

MEMORANDUM

November 8, 2017

To: Tom Holyoke, Chair
Academic Senate

From: Dennis Nef 
Vice Provost

RE: Grades Due Deadlines

In 2016, the Academic Senate passed a resolution on grades due deadlines. The resolution asked that:

- *the academic calendar at the local level never set that(sic) final grade due dates for fall semester sooner than January 2nd;*
- *CSU Fresno academic calendar provide no fewer than eight working week-days, and, ideally, ten working week-days between the day after the last day of finals and the dates that grades are due;*
- *appropriate administrative bodies work with the Senate leadership and appropriate committees toward implementing these recommendations, including explaining any potential unanticipated negative impacts, particularly those on students, and working toward implementation solutions that will mitigate such problems while still making progress on implementation of this resolution's goals*

In response, a task force was convened to examine the issue and develop a proposed response.

Members of the task force included: (please check titles)

Daniel Bernard, Continuing and Global Education
Bryan Berrett, Center for Faculty Excellence
Katie Dyer, Chair, Academic Standards and Grading Subcommittee
Xuanning Fu, Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Robert Guinn, Technology Services
Malisa Lee, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
James Mulooly, Chair of Academic Policy and Planning Committee
Dennis Nef, Vice Provost
Kelly Russell, Director Financial Aid
Rudy Sanchez, Interim Associate Vice President Faculty Affairs
Laura Yager, Registrar

The task force identified constraints; the scope of the problem; issues from faculty, staff, and student points of view; and a proposed course of action. These are each addressed below.

Constraints

1. The CSU academic calendar requirements included a minimum of 170 working days in the academic year with at least 147 instructional days.
2. The academic calendar requires a grades due deadline on a working day (so there will always be a grades due deadline on the last day of the semester). A second campus final grades due date will be used by the Registrar's Office to initiate a process called End of Term, which is needed before other offices (i.e. Financial Aid, University Advising, Degree Advising, and Student Accounts) can begin their processes -this is the one we are addressing.
3. The campus has a long standing practice that graduation be held on the weekend before the Memorial Day weekend. The cabinet recently reinforced this practice.
4. State payroll rules do not allow for more than 45 days in a payroll period (cannot begin before August 16 for a 4-6-2 payroll method nor January 16 if on a 5-6-1 payroll method).
5. The campus has elected to observe President's Day in February (other campuses have 'moved' this holiday to the week between Christmas and New Year's Day).
6. For many years, the campus has scheduled two consultation days near the end of each semester. While these are work days, they are not instructional days.
7. CGE winter break and summer session periods must be considered in establishing grades due deadlines as they can impact timely preparation of student aid packages and grade documentation for students with employment/graduate school applications.
8. Financial aid for all students cannot be released to students until grades are submitted and the Registrar's Office completes the End of Term process.
9. For the spring term, Student Affairs and the Accounting office has, at most, 9 working days to get all processes complete before the first day of classes.

What is the scope of the problem? How many faculty are not submitting final grades in a timely fashion?

- For Fall 2016, 68.8% of grades were submitted by the original deadline of December 22nd. Meanwhile 95% submitted their grades by the extended due date of December 27th, resulting in 2,710 missing grades. On January 3rd, 99.8% of grades were submitted, resulting in 264 missing grades.
- For Spring 2017, 71.1% of grades were submitted by the original deadline of May 26th. Meanwhile 96% submitted their grades by the extended due date of May 30th at 6AM, resulting in 7,750 missing grades.

What are the issues?

Faculty

1. Faculty are concerned about not having sufficient time to grade papers and final exams prior to the grade deadline.
2. Faculty teaching in summer may see reductions in salary because of lower enrollments (see student impacts #3 below)

Registrar and Financial Aid

1. It takes at a minimum 5-6 days to complete End of Term and Satisfactory Academic Progress processes, Disbursement of Financial Aid, and Refund of student credits. These are the most critical processes impacting students.

- a. Once the end-of-term process (to close out the semester) is run, any changes must be done manually. Thus, it is ideal to run this process only after all grades are in. Late grades holds up the process for ALL students and offices at the university.
 - b. The Registrar's office end of term process requires three days to 'finalize' grades and close out the term. Staff are working all three days. This is a significant improvement (from a 2-week process) and, while additional efficiencies are being sought and may still be possible, they will come at higher cost.
 - c. The Financial Aid office requires one day to complete the Satisfactory Academic Progress process and will be able to disburse aid to students the next day. However, the Registrar's end of term process must be completed first.
 - d. The campus goal is to disburse financial aid 10 days prior to the start of classes (the earliest the Federal Government will allow) so students can purchase instructional materials and have all they need by the first day of classes. Note: once the Financial Aid Office makes its disbursement, it takes an additional 2-3 days before the accounting office will process student refunds for students with a credit balance.
2. Campus typically opens on January 2. If the End of Term process is started first thing in the morning on this date, there is sufficient time to complete all processes.

Student impacts

1. A delay in grade reporting which delays financial aid means students may not have funds to purchase materials prior to the start of classes. This is a major issue in spring semester and summer term and affects all students receiving financial aid-not just those with late grades.
2. If grades are not posted in a timely fashion, degree posting will be delayed for all students graduating. This has the biggest impact on students applying to graduate school, those needing transcripts for potential employers, and students needing to show proof of their academic achievements for scholarship renewals.
3. Summer session enrollments are impacted- students who don't get their aid or who do not have prerequisite course grades in the system cannot register for courses.

Proposed Course of Action

1. The campus will establish standard grades due dates and times (with the expectation that 100% of grades are submitted).
 - a. The first business day after January 1 at 8:00 a.m.
 - b. Tuesday after Memorial Day 8:00 a.m.

The Registrar's Office will run their End of Term processes at these times
2. After the grade deadline in (1), all missing grades will be posted with RD (Report Delayed) in order for the Registrar's Office to run the end of term process. Faculty will have 5 calendar days to make online changes to grades. Faculty will need to submit paper grade changes after this point.
3. As the grades due deadline approaches, Faculty Affairs will work with Technology Services to automate reminders/requests at set intervals to faculty who have not posted grades. After the deadline, automated reminders will be sent to faculty who have submitted grades with summary reports sent to department chairs and deans.
4. A campaign to educate faculty about the impact of late grades on students will be launched focusing on the impact late grade reporting has on students.
5. Faculty Affairs will identify perpetual late graders who will receive a letter to their PAF.
6. The Center for Faculty Excellence will help faculty identify sound pedagogical approaches for end of term use. For example, long essay exams may provide faculty with information for summative assessments but are not formative for students since few will be able to

effectively receive and act on feedback they might get. Assigning iterative term papers that can be turned in earlier in the semester would facilitate faculty feedback to students upon which they could reflect and deepen their learning.