

The American University in Cairo (AUC)
Emergency Provost's Council November 24, 2020
ZOOM Meeting

Present:

Ehab Abdel-Rahman	Provost
Zeinab Amin	AP-AA
John Swanson	Special Adviser to the Provost
Ghada Elshimi	Dean, Undergraduate Studies
Hassan El-Fawal	Dean, SSE
James Ketterer	Dean, SCE
Daniel Ortiz	Dean, LLT
Nabil Fahmy	Dean, GAPP
Sherif Kamel	Dean, Business
Zeinab Taha	Interim Dean, HUSS
Aziza Ellozy	AP-TLT
Alaa-Eldin Adris	AP-RIC
Adham Ramadan	Dean, Graduate Studies
George Marquis	Dean of Students
Rachel Awad	Senior Director, Academic Affairs Projects
Sherine Mahfouz	Manager of Academic Communication
Randa Kamel	Associate Provost for Academic Student Services
Ahmed Tolba	Associate Professor
Hend Elziki	Executive Assistant, Office of the Provost
Hanadi Salem	Chair of the Senate
Rasha Mahmoud	Registrar

1. Presentation of the Senate Resolution on P/F

Recommendations of The Executive Committee of the Senate in Response to Students' Concerns FALL 2020 . University Senate is submitting for the consideration of the Provost's Council the following recommendations:

Course Delivery Infrastructure:

1. Connectivity. Explore effective ways to provide students and faculty with high-quality internet connection, if applicable.
2. Hybrid Attendance. Provide each department (depending on course offerings) with access to well-equipped classrooms for interactive online learning to be assigned by individual departments internally on the basis of their instructional needs. Ideally, these equipped classrooms should be organized to respect requirements of social distancing, and have a camera, a speaker with a screen to project the session to those who are accessing remotely. Large touch screens are strongly recommended. This will not only improve the quality education, but importantly will alleviate the pressure on students, and respond conclusively and fairly to their concerns.
3. Devices & Content. Provide faculty with up-to-date electronic teaching devices and material (e.g. subscription to academic databases for ready, secure exams, e.g. McGraw

Hill), including an expansion of storage (space and time) on Zoom, Blackboard, and others platforms.

Course Registration Recommendations:

1. Capacity. Max. 20 students per class for online courses for undergraduates, and a similar cap of 10 students for graduate courses.
2. Reduced Course Load for Students: to reduce the number of online courses that a student can register for.
3. Hybrid Attendance. Combine F2F and online teaching for a given course. In hybrid attendance, students enrolled in a particular class can be split into two groups. Some students will attend the class physically in an equipped classroom (see recommendation a, b. above), while respecting social distancing requirements (in a similar way to the Labs), and the other group will join the classroom remotely. The Face-to-face students' attendance should be rotational.
4. Interactivity: All remote participants must be "ON" their cams upon the instructor's request. This requirement is to be communicated to students at the beginning of the semester.

Communication with Students:

1. Circulate by early January 2021 a comprehensive and student-friendly document or manual that explains to the students what they should expect in an online semester.
2. Hold a kick-off departmental orientation meeting for new and continuing students early Spring 2021 to articulate and explain expectations for the semester.

Incentives and Rewards for Faculty:

Recognize and reward extraordinary efforts by faculty for online course preparation. At the same time, department chairs, and deans should be more proactive in identifying and swiftly remedying any shortcomings, by all means available to them in accordance with policies and procedures of the AUC faculty handbook including thorough annual reviews, and third year reviews, individual problematic cases of course mismanagement, and lack of responsiveness to legitimate students' concerns. Students should also be guided to share their concerns, worries and problems with appropriate channels first: their professors, chairs of relevant departments, then their deans. Taking their complaints directly to higher administrative levels contributes to not addressing their problems in a timely manner.

Other Quality Education Recommendations:

1. Adapting existing policies and practices to provide assistance to students with documented special needs to the needs of an online and hybrid attendance context.
2. Encourage departments to engage in a process of on-going peer review to ensure that adjustment of content to the needs of remote on-line and hybrid instruction does not negatively impact accreditation requirements, or reduce rigor and quality.

Grading System Fall 2020 Recommendation:

Recommend the adoption of an optional one course P/F grade with the following conditions:

- Selection is made prior to the last day of classes;
- The optional one course P/F grade is not available to any student who has academic integrity case filed in the semester under consideration;
- Maximum course load for Spring 2021 is 15 credits hours for undergraduate students and 6 credits hours for graduate students.

This option is recommended strictly for Fall 2020, which doesn't apply to the future online, partial online or face-to-face instruction modalities.

2. Internal PC Discussion

A motion to reject the Senate's resolution regarding the Pass\Fail for the following reasons:

Motion:

After consulting with Department Chairs and Associate Deans, and after discussion with the Senate Chair, the Provost's Council unanimously rejects the portion of the Senate's resolution 810, pertaining to Pass/Fail for Fall 2020 for the following reasons:

- Academic standing was put on hold for Spring 2020 due to the implementation of P/F, and we cannot keep this on hold for a full academic year.
- Not changing the grading system in the middle of the semester would ensure safeguarding of the integrity of AUC academic degrees and the institution's reputation.
- Some students have already dropped courses or withdrawn from the semester based on the current grading policies, and changing such policies at this point would be unfair to those students; the drop deadline was extended as a means of alleviating student stress.
- Some students have already submitted requests to apply the repeat policy, and they are now not able to opt for Pass/Fail.
- Input from chairs' indicates that a number of faculty members would have designed their syllabi differently if P/F had been a part of this semester's grading scheme from the start of the semester.
- Changing our grading scheme during Spring 2020 was justified due to the sudden change in circumstances. Making a change now to our announced Fall 2020 grading system would have a negative effect on accreditation.
- Incoming study abroad students have already reported to their home institutions that Fall 2020 will follow standard grading; some partner institutions verified AUC's grading semester this Fall before approving sending their students.

With regard to the other items in the Senate Resolution, the PC is currently studying these and their impact on the future of academics at AUC. Additionally, the Provost will be also asking the Academic Affairs Committee of the Senate to consider these issues and to report back to the PC on their findings. A letter will be sent to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Senate soon.

Motion unanimously approved.