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OVPAA Memorandum No. 2020-143

For: UP Faculty and Students

Through: The Chancellors
cc. **Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs, Deans/Institute Directors,
Program Directors and Chairs, University Registrars**

C I N T

From: Maria Cynthia Rose Banzon Bautista
Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Re: Academic Guidelines for the Remainder of the First Semester
AY 2020-2021; Reiteration of Suspended Academic Rules and Policies;
Revised Academic Calendar for the Second Semester AY 2020-2021 and
Midyear 2021**

Background:

- The First Semester AY 2020-2021 has been extremely challenging. Even before the spate of typhoons made life in a pandemic more difficult for the students, faculty and staff living in affected areas, our academic community had to contend with new work demands and their unintended consequences.
 - Academic units had to redesign programs, balance student demand for course slots with the faculty's appeal for smaller classes, rush requests for funds to cover resources for remote learning as well as additional Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows or Lecturers, and implore patience among their constituencies for delays in the provision of requested resources and subsidies, among many other troubleshooting tasks.
 - Faculty members have had to cope with an inordinate amount of work—designing learning activities, planning course requirements, selecting and curating course materials, iteratively reviewing learning outcomes in response to feedback, adjusting course content and requirements accordingly, preparing course packs with course guides, study guides and resource materials for uploading in the CUs' Learning Management System, or printing and delivery to those with poor connectivity; understanding the nuanced contexts of their students; monitoring both the ones who could handle synchronous and asynchronous class activities as well as those who could not be reached easily; coping with unstable, if not poor Internet connectivity and delays in the provision of the University's support, among others. Those with school children have had to bear the added burden of juggling work and domestic duties.

- Students have had to grapple with an overwhelming volume of readings and requirements in four to five courses administered remotely. They have had to adapt to the different time frame and rhythm of independent and remote learning without much preparation while studying in homes that may not be conducive to learning. For some students, poor Internet connectivity, occasional power outages, the feeling of not being able to cope with the pandemic and course requirements dampened their motivation to study.
- The “Kumustahan” and survey results from the different CUs prior to the typhoons prompted the Administration’s call for a review of course content and requirements, starting with learning outcomes and what are essential to achieving them. On the other hand, the mental health concerns disclosed by these activities underscored the need for a reading break from synchronous classes and the submission of course requirements.
- The typhoons exacerbated the situation for a segment of our community. To address the needs of those affected, the CUs identified students living in the affected areas as well as those directly affected. Both the System and CU Administrations called for even greater compassion and flexibility on the part of the faculty and for an iterative reconfiguration of course content and requirements for the remaining weeks of the semester.

Guidelines for the Remainder of the Semester

After due deliberation on the situation of faculty and students in the wake of the typhoons and in the spirit of balancing divergent positions and interests of faculty and students in the wider context of Philippine higher education, the Administration—specifically the President’s Advisory Council (PAC) composed of the System Executive Committee, Chancellors, and the PGH and BGC Directors—upon the recommendation of the Academic Affairs Committee consisting of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Assistant Vice-Presidents for Academic Affairs and Vice-Chancellors for Academic Affairs—endorsed the following Guidelines for the remainder of the First Semester AY 2020-2021 and its proposed modification of the academic calendar for the Second Semester AY 2020-2021 and Midyear 2021.

The Board of Regents, in its 1356th Meeting on 26 November 2020 approved the PAC-endorsed Guidelines and modified academic calendar with an additional condition for the conduct of bridging activities.

On the end of the Semester

- The First Semester 2020-2021 will end as scheduled.
- While this is the case, however, the deadline for the submission of grades for students as stipulated in OVPAA Memorandum No. 2020-139 is moved to 22 January 2021.
- The extended deadline for the submission of grades is intended to give students more time to accomplish requirements and the faculty to grade them.
- Faculty members are enjoined to continue calibrating their course requirements.
 - Course requirements may be further reduced to the essentials of a course.
 - No additional requirements should be specified for the period between the original date of the end of the semester and the extended deadline for the submission of grades.

- Bridging academic activities, for which attendance will not be required, may be conducted before the extended deadline for the submission of grades provided students in the course agree, no additional requirement is imposed, and the faculty will make arrangements for students who miss the activity (e.g. recorded session).
 - The Board of Regents required the additional condition that bridging activities between the end of the semester and the last day of submission of grades must be approved by the Faculty Assembly of the College/School/Center.

On the grading system

- The grades for the First Semester AY 2020-2021 shall be numeric for the following reasons:
 - Unlike in the Second Semester AY 2019-2020 when the pandemic hit us only a few weeks after the opening of classes, we are now only two weeks away from the academic calendar's last day of class for semestral courses.
 - Unlike the Second Semester AY 2019-2020 when the University was caught totally unprepared, students have course packs to enable independent learning even when formal classes are not possible.
 - Many students will need grades for scholarships, licensure examinations, future studies, among others.
 - Students may also need grades for employment in a national context that still privileges grades, no matter how imperfect the grading system or the conditions under which grades are given. Very few universities opted for a grade of "P" in the Second Semester AY 2019-2020. To date, none of the universities are deviating from a numeric grade system.
- Cognizant of high anxiety levels—due to the pandemic and the impact of the typhoons on students and faculty—as well as the reality that the First Semester AY 2020-2021 is still a transition semester towards the learning delivery mode of the next normal AND in the spirit of compassion and flexibility, the following conditions shall prevail: **A grade of "4" or "5" shall not be given this semester.** Nor are faculty members allowed to give a forced drop "DRP" to students on the basis of non-attendance of synchronous classes or non-communication within the semester (e.g. during scheduled consultations). Instead, they will be given an INC.
- This in effect suspends the following rule on attendance:

When the number of hours lost by absence of a student reaches 20% of the hours of recitation, lecture, laboratory, or any other scheduled work in one (1) subject, s/he shall be dropped from the subject; provided, a faculty member may prescribe a longer attendance requirement to meet special needs. If the majority of the absences is excused, a student shall not be given a grade of 5.00 upon being thus dropped (often referred to as "forced drop"); but if the majority of the absences are not excused, the student shall be given a grade of 5.00 upon being thus dropped. Time lost by late enrollment shall be considered as time lost by absence. (Revised UP Code: Art. 346)
- The faculty will help affected students comply with the adjusted requirements in time for the 22 January 2021 deadline for the submission of grades. However, students with missing or incomplete requirements by 22 January 2021 shall be given an INC.
 - The following rule on the grade of 'INC' is suspended:

The grade of INC is given if a student's class standing throughout the semester is

“Passing” but fails to take the final examination or fails to complete other requirements of the subject due to illness or other valid reason. In case the class standing is not “Passing” and the student fails to take the final examination for any reason, a grade of 5.0 shall be given (Revised UP Code: Art 369, as amended at the 886th BOR meeting: 28 April 1977; 899th BOR meeting: 30 March 1978.

- Removal of the INC must be done within the prescribed period, within one (1) academic year, by passing an examination or meeting all the requirements of the course. After which, the student shall be given a final grade based on his/her overall performance. In addition, the student must be enrolled in the term during which completion is made. Graduating students who need only to complete the course in order to graduate may enroll in residence.
- A student given an INC may opt to re-enroll the course/ for which they were given an INC in the subsequent term.
- An INC that is not completed within the prescribed period will automatically convert to DRP. The student must then re-enroll the course or its equivalent if the course is an elective.

Reiteration of Suspended Academic Rules

In addition to the suspended rules on attendance and the INC cited above, it is important to remind administrators, faculty and students of the rules that apply to all students – undergraduate and graduate - that have been suspended with the approval of the Board of Regents.

1. The deadline for dropping and filing of leave of absence is suspended.
2. A 12-unit course load will be considered a regular load for undergraduate students.
3. The First Semester AY 2020-2021 will not be counted towards MRR. This is because it is the first time for students to do remote learning and they will still calibrate the course load that they can manage, especially for graduate students who are working from home and for other students who have a workload outside of their school work.
4. A student enrolled in a course this semester that is a prerequisite to another shall be allowed to enroll in the latter course for credit in the subsequent semester, despite having no grade yet for the prerequisite course given the extension of the deadline for submission of grades to 22 January 2021.
5. The following rules on scholastic delinquency are suspended for the First Semester AY 2020-2021
 - a. Warning
 - b. Probation
 - c. Dismissal
 - d. Permanent Disqualification

Modified Academic Calendar for the Second Semester AY 2020-2021 and Midyear 2021

In light of the postponement of the submission of grades and the time needed to prepare the course guides, study guides and curated references and resource materials and distribute to students, the Board of Regents approved the following academic calendar for AY 2020-2021 and the Midyear 2021.

- | Second Semester | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Start of Classes | 1 March 2021 |
| • Reading/Wellness Break | 29 April – 5 May 2021 |
| • Reading/Wellness Breaks for | 25 – 27 March 2021 |

- the split-semester schedule
- End of Classes 20 – 22 May 2021
- Finals Period 11 June 2021
14 – 19 June 2021

- 2021 Midyear**
- Start of Classes 5 July 2021
- Reading/Wellness Break 29 – 31 July 2021
- End of Classes 20 August 2021
- Finals Period 23 – 26 August 2021

Thank you and stay safe.