

## Brothers, Sheila C

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**From:** Royster, David C  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 12, 2016 1:11 PM  
**To:** McCormick, Katherine; Brothers, Sheila C  
**Cc:** Brown, Russell  
**Subject:** Petition to modify due date for midterm grades

For consideration by the Senate Council. We need action on this this semester. This has been discussed by some parties earlier, but we are putting in a formal request at this time. Thank you.

We are writing to request an alteration to Senate Rule 6.1.3A item 1 regarding the reporting of Midterm grades.

Right now the rule is stated as

**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: [US: 2/14/94; US: 4/10/2000; US: 2/27/2008]**

**1. the end of the ninth week for the fall or spring semester;**

We are petitioning in order to change this to read

**1. the evening of the Monday following the end of the ninth week for the fall or spring semester;**

We are requesting this in order to allow our large classes the opportunity to give better feedback to the students in these classes. These classes are MA 109, MA 110, MA 113, MA 114, MA 123, MA 137, and MA 138. This semester these classes have a total enrollment of 3,855 students. We forward this at the request of our course coordinators for these courses. We believe that giving meaningful, appropriate midterm grades is an important tool which can help students and their advisers accurately assess their current progress and contemplate changes to their behavior and/or schedules. All of these courses follow the same exam schedule with exams given during the fifth, ninth, thirteenth and last weeks of the semester – counting the first half week as Week 1. Also, these exams are given on Monday night through Thursday night of this week due to space and manpower considerations. This current design has the second exam falling during the week midterm grades are due. This change would allow us to include the results from two of our four exams for the majority of students.

It has been suggested that we calculate midterm grades based on only one exam. Since over 70% of their final course grade is based on exams, including information from only one exam is much less useful. Many students, even when shown the relative weights of the components of their course grade, are still surprised when they learn how significant the exam grades are compared to their homework and participation grades. (The students who are most surprised by this are often the ones most in need of accurate grade information.)

It has been suggested that we move our exam to earlier in the semester. This is not optimal pedagogically or practically. As mentioned above the current exam schedule divides the semester into equal segments and moving the exams would not be a reasonable idea from the standpoint of pedagogy. Also, moving our exams would result in a competition for the scarce resources of exam rooms and proctors. Other departments are giving large common exams during the prior week, so either they fall victim to this current policy being forced to move their exams to the ninth week or would have to move their exams to a completely different week. Moving the exams to an entirely different week would also constitute a significant change in the structure of the course. This would cause much too much upheaval in the structure of the courses in other departments.

Students who take exams with the Disability Service testing center deserve midterm grades as meaningful as the others, but their exams sometimes require extra processing time. Extending the deadline will make it more likely that these students will also have their exams graded and included as well. According to the most recent report by the DRC students taking math exams comprise 29% of all exams administered by the DRC (1222 last year) and more than twice the number of exams administered for the next largest client.

We recognize that this change would move the deadline to the week of Spring Break in the Spring semester, and that some faculty may not wish to work over spring break. However, I do not think this change would prevent anyone from submitting their midterm grades by the Friday if they were in a position to do so.

There are many ideas of ways we could improve instruction for our students in our large core classes, but most of those ideas would require extra resources of time or money. Changing the midterm grade deadline seems that it would not require any extra resources, but would still allow us to provide meaningful feedback for our students without compromising our course. Moving the due date for the midterm grades should not be an imposition on anyone and will help us and other departments give students better information about their standing in their courses at midterm.

**Dr. David C. Royster**  
**Outreach Professor of Mathematics**  
**Department of Mathematics**  
**University of Kentucky**  
**859-257-1258**

## Brothers, Sheila C

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**From:** Brown, Russell  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 13, 2016 2:24 PM  
**To:** McCormick, Katherine  
**Cc:** Royster, David C; Brothers, Sheila C; Bosch, Anna  
**Subject:** Re: Petition to modify due date for midterm grades

Dear Professor McCormick,

Let me introduce myself as the chair of mathematics. I am writing for two reasons. 1. To add my endorsement to the request to alter the deadline for submitting midterm grades in future semesters. 2. To also ask if we could find a way to offer an extension of the deadline for this semester. We request that the deadline move from Friday 21 October to Monday 24 October at midnight.

The Math Department gives over 3000 exams during the week before the deadline for midterm grades. It appears that almost 300 of these are scheduled through the Disability Resource Center. Additional exams are given at various alternate times to accommodate students who have conflicts. Our faculty do a remarkable job and are able to get most of these exams graded and recorded in time to submit midterm grades by midnight on Friday. However, this is not an easy task. There are a number of students taking exams late on Friday and it is difficult to prepare a meaningful grade for them by midnight Friday.

It appears to me that this Friday deadline is unnecessary. I can't imagine that advisers are at work on Saturday morning to contact students who are struggling.

The Senate rule mandates that midterm grades are due at the end of the ninth week of the semester.

The Friday deadline appears to be an arbitrary interpretation of the Senate rule--if the first week starts on a Wednesday, I find it hard to understand why the 9th week has to end on a Friday. I also note that the Friday deadline falls during the sabbath for our jewish colleagues.

I regret that this appeal is arriving on your door at the last minute. I raised this with our Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs in 15 September. It has taken us a while to realize that you might be the right place to direct this request. Last year Ben Withers helped us with this, but he has gone and his office is being reorganized.

I very much appreciate your attention to this matter. Providing accurate midterm grades to our students is a small, but important part of our efforts to retain students. I also think it is extremely important to support faculty who insist on providing accurate grades when it would be much easier to base the midterm grades on the one exam we gave in late September.

Russell Brown