

1 Resolution on Continuity and Compassion Amid Disruption by 2 COVID-19: Student Assessment for Spring 2020

3 WHEREAS on March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in
4 California as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. On March 11, the World Health Organization
5 declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic; and

6 WHEREAS on March 11, 2020, the University announced plans to put strong social distancing
7 measures into place by discontinuing face-to-face instruction and replace it with 'virtual
8 instruction' starting on April 6. These plans allowed for a slow transition to voluntary
9 virtualization of teaching followed by Spring Break and then an additional week of canceled
10 classes to allow faculty a week to transition to mandatory virtual instruction; and

11 WHEREAS on March 12, the Ventura County Public Health Officer declared COVID-19 to be a
12 local health emergency. On March 13, the pandemic led President Trump to declare a national
13 state of emergency.¹ On March 15, the governor of California directed that populations
14 especially vulnerable to COVID-19 self-isolate at home. At the same time, to accelerate social
15 distancing in California, primary and secondary schools were closing their campuses and
16 moving instruction online; and

17 WHEREAS on March 15, the University announced an acceleration of social distancing plans,
18 canceling classes before Spring Break to allow faculty a week to transition to mandatory virtual
19 instruction, thereby starting mandatory virtual instruction a week earlier on March 30. The
20 Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Academic Affairs intensified efforts to identify
21 and meet student needs created by the emergency. For example, Student Affairs arranged to
22 feed and protect 250+ students who elected to remain living in campus housing. And the John
23 Spoor Broome Library, while searching for ways to provide needy students with internet access,
24 used its loaning infrastructure to provide students with laptops, sending them through the US
25 mail if necessary; and

26 WHEREAS on March 17, the Ventura County Public Health Officer issued the first shelter in
27 place² order for the county which ordered non-essential businesses to close and all citizens to
28 self-isolate at home. On March 31, this order was updated³ to align with a March 19 state-wide

29 ¹ Text of the White House declaration of national emergency
30 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-declaring-national-emergency-concerning-novel-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak/>.

31 ² Text of the Ventura County Stay Safe Stay Home order can be found online at
32 https://vcportal.ventura.org/CEO/VCNC/2020-03-17_Ventura_County_Public_Health_Order.pdf.

33 ³ Text of the Ventura County Stay At Home order
34 <https://s30623.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/StayWellAtHomeOrder.pdf>.

36 stay at home order from the governor⁴. On March 22, President Trump declared the
37 pandemic to be a major disaster for the state of California. On March 30, the county's Stay Well
38 Stay Home order was extended⁵; and

39 WHEREAS this timeline shows the rapid development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid
40 University response to the public health emergency, and the immense pressure put on all
41 members of the University community, it puts unique and poorly understood pressures on the
42 institution's instructional mission; and

43 WHEREAS many students matriculated to CI because the institution values face-to-face
44 learning, hands-on instruction, and small class sizes; and

45 WHEREAS students may now find themselves in environments that are not conducive to
46 college-level learning, some not having easy access to the internet, others having to share home
47 computers and internet access with siblings or children who are learning from home and
48 parents who are working from home, and some taking on responsibilities as caregivers for
49 family who are sick or especially susceptible to COVID-19; and

50 WHEREAS many students are suffering direct and indirect economic consequences from the
51 closure of non-essential businesses, such as being furloughed from employment or having
52 providers who are losing or have lost income; and

53 WHEREAS the emergency conditions surrounding the pandemic create social and
54 psychological stress on students and instructional faculty that add to the difficulty of learning at
55 a college-level; and

56 WHEREAS the US Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education issued
57 guidance for interruptions of study related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 5 (and revised
58 on March 20) that allows courses to convert to modalities that support 'distance education'
59 without going through normal approval processes, addresses accommodations for students
60 whose education was interrupted by the pandemic (e.g., study abroad), allows the use of
61 COVID-19 in Satisfactory Academic Progress appeals, and describes limitations on adjustments
62 that affect a student's enrollment status; and

63 WHEREAS the Chancellor's Office provided guidance⁶ on ways to create flexibility in campus
64 grading systems within the constraints of the Title 5 Administrative Code of California and CSU

65 ⁴ Text of the California state-wise stay at home order

66 <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.19.20-attested-EO-N-33-20-COVID-19-HEALTH-ORDER.pdf>.

68 ⁵ Text of the revised Ventura County Stay Home Stay Well order

69 https://vcportal.ventura.org/covid19/docs/March_31_2020_Order.pdf.

70 ⁶ See the March 25 document "California State University Grading Policy Considerations Response to
71 COVID-19 Disruptions".

72 Executive Orders and coded memoranda, and that guidance described student populations that
73 may be affected by changes to grading systems (*e.g.*, graduate and professional students,
74 credential students, student veterans, international students, DASS students, students on
75 academic probation or in danger of not meeting the 'Pace' standard); and

76 WHEREAS some programs require courses taken in sequence, making the satisfactory
77 completion of one course a prerequisite of another, and some programs expect students to gain
78 certain content and conceptual knowledge from pre-requisite courses; and

79 WHEREAS academic programs and departments, represented by the Chair, are in the best
80 position to decide which courses that are required in their major should always be taken for a
81 letter grade and not be allowed to count toward their major if taken for Credit/No Credit; and

82 WHEREAS the faculty in academic programs and departments, represented by the Chair, is in
83 the best position to communicate to their major students and prospective major students any
84 restrictions to adjusting the grading systems for their required courses taken in Spring 2020; and

85 WHEREAS it is critically important that all efforts are made to provide students, faculty,
86 and staff timely, full, and accurate information with regards to the consequences of a
87 student modifying a course's grading option; and

88 WHEREAS the members of the Academic Senate agree that now is a time that we make every
89 effort to treat one another, our students, and all our CI colleagues with compassion as we all
90 work to preserve our academic and professional standards so the University and its students are
91 positioned to continue their work in Fall 2020.

92 BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that at the end of the Spring 2020 semester all faculty will
93 submit letter grades for each student in all courses that use the letter grade system of
94 grading, and that students may opt to change their letter grade to a grade of Credit/No
95 Credit according to the following rule:

- 96 • For undergraduate students, grades of C- and better are considered Credit, and all
97 lower grades (D+ and below) are Non Credit. Whether or not a grade of Credit
98 satisfies existing major requirements will be determined by each department or
99 program. (See below.)
- 100 • For graduate and professional studies students, the rule used to assign a grade of
101 Credit and a grade of No Credit will vary between programs.

102 Students shall be given the ability to change their grading system from graded to
103 Credit/No Credit in CI Records starting on April 21 and ending on May 15. Grade rosters
104 will be available for faculty to submit semester grades on or before May 22 and will be due
105 on May 29. If after May 29 a student feels they made an error in their choice of grading
106 system, they may have until June 9 to make a written petition to the Registrar to have their
107 grading system changed. The procedure for the appeal will be created by the Registrar's

108 office, approved by the Executive Committee of Academic Senate, posted on the Registrar's
109 'Policies & Procedures' web page, advertised through the COVID-19 FAQ web page for
110 students, and broadcast using social media channels that serve students. Petitions to
111 change from letter grade to Credit/No Credit shall be granted without review.

112 BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that all instructional faculty teaching a course that uses the letter
113 grading system will maintain and retain gradebook information that will allow them to
114 assign a letter grade to each of their students who chose the Credit/No Credit grading
115 option in their courses. This information shall be in a form that the Chair can access if a
116 student petitions to change their grading option after May 29.

117 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any course that receives a grade of Credit in the Spring
118 2020 semester will not count toward any limit on the number of courses a student may take
119 for a grade of Credit in the University's General Education requirements, major
120 requirements, or other requirements for successful graduation.

121 BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that students can withdraw from any course as late as May 29th,
122 2020, and no faculty or Chair signature will be required for withdrawing from a Spring 2020
123 course. The Registrar shall not require additional outside documentation to support a
124 student's reason for withdrawal (such as doctor notes, employer notes, *etc.*) and may accept
125 electronic requests of withdrawal; and

126 BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Chair of each academic program or department will list those
127 courses required in their undergraduate major(s) that SHALL NOT satisfy a major requirement
128 if taken for Credit/ No Credit. Chairs shall submit that list by email to their Dean, the Provost,
129 and the Chair of the Academic Senate⁷ by the end of business day on April 20. On April 21, the
130 Chair of the Academic Senate will disseminate the entire list to Academic Advising and
131 Enrollment Services. The program or department Chair will also work with their faculty to
132 disseminate guidance to students on choosing the grading system for their major courses
133 during Spring 2020. If no list is submitted by a Chair by the April 20 deadline, then all required
134 courses in the major will satisfy major requirements if taken Credit/No Credit and earning
135 Credit; and

136 BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that directors of other offices that advocate for students as related
137 to grades during Spring 2020 (*e.g.*, Veterans Affairs Program, International Programs,
138 Academic Advising for students on academic probation, DASS) shall proactively give
139 students guidance on their choice of grading system.

140 If any resolution or part of a resolution in this document conflicts with or contradicts
141 guidance on other University policies or procedures, these resolutions shall prevail without

142 ⁷ Lists should be submitted to the Chair of Academic Senate by emailing them to senate@csuci.edu.

143 invalidating any other portion of the University policy or procedure. If any part of a
144 resolution statement in this document conflicts with existing CSU policy, executive order, or
145 coded memoranda, or if any resolution in this document conflicts with local, state, or
146 federal statute, or the Collective Bargaining Agreement, that part of a resolution statement
147 will be declared invalid without harming any other resolution statement in this document.