

Text from the email sent by Provost David Blackwell and Senate Council Chair on April 17, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We are grateful for all the efforts of faculty across this campus to continue educating our students in these difficult times.

Your work has been instrumental in allowing our students to cross the finish line of the Spring 2020 semester despite increasing hardships. As you know, many of our students are facing incredible difficulties, including having to move in the middle of the semester, having friends and family fall ill, or becoming ill themselves.

In addition, severe storms and tornadoes affected many of our students this past weekend, damaging some homes and wreaking havoc on the power and internet connections in others.

In light of all this difficulty, the Provost and the Senate Council met in an emergency session on the evening of Tuesday, April 14, to discuss the pass/fail rules for undergraduate students. After a long and challenging discussion, the Senate Council voted that, **for the Spring 2020 semester only**, "P" grades may be used to satisfy all undergraduate academic program requirements.

We recognize that, in response to the Senate Council's original message about pass/fail, many of you have had thoughtful conversations with your colleagues about whether to accept pass/fail in your program.

It was those responses, which indicated that, overwhelmingly, faculty had agreed to accept pass/fail for program requirements this semester, that helped the Senate Council to make this decision this week.

While the Senate Council's long and respected tradition is to defer to program faculty with regard to program-level academic decisions, the unprecedented hardships our students are currently facing and the very strong support among faculty for a pass/fail rule led us to the decision we arrived at Tuesday night.

Our message to the students will emphasize that the decision to choose pass/fail grading in a course should not be made without careful consideration, and that students must discuss these decisions with their advisors or DUSs. In addition, the Senate Council voted previously to permit programs that currently require a particular letter grade for progression (for instance, requiring a C or better for progression in a series of courses) to continue that requirement, even though students will be allowed to elect pass/fail grading in those courses.

To that end, we have worked with Registrar Kim Taylor to ensure that programs will be able to see the underlying grade entered by an instructor in order to determine if the minimum grade was met for purposes of progression.

Programs that elect to use the underlying grade for progression decisions should notify [Jennifer Bird-Pollan](#) and [Anna Chalfant](#) as soon as possible, so that this decision can be communicated clearly to students through the Learn Anywhere [website](#).

We know this semester has been a challenge in so many ways, and we know still more challenges await us in the future.

We remain grateful for the commitment of our faculty colleagues to the University of, for, and with Kentucky.

With gratitude,

David W. Blackwell, Provost
Jennifer Bird-Pollan, Senate Council Chair