistance in resolving academic complaints.

Note: Though chairs and deans (and academic area coordinators and campus chancellors) may resolve complaints about instruction and grading, they may not change a final grade without the consent of the instructor, except as provided by Rule 105.

Thank you for your attention to these important policies.

Cc: K. Schulz, President
M. Wack, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
C. Keane, Vice President for Research
Faculty Senate Leadership