

August 26, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty and Teaching Assistants
College of Natural Sciences

FROM: David A. Laude, Associate Dean

SUBJECT: Coursework and Routine: Policies, Procedures, and Recommendations

Welcome to the Fall 2009 semester in the College of Natural Sciences. I have completed a revised version of the memorandum on Coursework and Routine that is provided each semester to CNS instructors.

The document includes the following information:

- UT registration and grading policies
- UT academic policies
- Course management suggestions
- CNS contact and calendar information

If you have limited time on your hands, the *Baker's Dozen of Commonly-Abused Academic Policies* at the beginning of the document would be a good read.

If you are used to receiving this document and wonder what might be new, check at the links on [plus/minus grading](#) and the [Provost's Office materials on what is required in a syllabus](#)—with respect to the syllabus, they echo what I have offered as my biggest piece of advice— on the first day of class you provide your students with a thorough syllabus indicating course content and grading policy, and then stick to what it says throughout the semester. If this “contract” is made clear to the students from the first day of class, then they have little room for later grievance.

I hope that you have the best of semesters in the classroom!! Please feel free to contact me at dalaude@mail.utexas.edu if you have any questions or concerns.

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A BAKER'S DOZEN OF COMMONLY ABUSED ACADEMIC POLICIES

1. Final examination. This University takes its final examination policy very seriously--guidelines for final examination are the most detailed of all academic policies, and are also the most abused. Adherence to the posted final exam schedule, posted in the Course Schedule, is required and exceptions are rare. Requests for time or room change require approval of the department chair and the dean of the college. In addition, permission of the department chair is required if a final exam is not given. <http://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules/099/finals/index.html>

2. Course syllabus. Think of the syllabus as a contract between student and instructor. It should be distributed on the first class day and is required by the fourth class day. The syllabus should include details about course content, prerequisites, drop deadlines, attendance policy, exam times, make-up policy and grading procedure. Subsequent changes in the syllabus require consent of the entire class. The department chair and the dean of the college use the published syllabus to arbitrate disputes between faculty and students. More details on what should be included in the syllabus are found on page 15 of this document.

3. Required meetings outside scheduled course times; night exam conflicts. Required class meetings including required office hours, discussion sections, lectures and examinations can be scheduled only at times appearing in the Course Schedule:

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules/099/index.html>.

If exams are scheduled at times not identified in the Course Schedule, make-up exams must be provided without penalty. Also, there has been a significant increase in the scheduling of evening exams, which makes it difficult or impossible for students to create a full schedule without a conflict arising. The College position is that when a scheduled night exam unavoidably conflicts with other scheduled evening exams or labs, a solution must be found that does not affect student performance. The Dean's Office will arbitrate conflicts between departments that cannot be resolved directly.

4. Substantial examination during the last week of classes. It is not permitted to give exams counting for more than 30% of the course grade during the final week of classes. Also be aware that a large percentage of faculty schedule exams during the final week of class instead of during the official final examination period--sensitivity to the burden imposed on students would be appreciated and significant violations of this policy that are brought to the attention of the College will not be tolerated.

5. Incompletes. An incomplete (X) is a temporary delay in reporting the final course grade. It is intended to allow students with non-academic issues the time to make up missing work so that a fair final grade is assigned. It is not to be used to allow a student to replace graded coursework. For your own protection, a written agreement between student and instructor should accompany every assigned incomplete so that there is a clear understanding of what must be done to complete the work.

6. Course evaluations. Course Instructor Surveys (CIS) must be completed for every formal course taught at UT Austin. The College takes a dim view of faculty who do not complete this task, if for no other reason than that the evaluations are an essential piece of performance evaluation for promotion, post-tenure review, merit raise, teaching awards and reappointments. Fortunately the process will one day be fully automated with students completing on-line evaluations and you are encouraged to use this option when presented to you by MEC at the end of the semester.

7. Grading equity. Grading policies must be applied uniformly in accordance with the grading policy identified in the syllabus. Replacement or "extra credit" grading opportunities must be provided to every student. Not providing the same opportunity to earn a grade to every student in a class raises an immediate flag in the Dean's Office.

8. Makeup work. A reasonable policy for makeup work should be identified in the syllabus. Requiring a student to drop a course because an exam is missed for good cause is not acceptable, nor is it appropriate to view makeup work in a punitive manner. Although the Dean's Office cannot enforce simple human decency, it will exert pressure through the department chair to achieve fairness for students who have documented non-academic reasons for incomplete assignments.

9. Q-drop policy. Know and correctly implement the Q-drop policy. In particular:

- Provide substantial course assessment before the imposed Q-drop deadline (in principle by the 20th class day) but certainly no later than the mid-semester drop deadline (typically around the 40th class day). See the online calendar for specific dates.
- Provide realistic advising to students considering a Q-drop and do not encourage them to remain in the class past the Q-drop deadline unless there is a reasonable possibility of success;
- After the 40th class day (mid-semester), students can only drop a course by providing substantiated non-academic reasons to the College or the Dean of Student's Office. After the drop deadline the instructor may be asked to provide information about student progress in the course to validate or refute a non-academic drop or withdrawal request, but the College has ultimate authority in assessing these non-academic cases.
- Please encourage students who experience significant non-academic problems such as extended health-related problems or family emergencies to contact the Student Division of the College of Natural Sciences (first floor of W. C. Hogg or 471-4536) as soon as possible.

10. Processing of non-academic and scholastic dishonesty cases. Refer non-academic problems and scholastic dishonesty cases to appropriate offices. If uncertain about where to refer a student with a non-academic problem, contact the Dean's Office or an academic advisor in your department for assistance with appropriate referral. Contact Judicial Services in the Dean of Students Office for academic dishonesty referral (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>). Academic dishonesty issues can be difficult to navigate so if you would like advice before contacting Judicial Services, feel free to e-mail me with your questions.

11. Absence Failing Reports. The *General Information* catalog requires that a mid-semester report of failing work be submitted to the dean. To assist with this requirement, an automated absence/failing system is in place for the college. Instructors will be contacted by e-mail with directions for using the system. Aside from being required, absence/failing reports significantly reduce registration errors and ease academic advising for subsequent semesters.

12. Confidentiality. A student has a right to confidential distribution of grade information. The return of graded coursework must be done in a manner that ensures confidentiality. In addition, no part of the SSN may be made public as either a means to identify students or to return grades. Instead consider switching your grading to one of the secure web-based grading systems. Finally, parents may not be given information about student performance without student consent. To be safe, politely minimize conversation with parents about their children and speak only in general terms about academic issues. Persistent parents should be referred to the Dean's Office for an explanation of confidentiality rules.

13. Availability of coursework. Faculty must provide students with access to all written material submitted as part of a course. If coursework is not returned to the student, it must be retained by the instructor for one long semester following the completion of the course.

REGISTRATION AND GRADING POLICIES

ROSTERS

Official class rosters are sent to each instructor after the first, fourth, and twelfth class days. A final class roster is sent around the middle of the semester. Rosters may also be retrieved with a picture of each student from the Registrar's Office web site. This is a very easy procedure that requires only that you know your UTEID. It is a great way to familiarize yourself with the names of your students.

Please use these rosters to ensure that the students attending your class are in fact registered for the course and to notify the student's College if the student is not attending. If you discover students are attending your class who are not on the official roster, notify the College immediately. Those students will be required to provide verification that they have been attending class throughout the semester.

ATTENDANCE

University regulations require instructors to keep attendance records for students with less than 30 hours. If the size of the class makes checking roll impractical, assign several homework sets and check these against your class roll to isolate attendance problems. Report these problems to the student's academic dean. This can be done electronically using the absence/failing report (see below).

ADDING AND DROPPING COURSES

The academic calendar for each semester is provided at: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/calendars/09-10/index.html>. The College of Natural Sciences adheres strictly to the published deadlines of the University. The following information is generally true during each new long semester. Summer courses are subject to a somewhat compressed version of this procedure:

- **4th class day: Dropping courses electronically:** During the first four class days, students may add and drop courses with the Registrar's online registration service, ROSE.
- **12th class day: Dropping a class with possible refund:** During days five through twelve (September 11, 2009, for the Fall semester, and February 3, 2010, for the Spring semester) students may drop courses by phone, but must go to the department offering the course to seek permission to add a course. Be advised that some departments do not allow adds/drops after the fourth class day. For those departments that do allow adds/drops, the add-transactions before the twelfth class day will be processed in the respective department. Students who wish to add a class after the twelfth class day should be required to the Student Division of the Dean's Office (first floor of W. C. Hogg) to provide justification for the proposed change. The student must have written permission and documentation of class attendance from the instructor and departmental approval.
- **20th class day: Deadline for dropping a course without possible academic penalty:** The deadline for dropping a course without possible academic penalty is the end of the fourth class week (September 23, 2009, for the fall semester, and February 15, 2010, for the spring semester.) During this period a Q is automatically assigned but no refund is provided. If at all possible a substantial course grade should be assigned by this deadline to assist students in making an informed decision about dropping a course.
- **40th class day: Last day to drop a course with approval:** After the end of the fourth week of class, and until the deadline for dropping courses (October 21, 2009, for the Fall semester, and March 29, 2010, for the

Spring semester), a student wishing to drop a course will get the forms from the Dean's Office (WCH 1.106) and ask the instructor to complete the drop form that assigns a **Q** or an **F**. The symbol **Q** indicates an average of **C** or better at the time of the drop, or that no grade has yet been assigned, or that due to the student's performance and the nature of the course, no academic penalty is in order, or that for documented non-academic reasons, no academic penalty is in order.

- **Non-academic Q-drop:** After the last day for academic Q-drop students with substantiated non-academic reasons (as determined by the Dean's Office) may be allowed to drop a course. Faculty will be asked to provide information on student performance up to the time of the non-academic Q-drop request but are not responsible for making the decision about assigning a grade of **Q**. Please encourage students who experience significant non-academic problems such as extended health-related problems or family emergencies to contact the Dean's Office.

Please include this information about adds and drops with your course syllabus. It will help to clear up much of the confusion that students have about the add/drop cycle.

REPETITION OF FAILED AND DROPPED COURSES

Students cannot enroll more than twice in any course offered in the College of Natural Sciences, even if the course is needed to meet degree requirements. Exceptions are permitted but require the consent of the major advisor and the department offering the course. A symbol of **Q** counts as an enrollment unless the **Q** was approved by the Dean's Office for non-academic reasons. Some departments in the College of Natural Sciences may have additional requirements for students who repeat courses.

ABSENCE AND FAILING REPORTS

Faculty should notify students of excessive absences or poor performance on-line via "Absence-Failing" notice provided by the College for that purpose. Absence-Failing reports need to be in the Student Division Office after the first reporting period and before the end of the **Q** period if students are to receive maximum benefit from them. Each of you will be notified by e-mail of the specific period and procedure for completing the reports.

PROHIBITION OF SUBSTANTIAL EXAMINATIONS DURING LAST CLASS WEEK

No final examinations may be given before the examination period begins, and no change in time from that printed in the official schedule is permitted. An instructor with a compelling reason to change the time of an examination must obtain the approval of the department chair and the dean of the college or school in which the course is taught before announcing an alternative examination procedure to the students. No substantial examinations may be given during the last class week or during the reading days and the no-class days included in the final examination period. An examination counting for more than 30% of the final course grade is considered to be substantial. A change in the room assignment for an examination may be made only with the approval of the registrar.

FACULTY PRESENCE ON CAMPUS DURING FINAL EXAMINATION PERIODS

A faculty member is responsible for ensuring that final examinations for his or her courses are adequately staffed, that he or she is available for related questions and to resolve problems, and that final course grades are turned in on time. Unless a faculty member has received approval for travel under regular University policy, he

or she must be available on campus during final examinations in his or her courses, or available in the Austin area and easily reachable by telephone or e-mail. The faculty member must remain in the Austin area until his or her grades are finalized. If a faculty member must travel during this time, he or she must include on the request for travel authorization how final examination matters will be handled and how he or she can be reached in case of an emergency.

COURSES TAKEN ON A PASS/FAIL BASIS (CR/NC)

The University defines a **D** as a passing grade for undergraduate students. The instructor is obliged to assign a grade of **CR** (Credit) for a student registered on a pass/fail basis who has a **D** or better in the course. It is important that the roster indicate the student is registered for the course on a pass/fail basis. Otherwise, a letter grade must be assigned. There is a time limit for students to change courses from a grade basis to pass/fail basis and vice versa. During the long session, it is the same as the final deadline for drop/withdrawal for academic reasons. See the current academic calendar for the exact date. After that deadline, students should see a counselor in the Student Division of the Dean's Office of their college.

INCOMPLETE GRADES (X)

(From the UT Austin General Information Catalog)

A grade of Incomplete, X, is a temporary delay in reporting the final course grade. A student is expected to complete a course, including self-paced courses, in a single semester, summer term, or summer session. If the course is not completed as expected, the student normally will not be given additional time to complete it, or to do additional work to achieve a better grade. In rare instances, for nonacademic reasons and at the discretion of the instructor, a temporary delay of the final course grade, symbol X, may be recorded.

Improper uses of the symbol X. A student must not be assigned the symbol X to provide (1) the opportunity to raise a grade for any reason other than the approved reasons cited below; (2) time to prepare coursework in addition to that assigned the entire class; or (3) time to repeat the entire course.

Approved uses of the symbol X. The symbol X is not issued for student or faculty convenience; it may be issued for one of the following reasons only in the case of compelling, nonacademic circumstances beyond the student's control.

- 1. Missing the final examination: The student is unable to take a final examination because of illness or for another nonacademic reason. A physician's statement or other satisfactory verification is required.*
- 2. Incomplete classroom assignment: The student has not been able to complete the required class or laboratory assignments for a reason other than lack of adequate effort. A request for temporary delay of the final course grade because of incomplete class or laboratory work can be made only if the student has a passing average on the class work or laboratory work already completed and has taken and passed the final examination (unless a final examination is not given in the course or the student is unable to take the examination for reasons indicated in the previous paragraph).*
- 3. Reexamination petition: Only a student who has a grade average of at least C on all class work and laboratory work submitted before the final examination may request a temporary delay of the final course grade because he or she failed the final examination, which is the examination given during the final examination period as defined in the official examination schedule. If the instructor denies the petition, the student's final course grade remains as originally determined. If the instructor grants the petition, and the student earns a grade of at least C on the reexamination, then the instructor substitutes*

the reexamination grade for the original examination grade in determining the student's final course grade. If the instructor grants the petition, and the student earns a grade on the reexamination of less than C, then a final course grade of F must be recorded.

Out perspective in the Dean's Office is that students sometimes pressure their instructors to assign them an **X**, the symbol for an incomplete grade. This results in the **X** symbol often being assigned improperly, as a means of allowing a student to avoid a poor grade. Here are considerations you should use in deciding whether to give an incomplete:

- An **X** may properly be assigned for students who must miss the final due to illness or other imperative nonacademic reasons. You may require a medical excuse if the reason for the request for a postponed final is illness. If you would prefer to not deal with non-academic issues, you may refer the student to a counselor in the Dean's Office.
- An **X** may also be given when the student has not been able to complete all the required assignments for reasons other than lack of diligence *but only if the student has a passing grade on the work completed*. Finally, an **X** may be assigned if the student qualifies for a reexamination and the instructor chooses to give a reexamination. (See the *General Information* bulletin for details.)
- An **X** should not be assigned to allow the student an opportunity to repeat the entire course; the only assignments or exams that should be completed to resolve the **X** are those that were missed for legitimate reasons during the semester.
- An **X** should be assigned only if the student has been informed and the exact procedures by which the student will make up the work are agreed upon. The assignment of an **X** constitutes a contract between the student and the instructor. It is often helpful to have the arrangement in writing, specifying what the student is expected to do to complete the course, including due dates.

The instructor who assigned the **X** is responsible for evaluating the student's subsequent work. If another faculty member is to be involved, the procedures for this should be clearly understood by all parties in advance. If an instructor does not assign a grade or a symbol to a student on the final roster, the Registrar will automatically insert an **X**. This grade in no way obligates the instructor to allow the student to complete missing work. Students who have stopped attending class or who have never attended class should be assigned a grade of **F**.

Students have one long semester to make up an **X** and extensions are rare. After one long semester, the **X** converts to an **F** if no other grade is reported.

FINAL GRADES

Do not leave town or disappear before turning in final grades for your students. Seniors' names are starred on the grade sheets and their grades must be received in time to determine eligibility to graduate. A schedule for reporting final grades is provided to the department. Please notify the College if you are unable to comply with these deadlines so we can try to prevent problems for students.

PLUS/MINUS GRADING

You've been hearing about this for several years, now, and this fall semester it has arrived. I leave it to the memorandum from the Provost's Office to offer an FAQ on everything you need to know as you decide how you will (or will not) implement plus/minus grading. Note that where you see asterisks, the FAQs reflect some of the argument from Faculty Council debate as to the merit of plus/minus grading. I offer it without comment.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Department Chairs

FROM: Vice Provost Terri E. Givens

DATE: May 15, 2009

SUBJECT: Plus/Minus Grades Implementation: FAQs

As you are all aware, the new plus/minus grading system for undergraduate courses will be implemented beginning fall semester 2009. I have received a substantial number of requests for a memo to clarify how faculty and students will be affected by this change. The list of Frequently Asked Questions below was compiled with the aid of the Registrar's Office in response to these requests. I hope they will help to alleviate some of the confusion that still surrounds the new grading system. Please feel free to distribute this memo.

Plus/Minus Grading: What is it?

Starting in the Fall of 2009, the University will switch from its current system to a plus/minus system.

Current System:

Current System	
A	4.0
B	3.0
C	2.0
D	1.0
F	0.0

New System:

System for Fall '09	
A	4.0
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.0
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.0
D-	0.67
F	0.0

Why is the University Switching*?

1. Plus/minus grading allows for more accurate representation of students' performance.
2. Plus/minus grading makes it easier to assign grades in borderline cases.
3. Plus/minus grading may be used to reduce grade inflation.
4. All 11 of our peer institutions (the group of large public universities that UT Austin uses for comparison purposes) use some form of plus/minus grading.
5. The new system will help with transfer student discrepancies.
6. The more grade options we have means that students are awarded grades appropriate to their performance in a course.

Will the Plus/Minus System be Grandfathered?

No. Come Fall of 2009, all students (current and incoming) will be under the new grading system.

Is the Grading System Mandatory?

Yes, in that starting fall 2009 there will only be one grading scale, one that includes plus-minus grade options.

Do Professors Have the Discretion to Use or Not Use It?

Starting Fall 2009, the University will have a single grading scale, one that ALLOWS for the assignment of plus/minus grades. However, the assignment of grades has always been, and remains, up to the discretion of the instructor.

Will Student's GPAs be Affected*?

No. Effects on GPA will likely even out, and the effect on top students is as likely to be positive. In any case, given that most of our peer institutions use plus/minus grading, this change would increase the equity of comparisons for students from different universities.

Will this Grade Change Policy Affect Seniors Graduating in December 2009?

Yes. It applies to all classes/students based on instructor discretion.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

CONFIDENTIALITY

Student confidentiality is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. This means that it is not possible to give out any information about students or grades to anyone without the student's written permission.

Issues to consider include:

- Grades may not be posted by name or social security number
- No portion of the SSN may be posted, distributed or made public in any way, even with consent of the student.
- Students must give written permission to discuss academic issues with others, including parents.
- Homework or exams may not be left unsupervised for students to pick up and should be returned in a manner that maintains student confidentiality.
- Written permission must be given by a student prior to writing letters of recommendation if the student's academic record is to be discussed.

Faculty may continue to use student specific password protected systems (such as UT Direct and its applications) to communicate academic work grades or other confidential information to individual students. Students may also access their final course grades using UT Direct services. ITS has developed an e-grade book application that provides faculty with a password protected system to communicate academic work grades to individual students.

For those faculty who wish to post student grades on the Web, at least two options are available through the University.

Blackboard

Faculty may use the grade book feature of Blackboard even if they do not use the course management system for their courses. Tutorials on using the Blackboard grade book are online at

<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/blackboard/>

Faculty may also call 475-9400 for assistance.

e-Gradebook

The e-Gradebook tool, developed by a team at UT Austin, is available at

<https://utdirect.utexas.edu/diia/egb/index.WBX>

Training is provided.

PROHIBITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS

(for more information see: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gen-info/appD.html>)

It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin to maintain an educational environment free from sexual harassment and intimidation. Sexual harassment is expressly prohibited and offenders are subject to disciplinary

action.

"Sexual harassment" is defined as either unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, by a faculty member or other employee of the university, when

- submission by a student to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a condition for academic opportunity or advancement;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that student
- the intended effect or reasonably foreseeable effect of such conduct is to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for the student.

The Office of the Dean of Students has been given the primary responsibility for responding to questions about and receiving complaints of sexual harassment of students. Students who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment may consult with the associate dean of students. However, they also may address their questions or complaints to the department chairperson or other University administrative personnel. In such cases the chairperson or the administrator should immediately contact the associate dean of students for consultation.

Investigation of a specific complaint of sexual harassment will be initiated upon submission of a written and signed statement by the student to the associate dean of students, department chairperson, or dean. Investigation and resolution of such complaints will be through the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent permitted under the law, and the rights of the individuals involved will be protected.

Disagreement with the resolution of the complaint will be handled according to the usual procedures for grievances.

In addition to complying with the above policy dealing with sexual harassment, students and faculty members should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and should avoid compromising situations involving any romantic or sexual relationship between a faculty member and a student who is enrolled in a course taught by the faculty member or who is otherwise under the supervision of the faculty member.

This policy is not intended, in any way, to discourage the interaction of faculty and students where harassment or a conflict of interest is not a factor; however, the policy is intended to clarify that it is inappropriate for a faculty member to form romantic or sexual relationships with students working under the faculty member's direct supervision.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

(for more information see <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/index.php>)

The rights of students with disabilities are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which are civil rights provisions aimed at ending discrimination against persons with disabilities. Section 504 specifically refers to post-secondary and vocational education services. The legislation reads: "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to

discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The University of Texas at Austin provides a wide variety of services to assist students with disabilities in becoming active members of the University community. These services vary according to the different types and severity of impairments.

The Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office of the Student Dean's Office is charged with assisting disabled students. They estimate that about 2000 students suffer from disabilities including mobility impairments, learning disabilities, visual impairments, hearing impairments, ADD and ADHD, and others. By law, these students are guaranteed a learning environment with reasonable accommodation of their disability.

As an instructor you are required to provide reasonable accommodation of students with disabilities. Many of the problems that might arise during the semester can be avoided by letting students know that you are aware of your responsibility to provide these accommodations, especially with respect to modifications to the examination procedure.

OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS (Student and Faculty)

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. Sections 51.911 and 51.925 of the *Texas Education Code* relate to absences by students and instructors for observance of religious holy days.

Section 51.911 states that a student who misses an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day must be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, provided that he or she has properly notified each instructor.

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that the student must notify each instructor at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates he or she will be absent to observe a religious holy day. For religious holidays that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, the notice should be given on the first day of the semester. The student may not be penalized for these excused absences but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to complete satisfactorily the missed assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the excused absence.

Section 51.925 prohibits the University from discriminating against or penalizing an instructor who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day. Proper notice must be given to the department chairman. Prior to the beginning of classes each semester, the instructor must provide the department chairman a list of classes that will be missed due to observance of a religious holy day. The list must be either personally delivered, acknowledged and dated by the chairman, or sent certified mail, return receipt requested. Consistent with regular University policy, the instructor is responsible for finding a qualified substitute U.T. Austin instructor for any such classes.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating is not tolerated in this College. Design your course and teaching methods so that cheating is difficult. Tell your class what you consider to be plagiarism and collusion. If you have any questions about a suspected cheating problem, we will be happy to try to answer them, but ultimately the Office of the Dean of Students is responsible for handling academic dishonesty complaints. Additional information on the definition of academic dishonesty including plagiarism can be found at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>. You should discuss your options and University procedures with the Office of Student Judicial Services at 471-2841.

COURSE INSTRUCTOR SURVEYS

The University requires that Course Instructor Surveys (CIS) be completed for the instructor of record in all organized courses. The surveys are an essential component of promotion and post-tenure review files. Instructors and Teaching Assistants are not to be present in the room while surveys are being administered. Go to <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/mec/cis/index.html> for more information.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Should a student have a concern about your course that you are unable to remedy to both party's satisfaction, the next recourse for the student is the department chairperson. Please direct the student to your chairperson rather than to the Dean's Office. It is the chairperson's responsibility to send the student to the Dean's Office if the grievance is not resolved at the departmental level. If you wish, please consider making use of the Office of the Ombudsman. The ombudsman is authorized to investigate and seek to mediate and resolve student complaints and grievances concerning academic or administrative policies, procedures, or decisions at the University. Each complaint is carefully scrutinized to determine whether the student's grievance is actionable. The telephone number is 471-3825.

COURSE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

DIAA, CTE, CIT AND MEC—FACULTY INSTRUCTION SERVICES AT UT

The University has strengthened and consolidated its faculty support services for instruction with creation of the Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment (DIAA) under the leadership of Associate Vice President Judy Ashcroft. The Web site, <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diaa/>, is a remarkable source of materials and information that can help you improve your entire teaching experience. Please go to the Web site and explore. I am sure you will learn things that will be of real value to improving the quality of your course as well as providing resources to simplify the teaching process.

You are probably aware of several longstanding resources at UT that are now part of DIAA:

Center for Teaching Effectiveness (CTE) <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diaa/>. CTE is the place to go for assistance with improving the quality of instruction in your classroom. Whether you want formal instruction in the art of teaching or simply are looking for new ideas to spruce up your course, it is a remarkable resource.

Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cit/>

CIT assists faculty with integration of technology into instruction, serving as a training, consulting, and resource center, and as an incubator for promising new projects to enrich teaching and learning. For example, Blackboard is housed in CIT.

Instructional Assessment & Evaluation (IAE) <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/mec/index.shtml> MEC manages most of the testing and assessment at UT, which includes administering and processing course instructor surveys and credit by examination as well as supporting research in the area of assessment.

TUTORING AND STUDY GROUPS

The College and University are committed to providing attractive learning environments outside the classroom for students who need additional assistance beyond what you can provide through discussion sessions and office hours. Both the CNS Academic Communities Program and the UT Learning Center offer these kinds of

resources, especially for faculty teaching the large lower division courses.

Academic Communities. The Academic Communities Program (ACP) was created in 2005 to provide to University of Texas at Austin students resources and services that promote success in introductory courses in math and sciences and encourage students to utilize positive learning and study skills throughout their academic careers. Through a combined effort between CNS course instructors, the College and UT Housing, residence hall dining rooms are transformed into evening study environments with a TA presence, tutoring, and study group formation. For more information on the various activities offered by ACP go to <http://cns.utexas.edu/community/resident-hall-study-groups>.

Learning Center. The UT Learning Center in Jester provides a variety of opportunities for students to improve their chances for success in the classroom. A broad array of workshops and classes assist students with study skills development as well as foundational preparation in math, reading and writing, and English-language skills. In addition, free or inexpensive tutoring is provided for many introductory-level courses.

SYLLABUS AND DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

Instructors are required by University policy to provide a written statement to students on course requirements and the evaluation of student performance. This statement lets students know what they must do and how they will be graded. It must specify how the course grade will be determined. This statement should be handed out on the first day of class and is required before the end of the fourth class day each semester.

A memorandum from the Provost's Office explicitly defines the minimum requirements of the syllabus as proposed by the Educational Policy Committee:

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Department Chairs, Center Directors
FROM: Vice Provost Gretchen Ritter
DATE: June 3, 2008
SUBJECT: Requirement to Provide Students a Course Syllabus by First Meeting Day of All Classes

On June 13, 2007 President Powers approved a section of the Educational Policy Committee Proposal to Improve Course Availability for Undergraduates (D 3835 -3837) requiring that faculty provide students a course syllabus by the first meeting day of all classes. This memorandum serves as a reminder that this is currently a University wide policy. The syllabus must contain the following items:

- Course name and number;
- Faculty member name;
- Faculty member office location and office hours;
- TA name, office location and office hours if course has a TA;
- Overview of course, including course prerequisites;
- Grading policy for course, including whether class attendance is used in determining the grade;
- Dates during semester for examinations and assignments that count 20% or more of the total course grade;
- Required materials for the course (textbooks, supplies, packets, etc.);
- Course web site;
- and statement:

"The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-6441 TTY."

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR CNS ADVISING AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The Student Division of the Dean's Office can help you with questions about undergraduate student affairs. It would be useful to get to know the advising staff in the advising center associated with your department. Names and addresses of advising and special program locations are listed below for your convenience.

Dean's Office,

David Laude, dalaude@mail.utexas.edu, WCH 2.222, 471-6176

Student Affairs: Judy Davis, Assistant to the Dean, WCH 2.222, 471-6176

Career Services and Health Professions: Ray Easterlin, Director, PAI 5.03, 471-6700

Community Programs: Lisa Wyatt, Senior Prog. Coordinator, PAI 4.30, G2550, 471-1110

Emerging Scholars: PAI 4.30, 471-1110

Women in Nat. Sciences: Lynne McAnelly, Project Director, WCH 2.212 , 232-0678

Homework Service: Patsy McDonald, Prog. Coordinator, WCH 2.306, 471-5416

Honors & Research Programs: Sarah Simmons, Assistant Dean, PAI 3.04, G2550, 232-9029

Dean's Scholars Program: Allisa Carter, Sr. Prog. Coordinator, PAI 3.04F, 471-1094

Intl. Science Opportunities, Melissa Knight, Coordinator, PAI 3.04, 232-8483

Student Services: Mike Raney, Assistant Dean, WCH 2.102, 471-3796

Departmental Advising Centers:

Biological Sciences: PAI 1.13, G2530, 471-4920

Chemistry and Biochemistry: WEL 2.216, A5300, 471-3097

Computer Sciences: TAY 2.126, C0500, 471-9509

Human Ecology: GEA 37, A2700, 471-7219

Mathematics, Physics, and Astronomy: RLM 4.101, C1650, 471-0900

Texas Interdisciplinary Plan: Sue Harkins, Program Director, GRG 234, A2900, 232-1058

Transitional Advising Center: Mike Raney, Assistant Dean, WCH 2.102, 471-3796