

## **PASS/FAIL POLICY – SPRING SEMESTER 2020 ONLY    **UPDATED APRIL 28, 2020****

### **PURPOSE**

Westfield State students may face extraordinary hurdles completing Spring semester, 2020, coursework due to the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic. Online platforms are unfamiliar to many students and faculty alike, and the brief window when the University will operate fully online will not provide ample time for a fully effective transition to online learning. Students will be differentially impacted as they work off-campus in contexts where their resources and responsibilities vary greatly, and where they cannot rely on many of the supports (study groups, Ely library, secure food and housing, friends, extra-curricular activities) that ensure their academic success on campus. This policy represents an effort to define student success differently during the brief period when students are working fully online, often far from campus, in the context of families and communities experiencing high levels of stress. The goal of the policy is to support student success and ensure the highest levels of student engagement and retention. Students are responsible for being aware of their current standing in a class and for deciding whether to register for the Pass/Fail option. Students who are unsure of their standing in a class should contact their professor to make an informed decision.

### **POLICY**

- A.** During the Spring 2020 semester only, the end date for students to change their grading status to Pass/Fail is extended past the original date of March 5, 2020, to **May 22\*, 2020**, for all undergraduate courses, except as specified in Section B below. **Students wishing to convert to a Pass/Fail grade must submit the Pass/Fail Option Form to the Registrar's Office by May 22\*, 2020.**
- B.** Department Chairs may determine that specific courses are not eligible for this extension based on accreditation and professional licensing demands, in consultation with a dean and any other department chair whose majors are required to take the course. Pass/Fail eligibility must be consistent across all sections of a course. The Registrar will be notified of these excluded courses within 5 business days of the policy being approved by AUC. For any courses determined not eligible for the Pass/Fail option, the Department Chair must email students in those sections within 10 business days of the policy being approved by AUC, letting students know the course is not eligible for Pass/Fail grading and providing a brief rationale as to why that decision was made.
- C.** Consistent with current practice, faculty will submit a letter grade for each student. The Registrar will then convert letter grades to Pass/Fail for students who have submitted the request form for classes that Department Chairs have not specifically made ineligible for a grade of Pass/Fail.
- D.** Pass/Fail grades issued under this policy will be followed on transcripts by an asterisk, indicating that the course was taken during the COVID-19 emergency.
- E.** If a student is retaking a course due to a previous unsatisfactory letter grade, and chooses to take the course Pass/Fail, the Pass/Fail designation will replace the letter grade.
- F.** Courses taken Pass/Fail during the Spring, 2020, semester will not be counted toward the total number of Pass/Fail courses a student is allowed to apply to their final WSU graduation credit hours.

G. All courses taken Pass/Fail during the Spring 2020 semester only, with a Pass/Fail election date after March 5, 2020, will fulfill Major, Minor, Concentration, Prerequisite, Common Core and Honors requirements, except as specified in Section B above.

H. Any course taken Pass/Fail during the Spring 2020 semester may be retaken at a later point for a letter grade.

I. This policy intends, for the Spring 2020 semester only, to override Pass/Fail Policy 1180 Section A 1, 2, 4 and Section B 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10.

\*[Note the following amendment approved by governance and the president: “We recommend the Pass/Fail policy for Spring 2020 be amended to move the date for students to elect this option to May 22nd, 2020. In order to do this, the deadline on the Academic Calendar for submission of non-senior grades should be moved to 12:00 noon on Monday, May 18th. The deadline for submission of senior grades will remain at 12:00 noon on May 13th. Students will have more information and will be able to confidently make good decisions about whether to exercise this option. Faculty will also be able to complete grading without pressure from anxious students.”]

