March 25, 2020

SUBJECT: Official Grading System Changes for Spring Semester

Dear Mason Nation,

With the extraordinary circumstances created by the coronavirus, including the transition to alternative virtual instruction, the university wants to ensure that all students have opportunities for success this semester. In recognition of that, the Faculty Senate met Tuesday and approved two motions to provide accommodations to grading policies for undergraduate students for the Spring 2020 semester:

1. **Incomplete Grades**
   Incomplete grades (I) may be given to students who are passing a course but who may be unable to complete scheduled coursework by the end of the semester due to extenuating circumstances. Instructors should be flexible in awarding Incompletes if the student requires additional time to finish coursework. The previous deadline for completing work for the spring semester was Friday, October 23, 2020. The deadline for completing work related to an Incomplete grade received in Spring 2020 has been extended to the end of the Fall 2020 semester.

2. **Credit/Non-Credit Opt-In**
   Each student registered in A-F graded courses is able to decide individually, on a course-by-course basis, whether they want to receive a letter grade in the class or if they will receive an alternative grade. The default selection, if no action is taken by the student, will be A-F grading. To the extent practicable, faculty will submit A-F grades. For students who opt into alternative grading, the submitted grade would then be converted by the Registrar to alternative grades.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Office of the University Registrar will communicate with eligible students to their official Mason-issued e-mail address with information on how to select the new alternative grade mode for their classes. Information on the specific grading categories will also be provided.

**For Graduate Students/Law School/Cohort Programs**
Students, including undergraduates, enrolled in cohort sections or special programs will follow the decisions of their professional school or of the unit about which courses, if any, are eligible for the credit/non-credit option.

The Antonin Scalia Law School will separately determine the grading policies for its courses. Graduate programs may select specific graduate courses that are eligible for Credit/Non-Credit declaration by Wednesday, April 1.
For courses not selected, graduate students will be able to request a change in one or more of their courses to this new grading option. All requests will have to be submitted by May 11, and will be subject to their academic unit’s approval based on the following parameter: the student must provide a compelling reason why their academic success has been affected by the changes triggered by the coronavirus/ COVID-19.

We appreciate the broad engagement of the university community with the Faculty Senate on this issue over the past week. As faculty, student learning is our main objective. It is our hope that empowering students to make decisions about the grading categories that will be used to evaluate their work during this unique semester will reduce some of the stress associated with the transition to virtual learning.

Be well.

Shannon Davis
Chair, Faculty Senate

S. David Wu
Provost and Executive Vice President