

R F2020.09

**A Resolution Advocating for Amendments to Academic Policy for the Fall 2020 Semester
to Relieve Students of Excess Academic Anxiety**

*A bill for the consideration of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student
Government*

October 28, 2020

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Whereas, the mission of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government (hereafter LSA SG) is to “actively seek the voices of LSA students and advocate their interests to improve academic and non-academic life”¹; and,

Whereas, the purpose of the Academic Affairs Committee (hereafter AAC) shall be to “investigate issues concerning the academic quality of life for students of the College, research, formulate and evaluate proposals pertaining to College policies and practices, and recommend, on behalf of students, the adoption of resolutions and specific courses of actions concerning academic affairs.”²; and,

Whereas, the spread of COVID-19 across the globe has affected many operations of the university, including the rapid revisions to courses to allow for online instruction beginning in March of 2020; and,

Whereas, to account for the adjustment to online courses as well as for adjusting to life in a pandemic, the Office of the Registrar issued a new grading scale for the Winter 2020 semester. This grading scale created a system in which the default option showed courses being Pass or No Record COVID (hereafter NRC), with the ability to reveal certain grades for courses³; and,

¹ The Constitution of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government. Article II

² LSA Student Government Bylaws, 9.01.00

³ <https://ro.umich.edu/records-registration/covid-19-winter-2020-grading/undergraduate>

Whereas, in the Fall 2020 semester, the grading structure imputed by the Office of the Registrar incorporated utilizing NRC for non-passing grades, however any grade considered passing would be revealed unless the student elected the course to be taken Pass/Fail³; and,

Whereas, additional alterations to the university calendar were included for the Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 semesters, such as the removal of Fall Break in Fall 2020 as well as the removal of Spring Break in Winter 2021⁴; and,

Whereas, although previous revisions to the grading structure were conducted to account for adjustments made in Winter 2020, there have been numerous adjustments throughout Fall 2020 that create a demand for more lenient grading structures; and,

Whereas, on Tuesday, September 8th, the Graduate Employees Organization authorized a strike in protest of the University's response to the global pandemic⁵. These acts of protest suspended various operations in many courses throughout the first weeks of class; and,

Whereas, in addition to the Graduate Employees Organization Strike of 2020, similar protests by workers of the University of Michigan Dining halls⁶ as well as Residence Hall staff⁷ requesting better working conditions amongst the COVID-19 pandemic created additional adjustments to students during the Fall 2020 semester; and,

Whereas, on October 20th, Washtenaw County released a Stay In Place Order for University of Michigan Students. This stay at home order led to the emergency adjustments for courses originally taught in person to be moved online, as well as other disruptions to student academic life similar to the events in Winter 2020⁸; and,

⁴ https://ro.umich.edu/sites/default/files/2020-02/Cal_2020-2021_2.pdf

⁵ <https://www.geo3550.org/2020/09/08/geo-is-on-strike/>

⁶ <https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2020/09/university-of-michigan-graduate-students-residential-staff-march-in-solidarity-with-dining-workers.html>

⁷ <https://www.clickondetroit.com/all-about-ann-arbor/2020/09/10/university-of-michigan-residence-hall-staff-strike-demand-increase-in-coronavirus-protections/>

⁸ <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/18386/Order---Stay-in-place-Order---Final-Oct-20>

Whereas, the weeks leading to the upcoming 2020 Presidential Election have shown this election to be extremely contentious and chaotic, and no matter the outcome there is a strong likelihood of national unrest similar to the 2016 Presidential Election, in which the University felt it necessary to provide multiple resources for students⁹; and,

Whereas, a recent Central Student Government resolution was introduced and passed unanimously calling for academic revisions to the grading policies as well as other methods to help ease the anxieties students face in the midst of the pandemic¹⁰; and,

Whereas, in the Central Student Government resolution, as of November 4th, 147 University of Michigan student organizations and 3,081 University of Michigan students have expressed their endorsements of the ideas expressed in the resolution, showing that students are in support of the changes proposed¹¹.

Be it therefore resolved, LSA Student Government calls upon the University of Michigan to adopt the Winter 2020 COVID-19 grading policy for the Fall 2020 semester, in effect creating a policy in which the default option for students would be that classes are graded Pass/NRC, with the option to unmask grades for courses; and,

Be it further resolved, to account for breaks which allow for less stress while continuing to discourage travel, LSA Student Government also calls for the the University to create a week-long break from high-stakes assignments such as exams and projects for one week during the middle of the Winter 2021 semester; and,

Be it finally resolved, this resolution will be sent to relevant LSA faculty and administration, including but not limited to the Office of the Registrar, the Dean of LSA, Anne Curzan, and the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education, Kelly Maxwell.

⁹<https://president.umich.edu/news-communications/letters-to-the-community/2016-election-message/>

¹⁰<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TRixB9jdyij02L5EaUqTaJcY-ud6BaxUd8oYF2qfpbs/edit>