

January 22, 2021

Richard Tucker

Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

RE: Spring 2021 Final Exam Waiver

Dear Richard,

On Friday, January 22, 2021, the Committee on Courses of Instruction unanimously approved the following waiver for spring 2021:

For spring 2021, the requirement that instructors of undergraduate courses hold final exams is waived. Instructors will decide if their course will have a final exam, and that information must be provided to students in the syllabus/course outline by the end of the first week of classes. This waiver is approved only for fall 2020, winter 2021, and spring 2021. Undergraduate courses must resume final exams in summer 2021 unless the course has an individual waiver of the final exam requirement that has been previously approved by the Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) through the Integrated Curriculum Management System (ICMS).

The committee members expressed two primary rationales for this waiver. First, the committee has concerns about Academic Integrity. It is difficult to offer “normal” final exams remotely, while maintaining our high standards for academic integrity. There are currently no practical and effective remote proctoring solutions. Second, there are substantial logistical challenges of access. High-stakes timed exams can be difficult for students and instructors who may not have reliable internet access, quiet and secluded locations to take and proctor exams, and those in disparate time zones.

In communicating this waiver to campus, COCI recommends noting the following:

- Final exams are used to demonstrate cumulative (or comprehensive) understanding of course materials. We encourage instructors to explore alternative assessment methods that will achieve similar goals, as appropriate for their courses. Some examples of alternative assessment methods can be found on the [Keep Teaching](#) website.
- The committee’s concerns about final exams are also applicable to midterm exams. We encourage instructors to consider alternate assessment methods for midterm exams, if appropriate for their courses.

Should you have any questions about this waiver, or if COCI can provide any additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Steve Boucher

Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction

Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics

c: Edwin Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Theresa Costa, Analyst, Committee on Courses of Instruction