Grading Policy Change for Spring 2020 Semester

(Text largely taken from Minneapolis College, with permission)

In response to the challenges that COVID-19 has posed to members of the BSU community, we have created an alternative grading plan for students this semester.

The BSUFA Academic Affairs Committee, in collaboration with the Records Office, Advising Success Center, and Academic and Student Affairs, has outlined a process that will enable students to make extensive use of Pass/Low Pass/No Credit grading in their Spring 2020 courses while still allowing students to earn letter grades if they want to or need to do so. In response to the changes in student life circumstances and course deliveries driven by COVID-19, two principles guide this policy: 1) flexibility for students to choose a grading option that minimizes potential negative consequences of these changes, and 2) guidance from faculty, academic advisors, and support staff.

A Pass/Low Pass/No Credit option will give students an option for protecting their grade point average (GPA) in a time of uncertainty and reduce the risk that students will face Satisfactory Academic Progress challenges as a result. Numerous colleges and universities across the country have adopted such policies already, and there is a quickly evolving consensus that doing so is a best practice in the current environment. At the same time, we acknowledge that students may want or need letter grades. As a result, the proposed policy for the Spring 2020 term assures students can protect their academic record through the use of the P/LP/NC option while still earning a letter grade if needed.

How will this work?

Faculty will grade all students using the grade method they had been using for each student prior to the disruption of the semester and an alternate P/LP/NC grade. With consultation with their academic advisor, students will be able to decide whether to change their grading method to a P/LP/NC now or up to 30 days after the start of the fall semester. Students may take any or all of their courses on a P/LP/NC basis. Courses on a P/LP/NC basis may be used for or in major, minor, emphasis, or Liberal Education courses. Using this strategy will not impact the student’s GPA.

The grading scale will be:

- **Pass**: A to C
- **Low Pass**: C- to D-
- **No Credit**: F

**Cautions and limitations on the use of Pass/Low Pass/No Credit:**

We recognize there are possible downsides that students should consider before choosing the Pass/Low Pass/No Credit option. Courses taken on a Pass/Low Pass/No Credit basis may not be eligible for transfer to certain four-year institutions. Some students will be unable to take courses on a Pass/Low Pass/No Credit basis because of departmental requirements, accreditation, external rules or regulations. For these students, grading must occur in the typical A-F scale. Examples include:

- Veterans using GI Bill funds
- Some international students on F-1 visas
• Students in certain accredited programs

Additional guidance about the pro's and con's of the two grading methods will be developed and distributed to advisors, faculty and students.

The process for a student to request a Pass/Low Pass/No Credit grade will be described in greater detail in coming weeks. For example, the student process to request a change to Pass/Low Pass/No Credit.