

Brothers, Sheila C

From: Swanson, Hollie
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2012 12:54 PM
To: Anderson, Heidi Milia; Mullen, Michael D; Brown-Wright, Lynda; Feist-Price, Sonja M; Blackwell, Jeannine; Jackson, Brian A
Cc: Gill, Sharon; Lindsay, Jim D.; Nikou, Roshan; Brothers, Sheila C; Ellis, Janie
Subject: University of Kentucky Syllabi Requirements

Good afternoon, colleagues.

I am writing to you today in regards to course syllabi. As different as we all are in our respective fields, so too can be our individual syllabi. However, not many syllabi elements are *required*.

The Senate's Rules and Elections Committee frequently receives inquiries about course syllabi and what contents are required versus what contents are at the discretion of the Instructor of Record for the course. There appears to be confusion among faculty, educational units and Councils of the Senate as to what is 'officially required.'" This email is my attempt to bring clarify to these issues. Of course, the fact that we are having these conversations and confusion may be indicative of a need for further changes in our policies.

At present and according to the *Senate Rules*, the only specific requirements for information provided in course syllabi are listed below. (There is no rule prescribing the style of a syllabus.)

- In 400G- and 500-level courses, the different grading scales for both graduate and undergraduate students must be included. (SR 3.1.4)
- Attendance policies, and policies that involve attendance serving as a criterion for a grade, must be in the syllabus. (SR 5.2.4.2.E)
- For undergraduates, during Dead Week, no assignment(s) may be scheduled to fall during Dead Week unless it was scheduled in the syllabus AND the course has no final exam/assignment scheduled during finals week. (SR 5.2.4.6.E)
- All syllabi should include general information about the course, including the content, activities to be evaluated, and grading practices, including penalties for absences or late assignments. (SR 6.1.1)
 - The differentiation between graduate student and undergraduate student activities must also be included in the syllabus. (SR 3.1.4)
- All undergraduates must be told in the syllabus that they will be informed of their current progress based on the criteria in the syllabus before the midterm date of the semester, term or session. (SR 6.1.3.A)
- Students must be informed as to how much notice the faculty member requires for an accommodation due to a religious observance. (approved by Senate on February 14, 2011, not yet codified)

Courses that are offered via distance learning must comply with the action of the University Senate on March 9, 2009, which requires that the following information be included in the syllabus:

- Instructor's virtual office hours, if any.

- The technological requirements for the course.
- Contact information for Information Technology Customer Service Center:
 - Web: <http://www.uky.edu/UKIT/>
 - Phone: 859-218-HELP.
- Web Address for Distance Learning Programs: <http://www.uky.edu/DistanceLearning>
- Procedure for resolving technical complaints.
- Preferred method for reaching instructor, e.g. email, phone, text message.
- Maximum timeframe for responding to student communications.
- Language pertaining academic accommodations:

“If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations in this course, please make your request to the University Disability Resource Center. The Center will require current disability documentation. When accommodations are approved, the Center will provide me with a Letter of Accommodation which details the recommended accommodations. Contact the Disability Resource Center, Jake Karnes, Director at 859-257-2754 or jkarnes@email.uky.edu.”

- Information on Distance Learning Library Services
 - Web: <http://libraries.uky.edu/DLLS>
 - Carla Cantagallo, DL Librarian
 - Phone: 859 257-0500, ext. 2171
 - Email: carla@uky.edu
 - DL Interlibrary Loan Service: http://libraries.uky.edu/page.php?lweb_id=253

The confusion about what is and is not required on syllabi may have been caused by an action of the Senate on February 9, 2009. During that meeting, the Senate approved the use of “Syllabi Guidelines,” to be used as a guide for faculty when preparing syllabi for major course changes. Now we find ourselves in a situation where some are unfortunately under the impression that the Syllabi Guidelines list the required components for every syllabus, which is not the case.

The bulleted items above are the only requirements for syllabi being submitted to a Council of the Senate in association with a major course change. **Therefore, Councils of the Senate should check for the inclusion of the required items above, while recognizing that other aspects of a syllabus are *optional*.**

**With best regards,
Hollie I. Swanson
Chair, Senate Council**

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REFERENCES:

*Senate Rules 3.1.4*

Combined instruction of graduate and undergraduate students in 400G and 500-level courses must be structured to ensure appropriate attention to both groups, and a corresponding differentiation in expectations. This differentiation is to be accomplished by (i) the completion of additional or distinct assignments by the enrolled graduate students that are consistent with graduate-level scholarship; and/or (ii) the establishment of different grading criteria in the course for

graduate versus undergraduate students, reflecting a higher standard for graduate students. The grading scale for both graduate and undergraduate students must be clearly stated in the syllabus.

*Senate Rules 5.2.4.2.E*

If attendance is required by the class policies elaborated in the syllabus or serves as a criterion for a grade in a course....

*Senate Rules 5.2.4.6.E* (Note: this is about 'dead week' only applies to undergraduate programs)

No project/lab practicals/paper/presentation deadlines or oral/listening examinations may be scheduled to fall during the Dead Week unless it was scheduled in the syllabus AND the course has no final examination (or assignment that acts as a final examination) scheduled during finals week.

*Senate Rules 6.1.1*

Students have the right to expect the course to correspond generally to the description in the official Bulletin of the University of Kentucky and the right to be informed in writing (in the course syllabus) at the first class meeting about the nature of the course--the content, the activities to be evaluated, and the grading practice to be followed. Whenever factors such as absences or late papers will be weighed in determining grades, a student shall be informed.

*Senate Rules 6.1.3*

A. All teachers must inform the undergraduate students in their courses of their current progress based on the criteria in the syllabus before the following dates:

1. the end of the ninth week for the fall or spring semester;
2. the third day of the fifth week for the eight-week summer term;
3. the second day of the third week for the four-week summer term.

B. Students have the right to receive grades based only upon fair and just evaluation of their performance in a course as measured by the standards announced by their instructor(s) in the written course syllabus at the first class meeting.

*Recent Senate Rule not yet codified:*

"Faculty shall indicate in their syllabus how much advance notice they require from a student requesting an accommodation [for absence due to religious observance]. "

*Special Requirements for Distance Learning Courses* (approved by University Senate on March 9, 2009)

"... **moved** that the Senate approve the requirement that the Distance Learning Form be used in conjunction with: requests to modify course delivery; and requests to change current DL-approved courses, as appropriate... There being no discussion, a **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed."

Hollie Swanson  
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Chair, University of Kentucky Senate  
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