

November 24, 2020

**Academic Senate Request to Post Course Structure Information  
Sent to Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Chairs**

Dear Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Chairs,

At the beginning of fall quarter, the Academic Senate received a joint letter from the undergraduate and graduate student governments (ASUCD and GSA) requesting that the Academic Senate mandate asynchronous course requirements across campus. After much consultation and discussion, we determined that it was not feasible to implement such mandates (the request and response are available [here](#)). Even so, as our response notes, the Academic Senate continues to strongly recommend that instructors implement practices that promote flexibility and accommodation for students. We will soon send instructors another letter reiterating this guidance.

Even though we are not mandating asynchronous course requirements, the Academic Senate applauds and agrees with students' goals to reduce educational barriers and increase pathways to academic success during the pandemic. We have committed to two actions to address these goals. I write to you today to implement one of those actions:

***The Academic Senate requests that all departments and programs post, by the start of Pass 1 registration, what access their undergraduate and graduate courses will offer (e.g., synchronous, asynchronous, or both) and the particular form such access will take.***

**Timing**

For winter 2021, we ask that you post this information before the winter break, if possible, but no later than the start of the second week of instruction (January 11, 2021). For spring 2021 and future quarters of emergency remote instruction, we ask that you post this information by the start of Pass 1 registration.

We recognize that instructors might need to adjust course structures after they have been posted; this is permitted, but we ask that you adjust as minimally as possible and update the course information promptly. The goal of these postings is to help students make informed registration and planning decisions.

**Location and Content**

Departments and programs can use their discretion to determine where and how to post this information. We recommend posting it on one consistent webpage/hyperlink, that way students can continue accessing the information through the same link in future quarters. We recommend posting the link on department and program home webpages or course pages, or wherever students may normally seek such information for your courses. The Academic Senate may reach out a later date to ask for the link to your information so that we can consolidate all links in a central web location.

We ask that you include, at minimum, the following information for each course:

- Lectures
  - How will lectures be conducted? Are they synchronous, asynchronous, or both?
  - Is attendance in synchronous lectures required?
  - Will synchronous lecture material be recorded and made available to students?
- Discussion sections
  - How will discussion sections be conducted? Are they synchronous, asynchronous, or both?
  - Is attendance in synchronous discussion sections required?
  - Will synchronous discussion material be recorded and made available to students?
- Exams
  - How will exams be administered?
  - Will exams be held at a scheduled time (e.g., during lecture)? Will they be timed but held over a longer time frame? Will they be take-home?
  - Will students in different time zones have options to take exams in their own time zone?
  - Are students required to have their webcam on during the exam?
- Additional course logistics
  - How will office hours be conducted?
  - Is a webcam/microphone required?
  - Are students required to have their webcam on during the course?
  - Is any specific software required?
  - Are there other important course logistics or requirements that students should be aware of?

For examples, please view the [Economics](#) and [Managerial Economics](#) course lists. They have been proactively sharing information with their students and have graciously permitted the Senate to share their approaches as examples.

The Academic Senate will work with administrative partners to notify students that this course structure information will be available for them to review. You are welcome to notify students through your own channels as well. A copy of this communication will be posted on the Academic Senate's [COVID-19 webpage](#).

Thank you for your attention to this request. I continue to be heartened by the work across campus to make it through this pandemic and ensure our teaching, research, and service missions march forward safely. This work is iterative, and we continue to learn how to do it better. This course structure information will be one more tool to help our students navigate their academic planning.

Please contact me with any questions.

Take care,  
Richard

Richard P. Tucker, Ph.D.  
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate  
University of California, Davis