

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting: January 11th, 2021 (12:30 PM – 1:45 PM) Faculty Senate Meeting: January 25th, 2020 (12:30 PM – 1:45 PM)

Agenda

Opening Remarks

- 1. Welcome Humayun Zafar
 - a. Online Faculty Senate Meeting Expectations
 - i. Please complete the attendance survey (link in the chat window) if you are a senator or a guest.
 - ii. Voting will be carried out electronically (link will be available in the chat window) and will be tracked. <u>Please only vote if you are a senator.</u> A non-senator voting will result in an immediate permanent ban from the faculty senate.
 - iii. Use the "Raise your hand" feature in order to be recognized.
 - iv. As we move forward with our senate meetings, the FSEC has heard from its members and agrees on the need to hold to correct parliamentary procedure. Motions will be preferred over discussion items so that we typically have action items on the floor. We would like to point out that there will be less time in our meetings used to announce our business items, so it will be more important than even to be familiar with all documents pertaining to our meeting.

To further promote discussion, the president of the faculty senate will begin by calling for dissenting opinions. If there are no dissenting voices, we will be able to call for a vote directly and increase efficiency in our meetings.

New Business

- 2. Approval of minutes (December 7th, 2020 meeting)
- 3. Remote learning and remote work motion Stephen Collins
- 4. Plus/minus proposal update Cristen Dutcher, Bill Griffiths, and Joanne Lee
- 5. KSU Withdrawal Policy Paul Parker and Pam Cole
- 6. Fall student evaluations Snehal Shirke

Updates from the Provost and President

- 7. Dr. Kathy Schwaig
- 8. Dr. Pamela Whitten

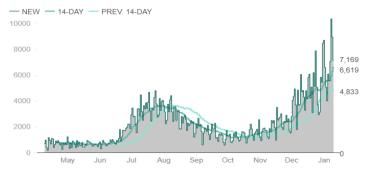
Motion on Moving University to All-Remote Learning, and All-Remote Working Arrangements

Author: Steve Collins, School of Government & International Affairs

Whereas, cases of the Covid-19 virus have surged dramatically in the past month in KSU's home county of Cobb, in surrounding counties populated by our students, faculty, and staff, and throughout Georgia (see charts below),

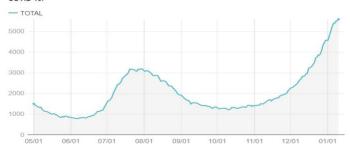
COVID-19 Cases in Georgia | 11Alive News

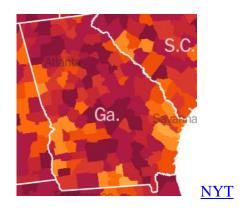
This chart from 11Alive News shows the total number of COVID-19 cases and how many new cases were reported each day.



People Receiving Hospital Care | 11Alive News

This chart from 11Alive News shows the number of people currently hospitalized in Georgia with





Considering, that a recent CDC study revealed that, (per *The New York Times*) "The spread of the coronavirus accelerated sharply in U.S. counties where large universities held classes in person last fall..." and that, conversely, "infection rates declined in counties...where large universities held classes remotely last fall,"

Noting that the administration of Kennesaw State University has pledged to be driven by the data in terms of its response to this historic health crisis,

The Faculty Senate urges the USG Board of Regents to allow KSU to move immediately and entirely to remote learning, and asks President Whitten to advocate for this move on the university's behalf. Furthermore, we ask President Whitten to instruct all employees to work remotely (with the very few exceptions of those employees whose job functions are impossible to complete remotely).

We strongly suggest that this arrangement should remain in place until virus levels in our state and in metro-Atlanta fall below the levels recorded in the mid-Fall 2020 semester. We note that mid-Fall 2020, when plans for the Spring 2021 semester were made, was a time when case counts were just one-fifth of the current level. Additionally, area hospitals were not, as they are currently, overflowing, leaving, per the <u>AJC</u>, "Georgia's health care system on the brink."

In short, the situation has rapidly and deeply deteriorated since we last gathered, and therefore the university's approach to the crisis must respond in kind.

Motion for the floor of the Senate:

We move for the Faculty Senate to officially request that each of its senators share the KSU Report on Plus-Minus Grading with the faculty of their department and encourage participation in the Faculty Senate Grading Modality survey by all full-and part-time faculty. Senators are requested to have the KSU Report on Plus-Minus Grading and Faculty Senate Grading Modality Survey appear as an agenda item at the February department faculty meeting as well as to send both the report and survey link to all full- and part- time faculty via their department mailing list.

KSU Report on Plus/Minus Grading

Grading	Example GP/	Recommended	Pros	Cons
System	Range	Course Grading Scale		
Traditional (currently used by all KSU faculty)	A 4.00 B 3.00 C 2.00 D 1.00 F 0.00	A = 90% - 100% B = 80% - 89.99% C = 70% - 79.99% D = 60% - 69.99% F = 0% - 59.99%	-Requires no change and thus is no additional work for faculty -Consistency maintained by use of the same system across the University	-Students who are at the low end of a letter grade may lack motivation to work as hard as required to move to the next letter grade -Does not provide a way to accurately reflect differing student performances -Potential for faculty to inflate grades, i.e. an "almost A" is given an A letter grade
Plus/Minus with A+ (to be used by all KSU faculty)	A+ 4.30 A 4.00 A- 3.70 B+ 3.30 B 3.00 B- 2.70 C+ 2.30 C 2.00 C- 1.70 D 1.00 F 0.00	A+ = 98% - 100% A = 93% - 97% A- = 90% - 92% B+ = 88% - 89% B = 83% - 87% B- = 80% - 82% C+ = 78% - 79% C = 73% - 77% C- = 70% - 72% D = 60% - 69% F = 0% - 59%	-Provides more grade options for a potentially more accurate way to assess different student performance -Potential for students to be more motivated to continue learning to reach shorter goal of next highest grade -Greater competitive advantage for high achieving students trying to enter graduate school with the availability of A+ grades -Fairly grades students if used across a University by all faculty	-Minor decrease, even less than without A+ system, in GPA with change from traditional system -More complex grading system for students and faculty -May cause marginal students to drop into academic probation without a change in their performance (C- is below 2.0) unless cutoff GPA changes -Unfairly grades students if not used across a University by all faculty (a 90% is an A in the traditional system course and an A- in the plus/minus course)

			-No empirical evidence of any of the above -Less likely for faculty to inflate grades in an objectively graded course, i.e. an "almost A" is now named = B+; 1 private college found 0.062 decrease in GPAs from reduction in inflation due to use of plus/minus grading and found that higher GPA majors had higher decrease, lower GPA majors had less of a decrease	-Potential for student grade complaints to increase -No empirical evidence of any of the above -1 small scale empirical study found no increase in student motivation when using plus/minus over traditional grading -Students may feel unhealthy competition for A+ grades
Plus/Minus without A+ (to be used by all KSU faculty)	A 4.00 A- 3.70 B+ 3.30 B 3.00 B- 2.70 C+ 2.30 C 2.00 C- 1.70 D 1.00 F 0.00	A = 94% - 100% A- = 90% - 93% B+ = 87% - 89% B = 84% - 86% B- = 80% - 83% C+ = 77% - 79% C = 74% - 76% C- = 70% - 73% D = 65% - 69% F = 0% - 64%	-Provides more grade options for a potentially more accurate way to assess student performance -Potential for students to be more motivated to continue learning to reach shorter goal of next highest grade -No empirical evidence of any of the above -Less likely for faculty to inflate grades in an objectively graded course, i.e. an "almost A" is now named = B+; 1 private college found 0.062 decrease in GPAs	-Minor decrease (between 0.04 and 0.08 reported) in GPA with change from traditional system -More complex grading system for students and faculty -May cause marginal students to drop into academic probation without a change in their performance (C- is below 2.0) unless cutoff GPA changes -Unfairly grades students if not used across a University by all faculty (a 90% is an A in the traditional system course and an A- in the plus/minus course)

			from reduction in inflation due to use of plus/minus grading and found that higher GPA majors had higher decrease, lower GPA majors had less of a decrease -Students may feel unhealthy competition for A+ grades, avoided without use of A+ -51.17% of KSU faculty support this system (half of all faculty responding) -42% of part-time faculty support this system (1/3 of all part-time faculty responding)	-Potential for student grade complaints to increase -Potential for students to complain that there is no A+ grade -No empirical evidence of any of the above -48.83% of KSU faculty do not support this system (half of all faculty responding) -47% of part-time faculty do not support this system (1/3 of all part-time faculty do not support this system (1/3 of all part-time faculty responding) -1 small scale empirical study found no increase in student motivation when using plus/minus over traditional grading
Plus Only (to be used by all KSU faculty)	A 4.00 B+ 3.50 B 3.00 C+ 2.50 C 2.00 D+ 1.50 D 1.00 F 0.00	A = 89.5% - 100% B+ = 84.5% - 89.4% B = 79.5% - 84.4% C+ = 74.5% - 79.4% C = 69.5% - 74.4% D+ = 64.5% - 69.4% D = 59.5% - 64.4% F = 0% - 59.4%	-Increases GPAs -May motivate students without negative grades (minuses), no empirical evidence of this -25% of 1/3 of part- time faculty support this system	-Rarely used among KSU peer and regional universities -No balance to the benefit of + grades which may inflate GPAs, no empirical evidence of this -1 small scale empirical study found no increase in student motivation when using plus/minus over traditional grading

^{*}A Note on the HOPE Scholarship*

HOPE Scholarship regulations require GPAs to be calculated on a traditional 4.0 scale. Pluses and/or minuses are ignored in the calculation of HOPE Scholarship GPA in determining undergraduate eligibility

KSU Report on Plus/Minus Grading

for continued HOPE scholarship qualification. For example, an A+, A and A- all equal 4.0 on the HOPE GPA scale. www.gafutures.org.

Resources

November 2020 KSU General Faculty Survey on Plus/Minus Grading

November 2020 KSU Part-Time Faculty Survey on Plus/Minus Grading

Usage of Plus/Minus Grading in KSU and SACSOOC Peer Institutions: 59% (10 of 17) use Traditional, 41% (7 of 17) use Plus/Minus: 3 with A+ and 4 without A+, 0% use Plus Only

Auburn Report on Plus/Minus Grading 2016, including referenced resources file:///C:/Users/cdutcher/Desktop/FINALrptAU_PlusMinusGrading.pdf

University of Guam Report on Plus/Minus Grading 2007, including referenced resources file:///C:/Users/cdutcher/Downloads/Evaluating The PlusMinus Grading System For Underg.pdf

Truman State University Plus/Minus Grading Report 2000, including referenced resources https://www.wku.edu/senate/documents/truman_state_report.pdf

University of Texas at Arlington Report on Plus/Minus Grading 2005, including referenced resources (Word doc on file with Committee, available upon request)

Bressette, A., <u>Arguments for Plus/Minus Grading: A Case Study</u>, <u>Educational Research Quarterly</u>, vol. 25:3, p 29, 2002 (finding 0.062 reduction in GPA using raw numerical grades after using plus/minus grading in all disciplines at private liberal arts institution (Berry College, GA) for one academic year that higher GPA majors had higher decrease, lower GPA majors had less of a decrease; student survey revealed preference against use of A+ which students felt would lead to unhealthy competition among them).

Dixon, C. <u>Plus/Minus Grading if Given a Choice</u>, <u>College Student Journal</u>, vol. 38:2, p 280, 2004 (small number of students in a single course prefer traditional grading to plus/minus grading at a 2:1 ratio when given the choice of which system to be graded by).

Fries, R. et al., <u>Student and Faculty Perceptions on Plus/Minus Grading: A Case Study</u>, <u>Educational Research Quarterly</u>, vol. 36:4, p 49, 2013 (review of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's investigation into the use of plus/minus grading and their ultimate conclusion to stay with traditional grading based on faculty survey, student survey, and literature review).

Kleinman, S. et al., <u>The Changing Landscape of Grading Systems in US Higher Education</u>, *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, vol. 22:1, p 26, 2018 (no clear evidence that plus/minus grading in any form is better than other forms of grading, much of the move toward plus/minus seems more for reasons of keeping up with peers/trends).

McClure, J. and Spector, L, <u>Plus/Minus Grading and Motivation</u>: An Empirical Study of Student Choice <u>and Performance</u>, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 30:6, p 571, 2005 (small scale empirical study finding that students who chose plus/minus grading in a single semester were not

KSU Report on Plus/Minus Grading

significantly more motivated, based on total points earned in the single semester, than students who chose traditional grading in the same semester).

University of Georgia Plus/Minus Sample Grading Scales file:///C:/Users/cdutcher/Desktop/UGAPlusMinusSampleGradingScales.pdf



Part-Time Faculty Plus/Minus Follow up Survey Results

12/07/2020

By James Stinchcomb, MSW, MPA, HS-BCP, CNP





Survey Dates:

Started: November

18, 2020

Ended on:

December 6, 2020



Total number of participants who finished the survey 236

60 survey submissions were previews, not submitted or finished and were automatically closed on 12/6/20 by force when ending collection of data

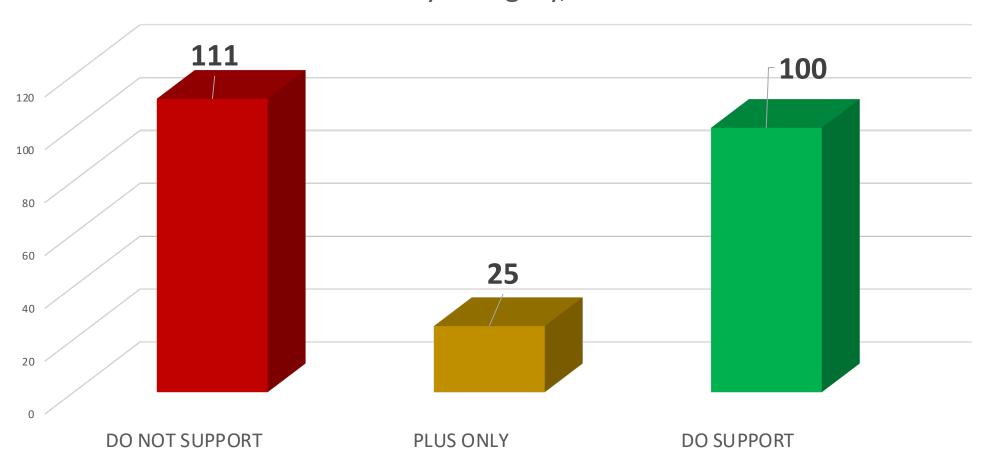


Total PTF survey was sent to was 714

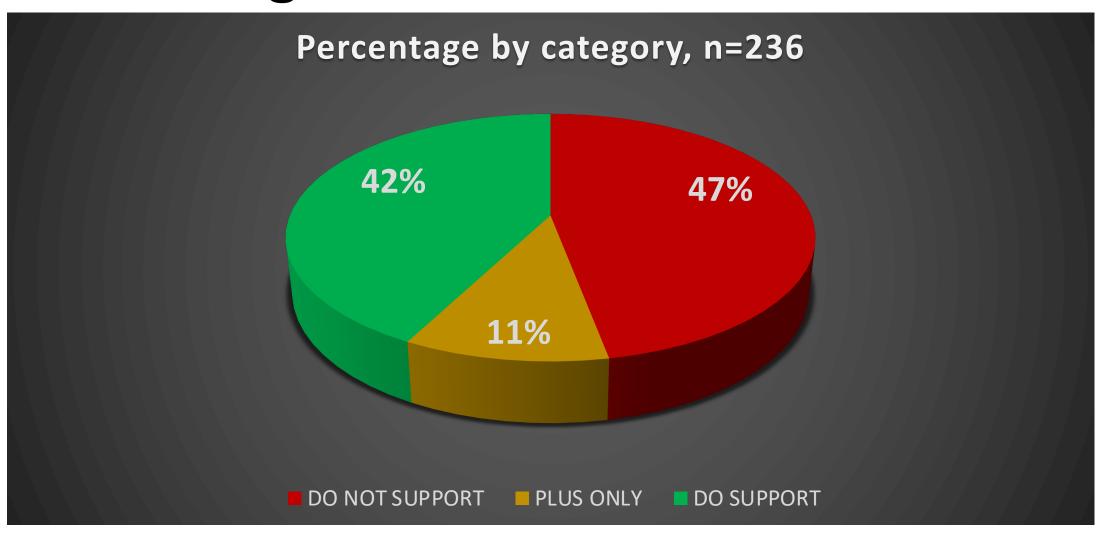
Completion
Percentage: 33%
return rate or 1/3 of
PTF Members

Results

Total by Category, n=236



Percentage





Comments – DO NOT SUPPORT

- Undue stress/Burden on Students
- Complicated/Unnecessary
- I like current system
- Creates more confusion
- Not all other schools use it/Transfer problems
- Disadvantage to students with lower GPA
- Research indicates minority students adversely impacted



Comments – DO NOT SUPPORT

- Subjective to the faculty
- Lack of standards with Hope
- Research does not support transition
- To make university "look" more rigorous
- Does not bring advantage to students

Comments Plus ONLY

- Rewarded for effort
- Benefits students
- Minus penalize students
- Acknowledges hard work
- Student extra effort
- Encourages high achieving students



Comments – DO SUPPORT

- Hard working students, more appreciated
- More accurate reflection
- Would encourage student engagement
- Allows more nuance in grading/More specific
- Difference in those who achieve minimal vs high end



Comments – DO SUPPORT

- More flexibility in grading
- Transcript better reflects student achievement
- Demonstrates students performance/Knowledge of course
- More informative and fair to students

Update KSU Withdrawal Policy

Intent: It is proposed that the Undergraduate Catalog be amended to remove the maximum limit of withdrawals and the "WF" for each withdrawal beyond the prescribed eight maximums. This proposal is to ensure KSU students are not penalized for withdrawing from courses as needed to protect their academic retention and progression towards graduation.

Current policy published in the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Catalog

Withdrawal from Classes

A student may withdraw, using Owl Express, from one or more courses prior to one week before the last day of class. The student should consult the applicable academic calendar posted on the Office of Registrar website because the last day of class varies according to the part of the semester in which the student is enrolled. Each first-time, first-year student may withdraw without penalty by the applicable semester date from a maximum of eight courses, while attending KSU. Each transfer student may withdraw without penalty by the applicable semester date from a maximum of one course per fifteen credit hours attempted and a maximum of eight courses, while attending KSU. A student pursuing a second degree at KSU may withdraw without penalty by the applicable semester date from two additional courses with appropriate consultation with the Office of the Registrar. A student who attended Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) and has been continuously enrolled at SPSU/KSU may withdraw without penalty from a maximum of eight courses, while attending KSU and after Summer Semester 2015.

The student will receive a grade of "WF" for each withdrawal beyond the prescribed maximums.

A student who officially withdraws from a course by the end of the last day to withdraw without academic penalty will receive a grade of "W" and receive no credit. A student who officially withdraws from a course after the last day to withdraw without academic penalty and before the last week of classes during the semester will receive a grade of "WF," which will be counted as an "F" in the grade point average calculation.

For attendance verification, the applicable faculty member will submit the last known date of academically related activity and one of the following symbols for each student who stopped attending the course.

- "NA" (never attended) for a student who never attended the course, never attended the course after the applicable Drop-Add date, or did not complete any academically related activity
- "W" (withdrew) for a student who stopped attending before the last day to withdraw without academic penalty for the applicable semester and whose academically related activity was deemed passing
- "WF" (withdrew failing) for a student who stopped attending after the last day to withdraw without academic penalty for the applicable semester, or who stopped attending before the last day to withdraw without academic penalty for the applicable semester and whose academically-related activity was deemed failing

Update KSU Withdrawal Policy

The only exceptions to these withdrawal regulations will be for instances involving unusual circumstances, which must be fully documented, or military withdrawal (see below). A student may appeal to the Academic Standing Committee for consideration of unusual circumstances. Withdrawal dates are published in the official academic calendar. A student will receive a refund only when the student withdraws from ALL courses for the applicable semester and only by the schedule outlined in the University System refund policy.

Proposed policy (with emphasis of proposed changes)

Proposed New KSU Withdrawals Policy

Students who withdraw from courses before the withdrawal deadline, two weeks after the midpoint, as specified by the academic calendar will receive a grade of W. A student who officially withdraws from a course by the end of the last day to withdraw without academic penalty will receive a grade of "W" and receive no credit.

A student who officially withdraws from a course after the last day to withdraw without academic penalty and before the last week of classes during the semester will receive a grade of "WF," which will be counted as an "F" in the grade point average calculation.

Students may drop one, some, or all of their classes during the drop/add period. Courses dropped in this manner do not appear on a student's transcript and are not considered as hours attempted for financial aid purposes. No grade is assigned for such courses. However, a student who wishes to withdraw from a course after the last day of the drop period for a term must withdraw through Owl Express. Students with an active registration hold on their record must clear that hold before being able to withdraw from their coursework.

If a student experiences significant personal hardship (e.g., medical or family emergency, prolonged illness), the Dean of Students can approve a hardship withdrawal from all courses in the term for which the student is currently registered. In the case of an approved hardship withdrawal from all courses, the Registrar will assign grades of "W" for those classes. The deadline for final approval of a hardship withdrawal by Dean of Students is the last day of class for which the hardship withdrawal is sought. If the hardship withdrawal process is not complete by the last day of class for which the hardship withdrawal is sought, a student must appeal for a retroactive hardship withdrawal from the Academic Appeals Committee.

Appeals for retroactive hardship withdrawals must be directed to the Academic Appeals Committee. Retroactive hardship withdrawals are rarely granted if it has been more than one year since the last day of class for which the withdrawal is sought. Extraordinary justification must be shown. In the case of approved retroactive hardship withdrawals, the Registrar will assign a grade of "W."

Update KSU Withdrawal Policy

If a student is suspended by the Office of Student Conduct following a violation of the University's Code of Conduct not related to academic dishonesty, the Office of Student Conduct may facilitate a University-initiated withdrawal from courses for which a student is registered for the term. The Registrar will assign grades of "W" for those classes.

A student will receive a refund only when the student withdraws from ALL courses for the applicable semester and only by the schedule outlined in the University System refund policy.

Students should be aware that a reduction in their hours might result in the loss of full-time student status and thus affect their financial aid, scholarships, athletic and ticket eligibility, University housing accommodations, use of University resources and access to University facilities, immigration status for international students, and Veterans Educational Benefits. Students should contact the appropriate office and their academic advisor with questions about the impact of their withdrawal from a course before initiating a withdrawal. Veterans and dependents of veterans who receive educational benefits must notify the Veterans Education Benefits Area in the Office of the Registrar of any course load reductions.

Rationale: The removal of the maximum withdrawal limit is a student success initiative to assist students with deciding to withdraw from a course without academic penalty. Many students are taking courses in which they may have to withdraw from due to academic reasons and/or reasons beyond their control. The awarding of a "WF" for withdrawals of the eight withdrawal has negatively impacted our students in regard to their academic standing, retention, progression and graduation. The "WF" is also causing financial aid issues for students who need financial aid in order to complete their degree requirements. Review of withdrawal policy requirements of other USG institutions informed the development of the proposed policy change. The proposed change will avoid many students from having academic standing issues and contribute to ensuring student success towards meeting graduation and degree requirements.

Other Grades

I: denotes an incomplete grade for the course. An incomplete grade may be awarded only when the student was doing satisfactory work prior to the last two weeks of the semester but for nonacademic reasons beyond the student's control, was unable to meet the full requirements of the course.

A grade of "I" must be removed by completing the course requirements within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which the "I" was originally assigned. In addition, should the student enroll in classes at KSU during the calendar year, the grade of "I" must be removed by the end of the first semester of enrollment during that calendar year.

Upon completion of the course requirements within the specified time limits, a final grade will be assigned based on the student's total performance.

If the course requirements are not completed within the specified time limits, the "I" will be changed to an "F" for a course that awards grades of "A", "B", "C", "D", or "F" and the student's cumulative and institutional GPAs will be recalculated accordingly, or the "I" will be changed to a "U" for a course which awards a grade of "S" or "U." An incomplete grade cannot be removed by reenrolling in the course.

IP: indicates that credit has not been given in a course that requires a continuation of work beyond the term for which the student enrolled in the course. This symbol cannot be substituted for an "I."

K: indicates credit awarded by examination including, but not limited to, the following:

- Advanced Placement (AP)
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)
- Foreign Language Achievement Testing Service (FLATS)
- Departmental Course Exams for Advanced Standing
- Prior Learning Assessment (portfolio review)
- Military Credit

NR: indicates no grade was reported. The grade will be changed to the appropriate grade once determined.

NA: Never Attended (for attendance verification) is for a student who never attended the course, never attended the course after the applicable Drop-Add date, or did not complete any academically related activity. The grade will be changed to the appropriate withdrawal grade.

S: indicates satisfactory completion of a credit-bearing course and is not included in the calculation of the grade point average. The use of this grade is approved for thesis hours, student

teaching, clinical practicum, and internship. It also indicates satisfactory completion of certain credit laboratory-type courses.

U: indicates unsatisfactory completion of a credit-bearing course and is not included in the calculation of the grade point average. The use of this grade is approved for thesis hours, student teaching, clinical practicum, and internship. It also indicates unsatisfactory completion of certain credit laboratory-type courses.

V: indicates the student was given permission to audit the course. It is not included in the calculation of the grade point average. A student may not transfer from audit to credit status or vice versa. The use of this grade is approved for cooperative (COOP) courses.

W: indicates the student was permitted to withdraw from the course without penalty. A course in which a grade of "W" has been assigned will not be included in the calculation of the student's grade point average. For attendance verification, a "W" denotes student who stopped attending before the last day to withdraw without academic penalty for the applicable semester and whose academically related activity was deemed passing.

WF: indicates the student was permitted to withdraw from a course with the approval of the Registrar after the withdrawal date listed in the Semester Schedule of Classes. The grade of "WF" is counted as an "F" in the calculation of the student's grade point average. For attendance verification, a "WF" denotes a student who stopped attending after the last day to withdraw without academic penalty for the applicable semester, or who stopped attending before the last day to withdraw without academic penalty for the applicable semester and whose academically-related activity was deemed failing.

WM: indicates a student was permitted to withdraw without penalty at any time during the term based on a military service refund, as defined by BOR Policy Manual, Section 7.3.5.3.

Fall Student Evaluations

Failure to implement the opt-out feature

Failure to implement the opt-out feature may have resulted in faculty being subject to possible retaliatory student evaluations after faculty submit their final course grades on December 17 and students take the course evaluation afterward. We request that the Fall 2020 course evaluation data be optional for faculty to present in their upcoming ARD due Jan 15, 2021. Course evaluations could have been skewed and not reliable to use in the ARD because students could have focused on final grades received rather than on teaching and learning activities that occurred during the semester.

Potential set back of the opt-out feature

The essence of the opt-out feature was to provide students a final opportunity to take the course evaluation first and then access their final grades on OWL, thereby serving as a reminder. However, KSU faculty make use of D2L Grade Book to input final grades for calculation purposes prior to posting on OWL. The opt-out feature does not serve its purpose as students are able to view their final grades in the D2L Gradebook. Once they view their final grades in the KSU D2L gradebook, their perception of course evaluation may change if they are not happy with the grade received, which will in turn skew the course evaluation data. Hiding the view of the column of a specific assignment in the gradebook is possible but we cannot hide the final calculated grade column.

Proposed solution of Course Evaluation Timeline

To increase course evaluation response rates, KSU can start the course evaluation period earlier in the semester and closed by the time the final exam week begins (for e.g. to follow the current practice at USG institutions like Georgia Tech and Georgia Gwinett College). The goal is to evaluate teaching effectiveness based on the semester teaching and learning activities, which can be achieved by the proposed solution. Make the evaluations viewable to faculty at the same time grades are viewable by students. This will assure balance and fairness for all.