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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
LEROY WESTERLING, CHAIR, GRADUATE COUNCIL
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MAY 26, 2020

TO: GRADUATE GROUP CHAIRS

FROM: LEROY WESTERLING, CHAIR, GRADUATE COUNCIL

Handwritten signature of Leroy Westerling in blue ink.

MARJORIE S. ZATZ, VICE PROVOST & GRADUATE DEAN

Handwritten signature of Marjorie S. Zatz in blue ink.

CHRISTOPHER KELLO, ASSOCIATE DEAN AND INCOMING ACTING GRADUATE DEAN

RE: ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS DURING COVID-19 EMERGENCY

Handwritten signature of Christopher Kello in blue ink.

As the tumultuous Spring 2020 Semester draws to a close, the Graduate Council and Graduate Division thank the Graduate Group Chairs for their ongoing efforts to support graduate students through what must be the most challenging time ever for many. In hopes of assisting your efforts, we wish to summarize the policies that have been put in place to accommodate graduate students with their various and pressing needs, with regards to program requirements.

S/U Grading Policy—students are allowed to request S/U grading option through the third week after the final day of instruction. This policy applies throughout the emergency period, and one semester after the campus emergency declaration is rescinded. Graduate Groups are encouraged to accept the “S” grade in lieu of letter grades that are normally required for courses specified in their P&Ps. ***If you haven’t already, please indicate whether your graduate group plans to accept the “S” grade on the “Changes in Graduate Program Requirements during Emergency plus One Semester” Google Sheet***, which is available at

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QrIbPou8yH-i1dMDrNo2kOiXUZ-w5dJJYECNwEVcCf4/edit#gid=0>

Emergency Educational Continuity Policy—under this policy, graduate groups are automatically approved to relax their program requirements to the minimum requirements stated in the Campus’ Graduate P&P Handbook. The intent is to create maximum flexibility for graduate groups to address their and their students’ unique needs, with minimum administrative burden. The Graduate Council only asks that the Graduate Chairs please fill out the aforementioned Google Sheet to document what changes, if any, are in place during this Emergency period, and in Fall 2020. It may be helpful to review the Google Sheet as your group considers changes to the program requirements, and reference changes that some graduate groups have already recorded (thank you!). **Please kindly record the program changes by June 15, 2020.**

There have been concerns expressed by some graduate students regarding a lack of communication directed particularly towards their specific needs, as opposed to students in general. The Graduate Division and Graduate Council have been at pains to communicate our policies regularly during the emergency period, and

the Graduate Division has compiled [COVID-related resources](#) for graduate students on their website. However, we think graduate students would be especially receptive to messaging from their graduate group chairs and their advisors. We strongly encourage you to reinforce our messaging with information tailored to the needs of the graduate students in your programs.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us (lwesterling@ucmerced.edu, mzatz@ucmerced.edu; ckello@ucmerced.edu), with a copy to the GC Analyst Naoko Kada, at nkada@ucmerced.edu.

CC: Graduate Council
Graduate Division
Senate Office