

Council on Academic Affairs
Minutes
March 26, 2020

The March 26, 2020 meeting of the Council on Academic Affairs was held at 2:00 p.m. in D2L Collaborate.

Members Present: Mr. Aydt, Dr. Gronnvoll, Dr. Hung, Dr. Janssen Danyi, Dr. Padmaraju, Dr. Ruholl, Dr. Throneburg, Dr. Wilkinson

Members Absent: Ms. Khamisani, Dr. Rosenstein

Staff Present: Ms. Hutchison, Provost Jay Gatrell, Mr. Jason Hood

Guests Present: Dr. Chris Mitchell (CLAS), Dr. Douglas Bower (COE), Dr. Sace Elder (HIS), Dr. James Howley (SEL), Mr. Nicholas Shaw (THA), Ms. Rose Myers-(HSCL) , Ms. Sam Laingen, Ms. Kathy Schmitz, Dr. Richard England (Honors), Dr. Ozlem Ersin (CHHS), Mr. Brad Bennington (Registrar), Ms. Kathy Schmitz (BUS), Ms. Julie Viertel (TLF), Ms. Julie Lockett, Director of Learning Innovation

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gronnvoll at 2:00 p.m.

I. Approval of the March 12, 2020 CAA Meeting Minutes.

Ruholl moved and Padmaraju seconded the motion to approve the minutes as written.

II. Communications:

a. College Curriculum Committee Minutes:

None

Executive Actions:

1. March 10, 2020 memorandum from Dean Ersin, CHHS, requesting executive action to remove the course restrictions from HSL 4775.
2. March 10, 2020 memorandum from Interim Associate Dean Mitchell, CLAS, requesting executive action to change the name of EIU 4161G from "Theatre as Soapbox" to "Social Justice and the Stage: Theatre from Aristophanes' Lysistrata to Miranda's Hamilton" (The short title will be "Social Justice and the Stage.").

Waiver reports:

None

b. Grade Appeals:

None

c. Committee Reports:

None

III. Items to be Added to the Agenda:

None

Items to be Acted Upon:

20-035, BIO 3390: General Microbiology, Honors (new course) Ruholl moved and Padmaraju seconded to open the discussion of the proposal. Dr. Hung presented the proposal. The proposal was **approved** unanimously with a revision to: effective date on cover sheet to SP2021.

20-036, THA 3338: Topics in Musical Theatre Performance (new course) Danyi Janssen moved and Ruholl seconded to open the discussion of the proposal. Mr. Shaw presented the proposal. The proposal was **approved** unanimously with revisions to: effective date on cover sheet to SP2021, reformat numbering; part I justification of pre-requisites and co-requisites; model syllabus add more measurable terms.

20-037, Theater Arts BA (revised program): Padmaraju moved and Wilkinson seconded to open the discussion of the proposal. Mr. Shaw presented the proposal. The proposal was **approved** unanimously with revisions to: effective date needed and change THA 2004 to THA 2008; add rationale for revisions.

20-038, ENG 1000: Fundamentals of College Composition (revised course): Gronnvoll tabled item – no representation to present the proposal.

20-039, BA in General Studies (revised program): Padmaraju moved and Hung seconded to open the discussion of the proposal. Dr. Howley presented the proposal. The proposal was **approved** unanimously with a revision to: remove COE 20-01 from proposal page

IV. Discussion Items:

1. EIU student pass/fail petition. <https://www.change.org/p/eastern-illinois-university-ensure-every-eiu-student-is-guaranteed-passing-credits-for-the-spring-2020-semester>
Provost Gatrell presented Student Relief in Response to COVID-19 Crisis (memo attached) to the CAA committee requesting a motion of their support. This is not a policy change and is intended to provide emergency relief for students. Provost Gatrell along with Mr. Bennington answered questions of the group. The committee **unanimously supported** the memo.
2. Gronnvoll requested the following memo from the Provost be included in today's minutes:

March 24, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Implications for Online & Hybrid Delivery Approvals

In light of the unprecedented and on-going events of Spring 2020, the decision to move face to face courses from campus to remote delivery should not be seen as a precedent relative to

required modality approvals for individual courses or programs. This position is also reflected in the March 2020 MOU between the University and our UPI partners.

V. Other:

None

VI. Ongoing:

None

VII. Meeting Adjournment:

Ruholl moved and Ayt seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Hutchison, Academic Affairs



March 26, 2020

To: M. Gronnvoll, CAA Chair
C. Janssen Danyi, CAA Vice Chair

From: J. Gatrell, Provost

CC: Deans

RE: Student Relief in Response to COVID-19 Crisis

Over the past several days, dozens of universities and colleges have announced significant grading modifications to support learners who are experiencing the unprecedented and abrupt transition from the physical classroom to remote learning. Indeed, students, as well as the faculty, are now being required to learn with new software, address the issue of uneven internet accessibility, and endeavoring to promote learning in radically different learning environments away from campus. In concert, these challenges have the potential to impact student success. For that reason, many colleges and universities have implemented a simple Pass/Fail framework (akin to EIU's CR/NC).¹ This form of relief often permits students to elect a modified grading scheme.² Beyond grading modifications, campus administrators have also given guidance on a range of processes, such as academic standing, scholarship renewals, and so on, to provide clarity and in an effort to hold students harmless, inasmuch as that is reasonably possible.

The purpose of this memorandum is to request feedback on and support for a university action that is intended to provide students with as many options as possible to be successful, continue their progress to degree, and obtain their academic goals. While this language responds to the unique situation facing undergraduate students, Dean Hendrickson is working with the Council for Graduate Studies (CGS) to provide guidance to graduate students, faculty, and programs.³

Insofar as EIU has an existing CR/NC grade type which includes an opportunity for students to elect and designate courses as CR/NC, the language below is fully consistent with the intent of the catalog. In order to implement administrative relief, I am requesting, after consulting the deans, support from the Council on Academic Affairs for: 1.) a one-time variance from the existing CR/NC policy relative to timing of a student request, 2.) waiving the maximum CR/NC grades permitted as a result of any SP20 enrollments, 3.) waiving the ordinary CR/NC course exclusions, and 4.) waiving the class standing requirement. With

¹ According to former chair of Sociology & Anthropology, Dr. C. Eckert, an EIU precedent exists for extraordinary administrative relief, specifically grade modification. The precedent was the Blair fire in 2004.

² Some campuses appear to have adopted the approach across the board; but students most often elect a modified grade type.

³ The nature of graduate education and the function of the CR/NC framework is distinct from the undergraduate catalog. Indeed, graduate students cannot elect the CR/NC grade type and grade type for all graduate coursework is determined by faculty.

respect to timing, I earnestly believe that any relief plan needs to be announced as soon as reasonably possibly prior to the return of students and in advance of the official withdrawal date of April 3, 2020.

Additionally, as you will see, the proposed relief would be post-hoc. The post-hoc approach will encourage students to remain engaged in their coursework, perhaps reduce withdrawals, promote sustained academic rigor, and honor the significant effort and on-going planning of EIU faculty. Additionally, the post-hoc approach will prevent the decision to elect for a grade modification (CR/NC) from being driven by a student's fear of remote learning, overall anxiety, and/or the confusion associated with the unknown. Ultimately, I am optimistic about the transition from classroom to online. Indeed, I am confident that our students will be successful and continue to work hard. Likewise, I am confident that our faculty are committed to the success of our students—and more importantly recognize and will account for the challenges facing our entire community as a result of COVID-19. For that reason, my expectation is that the more conservative post hoc approach, which includes a required advisor consultation, will result in a more limited number of students electing the CR/NC option and a significant percentage of students moving forward with the traditional grading format.

The proposed student relief action is outlined below:

To provide relief to undergraduate students as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and associated course disruptions, students may request the Registrar, as the Provost's designee, to change grade type in self-selected courses. Specifically, students may petition to change course grade types, based on enrollments as of Monday March 9, 2020, from a grade of "C or B" to "CR". Individuals with a "D" or "F" can request a "NC". Additionally, the University has developed a transcript notation for Spring 2020 to alert readers that "Due to the COVID-19 crisis, some students chose a CR/NC grade option in Spring 2020 only." When and where the CR may complicate graduation or program requirements, the Registrar will facilitate progress towards degree, registration, and/or certify graduation. Most importantly though, students are encouraged to consider the broader implications of the "CR" grade should they intend to transfer courses in the future or be required to earn a minimum course grade in a graduate or professional school prerequisite. Further, the "CR" may have implications for a student's academic standing at EIU and a petition to change grade type may not, in some situations, be in a student's best interest. For that reason, students need to remain engaged in all of their classes, focus on successful completion, and strive for highest levels of academic achievement. At the close of the semester, students may petition the Registrar beginning May 13, 2020 through August 1, 2020 and all students are required to discuss this option with their academic advisor prior to submitting a request.

In addition to the suggested action above, the Provost will also be reviewing all Spring 2020 "Academic Dismissals" to ensure that the relative performance of individual students may not have been disproportionately harmed by the transition from the physical classroom to online or remote learning. Likewise, Financial Aid and Enrollment Management will be instructed that merit-based scholarships cannot be negatively impacted as a result of a student selecting the CR/NC option.

Thank you for this consideration. Please know, I recognize that this request is unusual. Yet, extraordinary action addresses the difficult and historic circumstances facing our students, faculty, and campus in a responsible manner that provides students with options in an uncertain environment.