Increased flexibility for P/NP grading in Spring 2020

April 3, 2020

Dear UCSB College of Engineering Students,

With the switch to remote instruction in Spring 2020 as a result of the global pandemic and the desire to do everything we can to ensure that your academic success is not adversely affected during the spring quarter, the College of Engineering department chairs, in consultation with Dean Alferness and the UCSB Division of the Academic Senate, have made some temporary adjustments to policies regarding course grading.

All undergraduate courses offered in the College of Engineering departments (Chemical Engineering, Computer Science, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Materials, Engineering Science, and Technology Management) that are traditionally letter-graded only will allow for optional grading: you will be able to select Letter or P/NP grading in GOLD.* We believe the vast majority of students will benefit from the P/NP option and that this grading flexibility will reduce anxiety about final grades.

The ability to change your grading option in GOLD requires some coding by the Registrar and should appear by mid-April. The deadline to select Letter or P/NP via GOLD will be the last day of instruction, June 5, 2020, which is beyond the usual seventh week deadline for grading option changes.

All majors in the College of Engineering will accept a Pass (P) grade toward the satisfaction of major requirements. There is no limit on how many units of Pass (P) will be accepted toward the major for coursework taken in Spring 2020. A P grade is recorded when a letter grade C or higher is assigned by your instructor.

No Pass (NP) grades cannot be applied to major or GE requirements. A NP grade is recorded when a letter grade of C- or lower is assigned by your instructor.

Students will be able to exercise the P/NP option without having to go through a petition process. That is, GOLD and other university systems have been (or will be) updated to allow this automatically.

There will be no retroactive grading changes permitted (that is, for requests received after June 5, 2020) but extenuating circumstances will be given every consideration should any requests come in.

For classes offered by departments outside the College of Engineering:

- If the class is already coded with optional grading, you may select Letter or P/NP grading and a grade of P will satisfy the requirement in your major or General Education requirements.
• If the class is coded letter grade only, whether it can be taken P/NP depends on whether the department opts to change the grading option. You will see this in GOLD by the end of April.

As you consider your grading options, please reach out to the College of Engineering advisors if you need advice. There are a few considerations as you make your selections:

• Instructors will be entering a letter grade regardless of what grading option you’ve selected. The instructor should assign grades exactly as if there were no P/NP option, and you are never under any obligation to disclose to your instructor or TA which option you have selected.
  - The translation is Pass = C or higher; No Pass = C- or lower (with no units and no credit towards major or GE).
  - Letter grades D- and higher earn units and satisfy requirements.
  - Some courses require that you have earned a certain (higher than D-) grade in the prerequisite course. Generally, this means that a Pass will mean you have satisfied the prerequisite, but there could be exceptions to this, which will be at the discretion of the department.

• If you are trying to raise your GPA, you may want to consider taking at least some of your courses for a letter grade.

• If you are considering changing your major, or adding a second major, you will want to consult with an academic advisor in the desired major to verify their requirements. In many cases, particularly in the College of Engineering, these requirements preclude the ability to take courses with the P/NP option.

• If you are receiving GI Bill veterans’ benefits, check with your VA certifying official about policies. In some situations, grades of NP may require you to repay money.

• Normally, students on academic probation may not take classes P/NP. This will be relaxed this quarter: we will work with probationary students on an individual basis to allow some courses to be taken P/NP while still allowing us to gain a complete picture of your degree of academic success. After the quarter ends, this will allow our advisors to offer appropriate guidance for your studies beyond Spring 2020.

In closing, if you have any questions about the modified grading policy, do not hesitate to contact an academic advisor. We know this is a challenging time, and we stand ready to support you as you continue your education at UCSB.

Dr. Glenn Beltz, Associate Dean
Dr. Haley Orton, Director of Academic Advising

*The only exception is TMP 120, which will continue to be letter graded only.