

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
AGENDA FOR THE SPECIAL FACULTY SENATE MEETING
NOVEMBER 2, 2020
Electronic Meeting 3:00 – 4:15 pm

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss and prepare to vote (by Qualtrics following the meeting) on possible alternative grading options for the Fall 2020 semester.

Only business stipulated in the call to the special meeting may be transacted.

I. Call to Order

II. Discussion of Possible Alternative Grading Options for Fall 2020

III. Adjournment

ELECTRONIC MEETING INFORMATION

Topic: Faculty Senate Special Session

Time: Nov 2, 2020 03:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Primary Electronic Meeting Venue - Zoom:

For security purposes -- all attendees *MUST* login using any valid zoom account to join the meeting.

IMPORTANT: Faculty Senators must login using their GMU login/password from <https://gmu.zoom.us/> to be recognized.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://gmu.zoom.us/j/99247460927?pwd=UFRSMIVtbzA1VzJFajlwWk5pTmZmZz09>

In case of problems with joining the meeting, use the following information to join –

Meeting ID: 992 4746 0927

Passcode: 707544

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,99247460927#,,,,,0#,,707544# US (Germantown)

+12678310333,,99247460927#,,,,,0#,,707544# US (Philadelphia)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)

Meeting ID: 992 4746 0927

Passcode: 707544

Find your local number: <https://gmu.zoom.us/j/99247460927>

Join by SIP

99247460927@zoomcrc.com

Join by H.323

162.255.37.11 (US West)

162.255.36.11 (US East)

115.114.131.7 (India Mumbai)

115.114.115.7 (India Hyderabad)

213.19.144.110 (Amsterdam Netherlands)

213.244.140.110 (Germany)

103.122.166.55 (Australia)

149.137.40.110 (Singapore)

64.211.144.160 (Brazil)

69.174.57.160 (Canada)

207.226.132.110 (Japan)

Meeting ID: 992 4746 0927

Passcode: 707544

Backup Electronic Meeting Venue – Blackboard Collaborate (in case of problems with Zoom)

Once activated – A Blackboard announcement will clearly indicate the venue has been moved from Zoom

Collaborate Ultra:

Faculty Senators must login into Blackboard and join meeting to be recognized

- Organizations: Faculty Senate
- Menu: “Collaborate Ultra”
- Click on meeting link

Guests must use the following link to join:

<https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/6d83e373afff4c86982579ee6a10666b>

Dial-in for Collaborate: +1-571-392-7650 (PIN: 221 532 2011)

Appendix A

Background Information on Alternative Grade Mode Discussion

The administration has asked the Faculty Senate to consider approving an alternative grading policy for this semester, Fall 2020. Several options were discussed by the administration and the Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee.

The Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee proposes that the Faculty Senate discuss and vote (by Qualtrics following the meeting) on the following two grading options for Fall, 2020. (Note: the options do not extend to Spring, 2021.) There is a brief rationale accompanying each option.

Option 1: Keep the current traditional grading system.

Rationale: The university has not had significant disruptions or covid outbreaks; faculty designed courses for the previously-announced delivery modes this semester; special grades beyond the original emergency could impact student's professional goals; we are going to live in a disrupted world for a while and this is the new normal; mental health experts recommend consistency for troubled students. This option already affords students the opportunity to [request](#) S/NC grading on some coursework.

Option 2: Employ the [alternative grade mode](#) used in Spring 2020 for Fall 2020

Rationale: Representing the student body, the Student Senate¹ has requested this option; high levels of stress, anxiety, concern for overall well-being, and student's concerns about their ability to be successful are being reported by those who work closely with our students – including members of the faculty, advisors and coaches, University Life staff, as well as others in student serving units; many other institutions are considering or have adopted an alternative grading approach. As in Spring 2020, students would again be able to choose the alternative grade mode without that decision being noted by the instructor.

¹ On October 15, 2020, the Student Senate passed a resolution (R#6) stating the following:

“Therefore, be it resolved, that the Student Senate of George Mason University, being a representative body tasked with representing student interests, gives its full faith and support to the proposal to adopt an alternative grade system option for the Fall 2020 semester, and encourages the administration of George Mason University to be aware of and act on these concerns through the implementation of such a system; and

Therefore, be it further resolved, that the Student Senate of George Mason University calls upon the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Provost of George Mason University to accept the student proposal for the adoption of an alternative grading system for the Fall 2020 semester.”

Report from Office of Registrar regarding Spring 2020 Alternative Grading Usage

Spring 2020 counts V and WX

Chapter 1 - Reports - Overview

Spring 2020 V Grade Mode and WX Withdrawals							as of date 10/25/20
V Grade Mode - Number of Transactions				WX Withdrawals - Number of Transactions			
Level	Grade V Transactions	All Grade Transactions	Percentage	Level	WX transactions	All Transactions	Percentage
Total	20,031	149,829	13.37%	Total	2,241	149,829	1.50%
GR	595	21,282	2.80%	GR	111	21,282	0.52%
ND	135	3,835	3.52%	ND	19	3,835	0.50%
UG	19,301	124,712	15.48%	UG	2,111	124,712	1.69%
V Grade Mode - Number of Students				WX Withdrawals - Number of Students			
Grade V Students	All Students	Percentage	WX Students	All Students	Percentage		
8,668	37,217	23.29%	1,304	37,217	3.50%		
V Grade Mode - Number of Classes				WX Withdrawals - Number of Classes			
Grade V CRN	All CRNs	Percentage	WX CRNs	All CRNs	Percentage		
4,045	8,328	48.57%	1,394	8,328	16.74%		

Spring 2020 counts V and WX

Chapter 1 - Filter Summary

FILTERS (3)

grade_mode_code: A, C, E, F, G, I, L, N, R, S, U, V, X, Z

RSTS_CODE: RE, RW, RZ, WX

Level: GR, ND, UG

- 15.5% of total undergraduate grades were alternate grades.
- 37,217 students received a grade and of those students almost 8,700 selected an alternate grade mode which means approx. 23% of students selected at least one of their courses to be in alternate grade mode.
- 8,328 CRNs were graded courses; approx. 49% of all graded CRNs had at least one student who selected an alternate grade mode.
- Approx. 2,400 students changed their minds and switched back to regular grade mode. These are students who saw what their grade was going to be and decided to move away from alternative grade mode. 2,434 students changed 6,415 grades.