

University Senate of Michigan Technological University
Proposal 37 - 21
Proposal: Pass/ Low Pass/ Fail Option for Fall 2020
(Voting Units: Academic)

Submitted by: Academic and Instruction Policy Committee

I. Introduction

In recognition of the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the continuing challenges that students are facing, including access to technology and Wifi, decreased contact hours with instructors, changing Health and Safety Levels, the transition to remote only, possible stretches in quarantine, and the general anxiety and stress surrounding these uncertain times, a “Pass/Low Pass/Fail option” identical to the system implemented in the Spring of 2020 is being proposed. As in Spring 2020, this option would be extended to both undergraduate and graduate students.

II. Rationale

Recognizing the effect of continued disruptions on the teaching and learning process, the proposal seeks to mitigate these negative effects while still maintaining a high academic standard for progressing through a program. Students opting for the Pass/Low Pass/Fail option are able to avoid negative effects such as: reduced GPA, academic probation, and in some cases not being able to continue on at Michigan Tech. However students opting for one of these options are not given any benefit when it comes to progress in their program beyond what they would have earned from their letter grade. For example a program requirement of C or better for a course is equivalent to a requirement of Pass, since to be eligible to choose the Pass option a student would have to have earned a C or better. Since there are potential negative effects of a Pass/Fail system, this proposal outlines a procedure to give undergraduate and graduate students the option to change their course grading method at their discretion on a course-by-course basis. Introducing such a grading scheme will give students the flexibility to evaluate what best meets their needs, as was the case in Spring 2020.

III. Proposal

It is proposed that faculty members will assign grades using the existing grading scheme for the course. Students will then have seven days after grades are posted to decide if they would like to switch any classes to Pass/Low Pass/Fail grading, with

SCV, representing a pass grade equivalent to a course grade of C or higher; LCV, representing a low pass grade equivalent to a course grade of CD or D; and ECV, representing a fail grade equivalent to a course grade of F. Once a student elects the Pass/Low Pass/Fail option for a course and the final grade is changed, the decision is final and may not be reversed. Grades SCV, LCV, and ECV do not count when computing GPA. Policies regarding Pass/Fail are suspended for the Fall 2020 semester to allow classes in any category of degree requirements to be taken pass/fail, even if not typically allowed under normal circumstances.

In providing this option, it is important that the University provides students with the information they need to understand the short and long-term impacts of switching a course to pass/fail. This information may include, but is not limited to: GPA, course credit, academic standing, degree requirements, financial aid, transfer credit, and acceptance into graduate or professional schools. It is expected that the administration will contact those departments and individuals on campus who can best provide this information (e.g., registrar's office, financial aid, advisors, etc).