

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Department Chairs and Directors

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



SUBJECT: Reminders of Key Policies

DATE: August 16, 2016

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:** 509-358-7534, <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. 30).

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>.

Absences (Academic Regulation 73)

- A. **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 requested 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. Problem cases should follow the Academic Complaint Procedures, Rule 104.

- B. 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 work with the student/s to make-up the missed assignment or examination. 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.

- C. Other Excused Absences:** Students must sometimes miss examinations or other academic obligations affecting their grades because of illness, personal crises, mandated court appearances, parental responsibilities, and the like. As long as such absences are not excessive, it is recommended that the instructor provide and document reasonable accommodation. The instructor may require the student to submit a written explanation of the absence, but written excuses from health care personnel should not be required since these requests frequently put the health care personnel in untenable positions. A student who is dissatisfied with the instructor's accommodation may follow the Academic Complaint Procedure, Rule 104. It is recommended that the instructor explain the procedures for excused absences early in the semester, preferably in a written syllabus distributed to all students in each class. Once announced, these procedures should be scrupulously followed unless extraordinary circumstances require an exception. 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 Standards and Accountability for disciplinary action.

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, 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): Final examinations should not be scheduled for "closed week," the last week of regularly scheduled instruction. While this may seem to be an attractive option, it is clearly contrary to policy: No examinations or quizzes, (other than laboratory examinations, make-up examinations and make-up quizzes) may be given during the last week of instruction.

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.

Students having complaints about instruction or grading should refer them first to the instructor. If the complaint is not resolved, then the student may refer the complaint in writing to the chairperson of the department in which the course is offered by the end of the last day of the following semester (excluding summer term). The chair's decision shall be rendered within 20 business days. After the chair's decision, the student or the instructor may appeal to the Dean's Office. Complaints must be presented in writing to the 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 dean. The decision of the dean is the final step and shall be made within 20 business days. The University Ombudsman is available at any stage for advice or assistance in resolving academic complaints. At the branch campuses, the procedure is identical except that the academic area coordinator shall substitute for the department chair and the campus dean shall substitute for the college dean.

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