West Virginia University
The Student Assembly - Student Government Association
Assembly Proclamation: AP-2020-08

AN ASSEMBLY PROCLAMATION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE HIGH PASS/PASS/FAIL GRADING FOR THE FALL SEMESTER OF 2020 AND THE SPRING SEMESTER OF 2021

Short Title:	**High Pass/Pass/Fail Grading**
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	Amaya Jernigan, Senator
	Hunter Moore, College Senator (Statler)
Sarah Zanabli, Senator	
Sponsor(s):	**Alexis Rossello, Senator**
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Kevin Donnelly, Senator	
Zachariah Backus, College Senator (CEHS)	
Tyler Seidel, College Senator (Statler)	
First Reading Date	**12-02-2020**

Whereas, The COVID-19 pandemic has created a unique and challenging set of circumstances for both the West Virginia University faculty and the student body, requiring rapid changes and adjustments to university life; and,

Whereas, During the Fall 2020 academic semester, many students have been faced with various obstacles and adversities such as COVID-19, police brutality, and xenophobia which may have impacted their mental health and their ability to be a successful student at this university.[1]; and,

Whereas, A study conducted at Texas A&M University shows that 71% of college students have experienced increased feelings of stress and anxiety due to COVID-19; furthermore, 91% of those college students reported their feelings having a negative impact on their academics, health, and lifestyle.[2]; and,

Whereas, Many students are experiencing stressors they would not have otherwise been exposed to, such as adapting to a different format for classes, staying home when they would have otherwise been on campus, experienced the death of a family member or friend due to COVID-19, or had the illness themselves; and,

Whereas, The 2020 election has impacted everyone but has specifically targeted young adults' mental and physical health. Researchers have collected data that shows a large proportion of youth were affected by the election, either emotionally (86% pre-election; 71% post-election; 63% 4-months post-election) and/or physically (20% pre-election; 19% post-election) expressing signs of anxiety, stress, fatigue, tiredness, and nauseous.[3]; and,

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[1] https://www.jedfoundation.org/jeds-pov-on-student-mental-health-and-well-being-in-fall-campus-reopening/
[2] https://www.jmir.org/2020/9/e21279/
[3] https://capmh.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13034-018-0214-7

Whereas, Other institutions are adjusting their grading systems to better fit the circumstances that are beyond the students' control especially since the pandemic has had a disparate impact on disadvantaged individuals and communities.[4]; and,

Whereas, In the Spring semester of 2020, the university implemented a High Pass/Pass/Fail grading system to help students who may have been struggling with the adjustments due to COVID-19. High pass refers to any grade C- or above, Pass refers to a D-, D, or D+, and Fail is an F. It is only available to undergraduate students taking 100-400 level courses and one must fill out the grading request form online as well as check with the professor and/or advisor to opt into this grading system. It will not have a positive or negative impact on GPA however it does change what is reported onto the official transcript.[4]; and,

Whereas, The major disadvantage to this grading system is that once one has selected the High Pass/Pass/Fail grading system, but they end up getting an A after finals, they cannot switch back or reverse their decision.[5] This causes unnecessary amounts of stress as students calculate and guess how their final or missing grades will impact their overall grade and to decide which grading system to use based on their current standings; and,

Whereas, many students greatly appreciated the University's acknowledgment that uncontrollable life circumstances could affect students' work performance. Many students also believe that it could be improved by allowing students to choose to opt into the High Pass/Pass/Fail grading system after everything is graded so that they can make a more informed decision regarding the fate of their grades; and,

Whereas, A conversation with Evan Widders, a representative from the provost office, encouraged SGA to write a proclamation about implementing the HP/P/F grading system so that the administrators can later reference it in making their decision; and,

Whereas, President Gee is currently debating on re-adopting this system, and was informed of the importance of allowing students to wait until after all grades are in to make the decision of which grading system to use, in which he agreed that it is his priority to accommodate students and give them the tools needed to be successful; and,

Whereas, the following administration commits to helping and advocating for the HighPass/Pass/Fail grading system because we recognize the dire need to prioritize student success academically, mentally, and physically; and,

Whereas, the online and hybrid learning format for the fall and spring semester are necessary but undesirable to students and faculty, however it is the responsibility of the University to accommodate the difficult transition for students who may be struggling inside and outside of the classroom.

Therefore, be it resolved by the Student Assembly of West Virginia University:

Section 1: The West Virginia University Student Government Association recommends that the University re-adopt the HighPass/Pass/Fail grading for the fall semester of 2020 and the spring semester of 2021 due to these extenuating circumstances, in order to avoid another stressor in students' lives in the form of their grades. It is vital that students may choose to participate in the HighPass/Pass/Fail grading system after all grades are in so that students have the best opportunity for success at this institution during trying times.

Mandates:
G. Corey Farris, Dean of Students
Sabrina Cave, Executive Director, Student Enrichment
Dr. Thanh Le, Director, Student Engagement and Leadership (Advisor)
Daily Athenaeum
Chase Riggs, Student Body President

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[4] https://gwtoday.gwu.edu/passno-pass-and-creditno-credit-academic-year-2020-21
[5] https://undergraduate.wvu.edu/strategies/academic-policy-committee/academic-policy-changes/pass-fail-grading/faqs-for-spring-2020-pass-fail-grading

Tracey Picou, SGA Secretary
Evan Widders, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education
Nathalie Singh-Corcoran, WVU Faculty Senate Chair
Maryanne Reed, Provost