CAL STATE LA
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES

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To: Veena Prabhu, Academic Senate Chair

From: Paul Nerenberg, Educational Policy Committee Chair

Copies: R. Roquemore, M. Hawley, C. Pugh, K. Bezdecny, C. Haras

Subject: Proposed Changes to Class Syllabus Policy in Chapter 5 of the *Faculty Handbook*
(EPC 16-15/AIRS 18-01)

During AY2017-18 and Fall 2018, the Academic Information Resources Subcommittee (AIRS) reviewed the existing Class Syllabus policy with a particular focus on its appropriateness in light of the increasing number of hybrid and fully online courses at Cal State LA. AIRS approved its proposed changes toward the end of Fall 2018, and EPC began reviewing the proposed policy changes shortly thereafter.

Much of EPC's discussion centered on determining to what extent "best practices" should be formalized – and therefore made mandatory – via this policy vs. having them be propagated through other means (e.g., CETL workshops). The committee also wanted to ensure that the proposed changes to the syllabus policy would be useful to both students and faculty, while not unduly burdening the latter. After further discussion and modification, EPC approved the proposed policy changes on February 27, 2019.

To borrow (heavily) from the AIRS chair's memo to EPC, these changes are recommended for the following reasons:

- With an increase in hybrid and fully online courses, the revised policy addresses necessary syllabus inclusions to support these instructional modes;
- With the increased use of the campus LMS (learning management system), the revised policy recommendations become instructional-mode agnostic, as many of our face-to-face classes are also utilizing technology (e.g., clickers), the campus LMS, and electronic means of communication outside of their physical classrooms; and
- The need for an accessible syllabus for ADA compliance, which while included in the original policy, should be stated more inclusively to better align with the Accessible Instructional Materials policy and with the work of the Academic Technology Initiative in addressing accessible technology issues on campus (inclusive of information resources).

In addition, these changes aim to highlight and make clear the central importance of required course materials (including technology requirements), course policies and procedure, and the grading system and mechanism(s) of evaluation used in the course.

The following is a guide to the various changes proposed for this section of the Handbook:

Lines 6-8:   Specifically states that the information provided to students will be presented in a syllabus by the second class meeting. To meet the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) compliance, and to align with the existing Accessible Instructional Materials policy of the Cal State LA Faculty Handbook (Senate: 10/14/14; President: 10/22/14), all syllabi need to be provided in an accessible electronic format rather than waiting for such a request from an OSD student. This also ensures that an accessible version of the syllabus is available to all students by the second meeting, in case there are any notification delays from OSD, and so that students have access to an electronic copy of the syllabus throughout the term and are not dependent on a single hard copy given to them at the beginning of the term.

Lines 9-11:   Removed because this verbiage is now redundant with the changes made to lines 6-8.

Lines 16-18:   The mode of instruction reinforces for students that the section they registered for will be meeting using a specific mode of instruction. This is especially important for classes with multiple sections that may be using different modes of instruction depending on the section.

Lines 23-26:   Removed because this verbiage is now distributed into several sections that follow.

Lines 27-28:   Makes "required course materials" its own section and ensures that students are informed if the course requires any additional technology, software, or related tools. If there are available support resources, such as a helpdesk contact or online documentation, these should also be explicit in the syllabus so that students have timely notification of any additional technology they may need to purchase and to quickly address any access/usability issues early in the term.

Lines 29-34:   Makes "course policies and procedures" its own section and ensures that students are informed about the course attendance policy (which must be in compliance with the existing "Missed Class Time and Makeup Policy" in the Faculty Handbook). This section also recommends that instructors set out their expectations for in-class and online discussions, course communication preferences, etc. Such items are especially important for hybrid and online courses, but also face-to-face courses.

Lines 35-42:   Removed previous verbiage and replaced with more detailed and explicit verbiage stating that syllabi should include: the basis for evaluation in the course, the grading scale used for the course, and the relation of the evaluated work to the final course grade.

Line 43:   Added "if applicable" because not all courses have a final exam.

1   **The Class Syllabus**

2   (Senate: 2/18/97, 7/17/01, 5/26/09; President: 4/22/97; 10/15/01, 6/16/09; Editorial Amendment:
3   8/01)

4   Each instructor shall provide information at the first class session as to the general requirements
5   and goals of the course, and the general criteria upon which students will be evaluated in that
6   course. Such information A SYLLABUS must be made available in the form of an
7   ACCESSIBLE electronic FORMAT or hardcopy version of the syllabus AND SHARED no later
8   than the second meeting. A copy of the syllabus shall be available for review in the
9   department/division/school office. An instructor must provide his or her syllabus in an
10   accessible format in keeping with the CSU Accessible Technology Initiative with proper
11   notification from the Office of Students with Disabilities. The syllabus shall include but not be
12   limited to the following:

13   1. Contact information for the instructor: campus office hours and location, campus
14   telephone extension, and campus e-mail address.

15   2. General course description including course prerequisites, if any.

16   3. THE MODE OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE COURSE, AS DEFINED BY THE
17   FACULTY HANDBOOK (E.G., HYBRID, FULLY ONLINE, FACE TO
18   FACE).

19   4. Student learning outcomes for the course.

20   5. For all general education courses, the area of the general education program that
21   the course fulfills.

22   6. Topical outline of the course.

23   Requirements - policies and procedures (for example, attendance, assignments,
24   readings) and basis for evaluation (written work, examinations or quizzes, term
25   papers, portfolios, projects, laboratory or field work assignments, and other items
26   as appropriate).

27   7. REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS, INCLUDING MINIMUM COURSE
28   TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND THEIR SUPPORT RESOURCES.

29   8. COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, INCLUDING ANY POLICY ON
30   CLASS ATTENDANCE. [PLEASE REFER TO THE "MISSED CLASS TIME
31   AND MAKEUP POLICY" IN THE FACULTY HANDBOOK.] OTHER ITEMS
32   MAY INCLUDE INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS FOR IN-CLASS AND
33   ONLINE DISCUSSIONS, COURSE COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES,
34   AND THE LIKE.

35   9. <u>Grading system and its relation to achievement of the requirements stated above.</u>
36   BASIS FOR EVALUATION IN THE COURSE (INCLUDING WRITTEN
37   WORK, EXAMINATIONS OR QUIZZES, TERM PAPERS, PORTFOLIOS,
38   PROJECTS, LABORATORY OR FIELD WORK ASSIGNMENTS, AND
39   OTHER ITEMS AS APPROPRIATE), A CLEARLY ARTICULATED COURSE
40   GRADING SCALE (E.G., GREATER THAN 90% EQUALS AN A OR
41   SIMILAR DESCRIPTIVE CRITERIA), AND RELATION OF EVALUATED
42   WORK TO FINAL COURSE GRADE.

43   10. Date and time of final examination IF APPLICABLE.

44   11. The following ADA statement verbatim: "Reasonable accommodation will be
45   provided to any student who is registered with the Office of Students with
46   Disabilities and requests needed accommodation."

47   12. An academic honesty statement that includes reference to the University policy.