

Dear Students,

With the ongoing health crisis, I hope that you and your families are staying safe and are following all the necessary precautions. In times like these, our core values and beliefs shine a light on what matters to us the most and keep us moving forward despite the challenges. Rest assured that we have been and will always stand by our students – our pride and joy. Our mission focuses on serving you the best way we can, and we have been working tirelessly since September on dynamic measures to adapt to the various hardships we have been facing and offer the best possible solutions. Continuously providing quality education will always be a priority for us, and even with the various challenges, we have successfully moved more than 90% of our courses online to ensure the continuity of your semester and your educational future. Unfortunately, the internet infrastructure in Lebanon is suboptimal which has posed many difficulties for all of us; nonetheless, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education as well as the Ministry of Telecom announced on 18/03/20 that using the educational platforms that NDU is providing will not be charged or deducted from your internet consumption.

New academic measures have been put in place following several strategic meetings to alleviate some of the pressures you are experiencing in these unconventional times, and we will continuously assess them along with the various tools we are offering to provide optimal support and quality of service.

### **Optional Pass/No Pass Grading System (P/NP)**

With the shift to remote delivery of instruction occurring at higher education institutions across many countries, many institutions are moving to Pass/Fail or Pass/No Pass grading mechanisms. NDU has opted for the Pass/No Pass system since it exists in our current rules and regulations. As NDU transitions to remote learning, faculty and students alike are experiencing a new mode of instructional delivery with undoubtedly associated stress for both. Our Faculty members have invested ample efforts to deliver their lectures and communicate with the students through a remote environment. They have also been asked to adjust their student learning assessment methods as described below. To help alleviate some of the stresses, NDU has decided to offer the students an **optional** P/NP grading mechanism as such:

- 1- An **optional Pass/No Pass** system will be adopted exceptionally this spring 2020 semester;
- 2- Students can choose and declare which course(s) they can take on a P/NP basis. The Office of IT will soon work out the procedure that students will follow to declare their choice for each course (P/NP or the conventional letter grade A+, A, A-, B+, etc.);
- 3- In case a student declares a P/NP grading system, the passing grade already adopted (D, C+, etc.) will be a P otherwise the student will get an NP;
- 4- P/NP grades will **not be counted in the GPA** (cumulative, core and major);
- 5- If the student Passes the class, the course credits will count on his/her transcript toward reaching the graduation requirements. If the student gets an NP on the course, NDU will **not calculate the zero points** into the GPA calculation, and, naturally, the student doesn't receive the credits for the course because he/she did Not Pass and will have to repeat the course.

### **Who can or cannot opt for the P/NP**

Undergraduate and Graduate Students:

- 1- Usually students in good academic standing may request to take courses on a P/NP basis;

- 2- Spring 2020 graduating students who do not have the required Cumulative and/or Core/Major GPA are not recommended to use P/NP, for this option may delay their graduation;
- 3- Students who are repeating courses to raise their Cumulative and/or Core/Major GPA must choose the conventional letter grades option;
- 4- Students who received an F grade in a course and are repeating it must choose the conventional letter grade option;
- 5- Students who are placed on probation, suspension, and/or readmitted on probation are not recommended to use P/NP option;
- 6- Freshman students who did not complete their Freshman requirements cannot use P/NP option; this is based on the Ministry of Education and Higher Education requirements (D as passing grade);
- 7- If you receive an Incomplete grade in spring 2020, you must complete it on the conventional letter grade basis;
- 8- Cross registered students at NDU are encouraged to consult with their University's Administration prior to selecting the P/NP option;
- 9- Students who intend to apply for graduate studies are advised to choose the conventional letter grade system;
- 10- Graduate students who do not hold a GPA of 3.0 and above are advised to choose the conventional grading system.

#### **Deadline to declare P/NP**

- The deadline to declare the chosen option is at the end of Spring 2020 classes;
- You may not change your option after the deadline has passed.

#### **Assessment Tools**

- 1- Faculty members must use projects in lieu of exams/quizzes/midterms and even finals. Due dates of projects could extend till end of the spring 2020 semester. Exams will be administered as the absolute last resort;
- 2- Whenever it is impossible to give a project and should an exam or quiz be administered, it will only include new material covered after the previous exam/quiz;
- 3- Whenever it is impossible to give a project and should a final exam be given, it should cover the material that has not been covered in previous quizzes or tests. In other words, the final exam will not be comprehensive;
- 4- In the absolute necessity when multiple exams/quizzes are used to assess the performance of students, the highest grade counts towards the final grade;
- 5- Attendance is not graded, but students are encouraged to engage in their online class to the maximum extent possible because faculty members will take into consideration the interaction and engagement when computing the final grade.

#### **Grading Distribution**

The following grading allocation system will be adopted for the final grades:  
Exams, projects, reviews, etc. done before the closure will be allocated a percentage **up to 40%**. The balance of the final grade is left for assessment done online (after the closure).

Other non-academic measures addressing your concerns will be shared with you soon.

As a community, I am certain that we will overcome these difficult times together. I ask you to be patient, cooperative, resilient, and hopeful as these are part of an NDUser's values and our culture that will always make you stand out.

God bless you all