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May 15, 2009

EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR AND PROVOST GEORGE BRESLAUER
ACADEMIC SENATE CHAIR MARY FIRESTONE

Dear EVCP Breslauer and Chair Firestone:

We are pleased to submit the Final Report of the Joint Task Force on Exams, as charged in your memorandum of September 8, 2008. The members of the Task Force have identified specific recommendations designed to accomplish the following:

- Streamline and simplify COCI procedures for implementing SR770 and SR 772, which require a written final exam that does not exceed three hours for all undergraduate courses and stipulate exceptions to that requirement, on the Berkeley campus;
- Take coordinated steps to revise scheduling in the academic calendar to accommodate student desire for a longer reading period prior to final exams and to reduce scheduling conflicts for students during the final exam period;
- Enable the practice of alternate exam seating to the extent possible while minimizing disruptions to recreational sports, intercollegiate athletics and arts events;
- Improve the communication and dissemination of information related to midterm and final exams to instructors, students, and administrators.

Implementing these recommendations will improve the teaching and learning environment for students and instructors, while eliminating common challenges and streamlining administrative procedures associated with exams. Moreover, these recommendations do not require an investment of resources and can be implemented even in the constrained budgetary environment we face.

The Task Force consulted in the course of its work with key Academic Senate committees, as well as with faculty, students and staff. We believe that there is already considerable support for the directions detailed in the report. We urge that the report be vetted quickly and that a team be charged to design a plan for implementing the recommendations as a coordinated package beginning in 2010-11. We hope this team will make optimal use of the 2009-10 academic year to communicate with the key constituencies and to revise the policies and procedures necessary for this effort to succeed.

We have appreciated the opportunity to serve on this Task Force and to address this important issue. If we can provide further information or answer any questions concerning this report, we would be happy to meet with you.

Best,



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Enclosure: Final Report with Appendices

Joint Task Force on Exams Final Report

May 15, 2009

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....3

Activities Undertaken.....4

Key Findings and Considerations.....5

Recommendations.....13

Conclusion.....17

List of Appendices.....19

INTRODUCTION

The Joint Task Force on Exams was convened in September 2008 by Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost George Breslauer and Academic Senate Chair Mary Firestone to investigate and to address concerns regarding the administration of mid-term and final exams, including the implementation of the system-wide undergraduate final exam requirement on the Berkeley campus. Over time, issues have been raised by students and faculty related to exam administration and scheduling, as well as compliance with Senate regulations, policies, and guidelines. Changes in pedagogy in recent years have also made it timely to consider how achievement of new pedagogic goals could be included in recommendations to resolve the problems under consideration.

Specifically, the Task Force was charged to examine and to make recommendations in the following areas (Appendix A):

- current Academic Senate policies and guidelines on exams (both mid-terms and finals), including implementation of UC Systemwide Academic Senate Regulations 770 and 772, which require a written final exam that does not exceed three hours for all undergraduate courses and stipulate exceptions to that requirement;
- practices with respect to scheduling of mid-terms and finals with a view to reducing conflicts for students and improving the efficient scheduling of exams;
- current seating practices for mid-term and final exams and their effects on the efficient utilization of space, as well as on recreational sports and intercollegiate athletics activities.
- ways in which faculty (including visiting and new faculty) are informed about and acculturated to Berkeley campus exam standards, practices, and approaches to student assessment.

Kristie Boering, Chair of the Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) and Associate Professor of Chemistry and Earth & Planetary Science, and Christina Maslach, Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning and Professor of Psychology were appointed as co-Chairs. Representatives from the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the Committee on Academic Planning & Resource Allocation (CAPRA) and two at-large Senate faculty were selected to represent a variety of disciplines and as experience in teaching a variety of courses. On the administration side, the Task Force membership included the Vice Provost for Academic Planning & Facilities, the University Registrar, and a representative from Space Management and Capital Programs. The ASUC was invited to appoint a representative, but did not do so. Staff support was provided by Teaching and Learning, Academic Planning & Facilities, and the Academic Senate.

The Task Force met as a group seven times during the 2008-09 academic year and undertook a variety of data-gathering efforts between these meetings to inform its discussions. This report summarizes activities, findings, and recommendations in response to the issues outlined in the charge letter.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

To identify key issues and recommendations, the Task Force did the following:

- reviewed system-wide Academic Senate Regulations 770 and 772 governing final exams (Appendix B) and Berkeley's implementation of those regulations as stipulated by the Berkeley Division COCI Handbook Section 3.2 and Petition for Final Exam Variance (Appendix C);
- conducted a comparative analysis of the implementation of 770 and 772 at the eight other undergraduate UC campuses;
- canvassed instructors on their experiences with final exams at Berkeley via Teachnet (a moderated email forum for Berkeley faculty and staff to exchange information, advice, tips, and general talk concerning teaching at Berkeley);
- sought input from key committees including CEP, COCI, the Academic Senate Divisional Council, and the Council of Undergraduate Deans;
- considered input from students, including reviewing a written communication from the Graduate Assembly, examining select written student complaints received by various administrative offices concerning experiences with exam administration, and seeking advice from the Student Advisory Council on Undergraduate Education and student representatives on various Senate committees;
- collected and examined statistics and trends related to the approval/denial of requests for final exam variances by COCI, as well as one-time approvals by department chairs of alternative examination methods since 1998;
- obtained a briefing from University Counsel on the campus policy on religious accommodation and the university's obligations concerning scheduling of exams on Saturdays and Sundays;
- examined exam and academic calendars at other institutions to understand their practices and determine whether we could adopt any here;
- requested and examined the Office of the Registrar (OR) information on the number of students with three exams per day in our current schedule and compared that with calculations of the probability that students--randomly distributed into final exam groupings--would have multiple exams in one day under a three-exam-per-day and four-exam-per-day schedule;
- requested and reviewed information on the academic calendar as it affects the administration of final exams;
- reviewed a proposal prepared by the EVCP Office to change the commencement schedule to eliminate conflicts with final exams;
- examined budget data on recent campus costs of holding exams in alternative locations, and future potential costs including the rental of tents to address space shortfalls;
- met with the Director of the Office of Educational Development (OED) to discuss faculty and lecturer acculturation to exam practices at Berkeley;

- reviewed best practices at other campuses regarding communication and dissemination of information on exam practices to concerned constituencies.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Policy and Pedagogy

The Task Force investigated the apparent increase in lack of compliance with Systemwide Academic Senate Regulations (SR) 770 and 772 on the requirement of in-class written final exams in undergraduate courses at the times officially scheduled by the OR and with Berkeley Division procedures for a variance from this regulation. A key question addressed by the Task Force was whether to ask for a variance from Systemwide Academic Senate Regulation (SR) 772 or to clarify and streamline campus policy and procedure for alternative methods of final student assessment and changes in the officially scheduled final exam time for a course. For mid-term exams, the Task Force found no official policy and little guidance for instructors in scheduling and announcing exam times.

SR 770 states that “no student shall be excused from assigned final examinations, except as provided in SR 772” (Appendix B). SR 772 stipulates that “final examinations are required in all undergraduate courses, except as provided elsewhere in this Regulation” and that “whenever practicable” they should be “written” and “may not exceed three hours’ duration.” However, SR 772 also gives considerable leeway to “omit” a final examination from a course with “approval of the Committee on Courses and upon recommendation of the department concerned.” At UC Berkeley, variances for individual courses (either to omit the final exam or to offer an alternative form of final exam) are granted by the Senate’s Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI). By current policy, if an instructor wishes to give an alternative form of final evaluation or to omit a final evaluation completely, a petition (Appendix C) is submitted by the department for COCI review. The petition is also used to request a change in the final exam time from that officially scheduled by OR each semester. Based on student complaints regarding instructor deviation from the official exam time and anecdotal information from faculty, it appears that instructors are frequently unaware of these procedures or intentionally do not follow them. Failure to adhere to procedures results in scheduling conflicts during the final exam period and an increase in the number of exams given during the last week of classes instead, thus creating a burden for students and inefficient use of space during the exam period.

Given that some UC campuses have requested and received variances from SR 772, as well as the possibility that pedagogy in many fields has changed considerably since these regulations were written, the Task Force examined final exam policies at our sister campuses and determined that the regulation was amenable to a relatively broad spectrum of interpretations. We found three basic approaches:

- **Decentralized:** UCLA and UC Irvine have received a variance from SR 772 from the Systemwide Senate and have a highly decentralized approach, which grants authority to local academic units;
- **Centralized:** UC Santa Cruz and UC San Diego require divisional Senate approval for any departure from a three-hour, in-class, written exam, as well as changes to originally scheduled exam times;
- **Hybrid:** UC Davis and UC Santa Barbara allow instructors to give written papers and take-home exams without divisional Senate approval.

Berkeley's interpretation of SR 772 has been congruent with the centralized approach, which is based on a fairly strict interpretation of the regulation. In 1998, however, COCI relaxed its approach somewhat in recognition of changes in pedagogical approaches to assessment by delegating to department chairs the authority to approve alternative methods of final assessment on a "one-time basis." Data collected by OR and Senate staff for this report show that courses for which department chairs have given such approvals number several hundred per semester, with an increasing trend over time. In contrast, requests to COCI for permanent variances for an alternative final exam format or for omission of a final exam for a course typically number under ten per semester. The Task Force also discovered that there is some confusion across the university as to the meaning and intent of "one-time." If "one-time" means an exception can be made by the chair only once for a course and COCI must approve a permanent variance after that, then clearly policy is not being followed. If "one-time" means the chair can approve an alternative form of final student assessment on an on-going, semester-by-semester basis, then the data simply reveal an increasing trend toward non-traditional final assessment formats on campus.

Drawing on the experience of its own members, consultations with faculty colleagues, and examination of the trend data parsed by department, the Task Force recognized significant differences in the approaches to assessment as practiced across the disciplines. The Task Force acknowledged that, while the three-hour in-class written final exam is still the gold standard in some areas of the curriculum (e.g., lower-division gateway courses in the sciences), other courses (e.g., in the humanities) employ assessment practices such as take-home exams, final papers, final projects or oral presentations which are the norm for those disciplines. As one Task Force member in the humanities put it,

Most humanities (or at least language and literature) faculty would agree that the primary skills we are trying to teach are best demonstrated in writing projects that students have some time to work on (and revise) and in which they focus on analysis of texts. An in-class, closed-book exam has some value in classes like these, but tends to weight recall of texts over the ability to develop an incisive analysis...so [written finals] should not be the only option or even a privileged option.

In discussions of both these trends and the wording and intent of SR 772, the Task Force agreed that SR 772 grants instructors, departments and COCI latitude in determining the appropriate method of final assessment, based on pedagogical differences across the disciplines and other considerations. Therefore, after seeking input from COCI and CEP, the Task Force concluded that a variance from the Systemwide Senate was not necessary and that implementation of the regulation could be made to better reflect modern pedagogical practices in a number of subject areas and to increase ease of compliance for instructors and departments. Implementation changes include (a) advising department chairs that they may approve alternative forms of final student assessments for courses on a semester-by-semester basis indefinitely; (b) streamlining COCI's procedure for granting permanent final exam variances for a course; and (c) considering a final exam format that is not a written, in-class exam simply as part of the normal COCI course review process rather than as a "variance." Our specific recommendations are elaborated in #1 below.

Under current policy, changing the time of a one-to-three hour written final examination from that officially scheduled by OR requires a variance from COCI. The Task Force agreed that COCI should (a) still approve such requests for changes in the final examination time, and (b) establish a clear policy for instructors and departments on the scheduling of final exams as well as mid-term exams, including the importance of clearly communicating the format and time of both mid-term and final exams to students in the syllabus distributed during the first week of classes. This policy is discussed in the following section on scheduling.

Scheduling

The Task Force investigated a number of inter-related issues related to the scheduling of mid-term and final exams with a view to reducing conflicts for students with other exams, with religious observances, with commencement ceremonies, and with multiple final exams on the same day.

The Task Force identified a complex and interlocking set of issues related to the final exam schedule. We considered anecdotal evidence in the form of student, instructor and parent complaints and, wherever possible, sought to validate anecdotes with more systematic data analysis. The following were the most salient issues identified:

Conflicts with other exams--Final exams: There have been increasing student complaints that written final exams are being given at times that deviate from those officially scheduled and published by OR, including during exam week, during "dead days" (defined here as the two days between the end of formal instruction and the final exam period), and in the last week of classes. These unofficial changes often create conflicts with other course assignments and final exams that students have. The Task Force agreed that an explicit policy, broadly disseminated, is needed to guide instructors, departments, and the university in expectations for the scheduling of final examinations. Such a policy should require instructors (a) to announce the final exam times in the course syllabus given out the first week of classes; (b) to obtain approval from COCI to

change the final exam time from that in the official final exam schedule; and (c) in cases where the request goes to COCI after the first week of classes and is not announced in the first week's syllabus, to offer the final exam at the officially scheduled time, as well as at the new time approved by COCI, for the benefit of students who cannot make the alternate time. Instructors should be reminded that no final examinations of any kind should be conducted outside of the scheduled exam period. Students should also be educated about this policy and about the recourse that is available to them should instructors fail to adhere to policy. This is the policy on several UC campuses, and the Task Force believes such a policy will help alleviate both undue burdens on students planning their semester during the first week of classes and conflicts with other final exams.

Conflicts with other exams--Mid-term exams: It is common practice for large classes to hold mid-term exams in the evening so that a larger venue than the regular classroom can be used for alternate seating. The logistics of large courses taught in multiple lecture sections (e.g., Chem 1A with lectures at 9am, 11am, and 1pm) that give common mid-term exams also require the exams to be held outside of class time. However, conflicts with other mid-terms sometimes arise and no official policy exists for OR or instructors and departments to follow in preventing or addressing such conflicts. The Registrar can often catch possible conflicts that emerge in the process of scheduling large venues (e.g., if Chem 1A and Math 16A try to schedule their mid-terms on the same evening); however, the process is ad hoc and slightly smaller courses may be off the OR's radar. The Task Force identified the need for a policy, similar to the requirement pertaining to final exams, that the specific date and time of any mid-term scheduled outside of the regularly scheduled class time be announced in the syllabus the first week of classes (and preferably, if possible, in the online schedule of classes during the enrollment periods). If students have a conflict that they cannot resolve with the instructor during the first week of classes, as stipulated in the "Guidelines Concerning Scheduling Conflicts with Academic Requirements" (Appendix D), the student should not take that course. To the extent possible, OR should act as an intermediary in minimizing conflicts for large enrollment courses when it processes room requests for mid-term exams.

Religious Accommodation: The campus currently schedules exams on Saturdays but not Sundays, leading to conflicts for students for whom Saturday is a day of religious observance. The Task Force sought input from University Counsel regarding the campus's obligations in this area and was advised that the burden is on the campus to accommodate students (Appendix E). The Task Force surveyed practices at peer institutions and considered two options for lessening the perception of discrimination against any one religious group, each of which is in practice at other institutions surveyed: (1) eliminating Saturdays from the exam schedule, or (2) adding Sundays to the exam schedule. Each of these options would have implications for the academic calendar that are further complicated by considerations listed below.

Commencement Conflicts: The campus final exam period currently overlaps with commencement ceremonies held by various academic units, with the result that students may have final exams scheduled after or even during their graduation ceremonies. In

spring 2009, for example, the final exam period runs from May 14 to May 21, while departmental or college graduation ceremonies are scheduled every day from May 14 to May 23. This decentralization of commencement ceremonies dates to the 1960s and has generated not infrequent complaints from students and parents. As a result of such complaints, the EVCP Office had separately undertaken an analytical study, spearheaded by AVC Charles Upshaw, to create a scheduling and facilities matrix that would remove exam conflicts and cluster graduation ceremonies closer to the weekends when families are free to travel and could attend a large, campus-wide ceremony (held, e.g., in Memorial Stadium) in addition to the current departmental or college ceremonies. The Task Force strongly endorsed this effort to reintroduce some centralization to the practice of commencement at Berkeley and to bring about the ancillary goals mentioned above.

Multiple Exams in one Day: Berkeley currently schedules a maximum of three exams per day, and the responsibility lies with students to take exam groupings into account when planning their course schedules. The Task Force asked OR to analyze the frequency with which students have multiple exams in one day, which many students consider burdensome, and to provide some recommendations on how exam groupings might be altered to minimize that likelihood. Large enrollment gateway courses were tagged as of particular concern. It was further noted that avoiding Saturday exams for such courses would greatly reduce the probability of requests for religious accommodation noted above. In fall 2008, the OR data revealed that 320 students out of 24,615 (or 1.3%) had three exams scheduled in one day, with 145 out of the 320 students affected on the third exam day (likely due to large numbers of students taking clusters of introductory courses offered on TuTh at 9:30 am and 11 am and MWF at 3 pm). A probability analysis was done, assuming students are distributed randomly into 20 final exam groups and each has four courses with final exams; it yielded a percentage of 2.1%. That the actual percentage is almost half what is expected for a random distribution likely reflects a non-random distribution, including student selection of classes to avoid three exams per day and optimization over the years by the Registrar in scheduling exams. This relatively small fraction is also consistent with feedback to the Task Force by staff of the offices of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning and the EVCP that few students over the years have complained to them about three exams in one day. We do advise, however, that any changes in the exam schedule (e.g., selectively removing large enrollment courses from Saturday exam days) should be undertaken with caution to avoid unnecessarily increasing this percentage.

The Task Force also investigated how a four-per-day exam schedule reduces the number of days in the exam period and concurrent conflicts with commencements or religious observances, as noted above. A four-per-day exam schedule is successfully practiced at all other UC undergraduate campuses, including UC Merced (which, like Berkeley, is on the semester system), with the exception of UC Irvine, which has 5 exams per day. A probability analysis for four exams per day and students taking four courses with final exams yielded a probability of 6.6% for three exams in one day and a negligible 0.1% for four exams in one day.

Reading/Review/Recitation (RRR) Period. Students consistently request more “dead days” in the academic calendar to allow them to synthesize and review course material and to complete final papers and projects. This was the major finding that emerged from the discussion with the Student Advisory Council on Undergraduate Education, and this position has also been echoed by other students and student groups. Concurrent with the Task Force’s efforts, Academic Senate Vice Chair Christopher Kutz and Vice Provost Cathy Koshland consulted with the Divisional Council (DIVCO), CEP and COCI on both the policy and the pedagogical implications of recommending the incorporation of a formal reading period into the academic calendar that would count toward the total numbers of days of instruction required by the State Legislature. The proposed RRR period would maintain student-faculty contact through review sessions, office hours, and oral or poster presentations. The Task Force learned that federal guidelines for financial aid allow RRR days to count as required days of instruction. The proposal would ostensibly shorten the number of *traditional* days of instruction; however, it would almost certainly enhance student learning and would institutionalize a long-time recommendation by CEP that no new material be introduced during the last week of classes [Appendix F]. In addition to having significant pedagogical benefits, the RRR period would ease end-of-semester scheduling constraints and would permit the resolution of some of the final exam conflicts noted above. While the Task Force strongly supported the introduction of an extended RRR period into the academic calendar, it also noted some of the complexities of implementing such a recommendation, including the need to clarify precisely what types of activities can be scheduled during the RRR period and to determine whether all activities would be optional for students or whether some specific types of activities (e.g., oral presentations) could be required.

Based on the interlocking set of issues described above, the Task Force concluded that coordinated changes to the academic calendar and specific policies regarding the scheduling and announcement of mid-term and final exam schedules should be undertaken. Two scenarios for the final exam schedule were considered. Scenario 1 entailed (a) instituting a five-day RRR period on Monday through Friday prior to the exam period; (b) retaining the three-per-day exam schedule; and (c) holding exams for seven days including the Saturday and Sunday immediately following the M-F reading period. Scenario 2 entailed (a) instituting a five-day RRR period on Monday through Friday prior to the exam period; (b) moving to a four-per-day exam schedule; and (c) holding exams for five days beginning on the Monday following the end of the RRR period, thus eliminating the need for either Saturday or Sunday exams. The pros and cons of each scenario were discussed. The Task Force concluded that the benefits of the easing of religious accommodation challenges and the longer *de facto* reading period (two contiguous weekends) associated with the four-per-day exam schedule outweighed the potential increase in the odds that a student could have three or more exams per day. Moreover, it was felt that the increase could be mitigated if the OR took proactive steps to work with deans and chairs to optimize exam groupings to reduce conflicts and multiple exams per day for students in large enrollment courses. Specific recommendations are outlined in #2 below.

Facilities

The Task Force examined current seating practices for mid-term and final exams and their effects on the efficient utilization of space, as well as on recreational sports and intercollegiate athletics activities and community arts events.

Another key issue for the Task Force was final exam venue impaction related to the campus practice of alternate exam seating, in which one empty seat is placed between every two students. The campus has only a limited number of large venues capable of accommodating alternate exam seating for large enrollment courses. Some of these venues also house recreational sports and intercollegiate athletics activities, which are disrupted by exams. These disruptions are likely to increase rather than decrease in the near term due to the anticipated seismic upgrade to Hearst Gymnasium and the loss of the heavily used spaces there.

The Task Force heard strongly voiced opinions on both sides of this issue. Some instructors on the Teachnet discussion forum were adamant that academic needs should always supersede sports (whether recreational or intercollegiate athletics), while others affirmed the importance of preserving these facilities for their intended uses during the exam period. In addition, the Task Force co-chairs received a communication from the Graduate Assembly expressing their strong support for maintaining full use of gymnasium facilities during exam times as an important means by which students can alleviate academic stress. The Task Force evaluated whether students' and instructors' needs for fair and reasonable final exam conditions can be met while preserving access to recreational facilities for students, faculty, and staff; access to normal practice spaces for student athletes; and a normal arts community schedule during the busy December season.

The Task Force determined that there is no specific Academic Senate policy or regulation that requires alternate exam seating. However, it also recognized that this practice is deeply engrained in the campus culture and is viewed as a necessity by many instructors and students for two reasons: (1) it functions to deter academic dishonesty, to simplify exam proctoring, and to reduce the number of false accusations of cheating (an argument that was also made in the Report of the Subcommittee on Academic Dishonesty, June 2004); and (2) it serves to improve student comfort during the taking of exams and to reduce distractions that could diminish student academic performance.

For these reasons, the Task Force affirmed that preserving the practice of alternate exam seating (i.e., one empty seat between students) is a high priority. However, it found no compelling reason to support double alternate seating (two seats between students). The Task Force acknowledged that the campus should find solutions that accommodate alternate seating while minimizing disruptions to campus gymnasiums to the greatest extent possible. Strategies for accomplishing this include asking instructors to "opt-in" to alternate exam seating rather than making it the default seating arrangement; continuing the use of lapboards in Haas Pavilion seating sections successfully piloted in fall 2008 in order to leave the gym floor free for non-concurrently scheduled team practices;

addressing issues such as adequate lighting for Zellerbach Hall; encouraging long-term, multi-year agreements and cooperation among the various constituencies using Haas Pavilion, Zellerbach Hall, and Pauley Ballroom; and budgeting for the rental of large tents as an alternative or augmentation to existing venues. These recommendations are detailed in #3 below.

Communication and Dissemination

The Task Force found that the absence of clear communication of exam policies and procedures to relevant constituencies is a key part of the current problem and must be a critical part of the solution.

On a decentralized campus such as Berkeley, communication is often more than half the solution to any problem. The Task Force found that instructors, students, and administrators lack familiarity with their exam rights and responsibilities, and that there is no clear procedure for acculturating them to exam policies and practices. Although information concerning exams can be found on the Berkeley website, it is scattered across multiple locations and often not prominently displayed. In the absence of a central location for clear and consistent information, instructors, students, and administrators who are not “in the know” might have difficulty locating the information they need. The Task Force sought out best practices at other UC campuses and was particularly impressed by the one-stop web portal on the UCSD website that lists final exam responsibilities for students, instructors, departments, and the university (e.g., registrar).

As one outcome of the Task Force’s deliberation, a small group of staff from the OR and the Office of Educational Development is designing a web portal for information on exam policies and responsibilities that is organized by constituencies (e.g., instructors, students, department chairs). This site will be housed on the OR website and prominently linked to other key sites that serve students and instructors, such as the online schedule of classes. Additional recommendations for dissemination of information related to exam policy and procedures are outlined in #4 below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Streamline and simplify COCI procedures for implementing SR 772 on the Berkeley campus.

1.1 Grant department chairs clear authority to approve alternative final assessment methods for courses on a semester-by-semester basis indefinitely. We recommend clarifying current COCI policy that the chair can approve an alternative form of final student evaluation on an ongoing, semester-by-semester basis indefinitely. Since a permanent variance from COCI applies to the course and not the instructor, there is less flexibility in cases where different instructors will be teaching the same course but may wish to give different forms of final evaluation. In such cases, having the chair approve alternative forms of assessment semester-by-semester may be preferable to having COCI grant a permanent variance. The determination about whether a permanent variance is preferable and should be requested from COCI is at the discretion of the chair. If a department wishes to omit any form of final student assessment from a course, it will still need to request approval from COCI.

1.2 Grant permanent variances for in-class written exams for a particular course if requested by the department, but clarify that alternative forms of final assessments are considered normal and equivalent, not exceptions. Such permanent variances would be routinely reviewed as part of the normal COCI course review process for new courses or for existing courses. The method of final student assessment could be indicated by simply checking one of three boxes on a revised COCI course approval form (e.g., “one-to-three-hour in-class written final exam” or “other”, with a one-or two sentence explanation of method, or “none”, with a brief explanation). COCI’s current “Petition for Final Exam Variances” could be eliminated or modified to include only requests for changes in the officially scheduled final exam time (see 1.3).

1.3 Enforce the current COCI procedures regarding the format and time of the final exam and institute a new requirement: instructors who request a change in either format or time after the first week of classes must offer the final student assessment in its original format at the official time scheduled by the OR (or as indicated in the syllabus from the first week of classes if a different format), as well as in the new format and/or at the new time.

Campus procedures currently require that the method of final assessment and the scheduled time for such assessment be clearly stated in the course syllabus that is handed out to students the first week of classes. The current procedures further stipulate that a final exam must be held during the final exam period at the time officially scheduled by OR and not during the instruction period or during the two days between the last day of instruction and the final exam period; any change in the official final exam time for one-to three-hour written exams should be requested and approved by COCI. We recommend better enforcing these existing policies through regular communication as stipulated in recommendation #4 below. We further recommend codifying the following: (a) if a request for a new

exam time is made after the first week of classes and is approved by COCI, students who cannot make the new time should be allowed to take the exam at the originally scheduled time; and (b) if the instructor wishes to change the method of assessment during the semester, students should be given the option of being evaluated by the method originally described in the syllabus from the first week of classes. Department chairs should continue to be required to report to OR by the fifth week of classes those courses that will not require a room for an in-class, three-hour, written exam or for, e.g., final student presentations.

1.4 Institute explicit practices concerning the scheduling of mid-term exams, including the expectation that instructors must notify students in writing in the syllabus distributed the first week of classes of the specific date and time of any exams that will be held outside of the regularly scheduled class time.

Instructors should not deviate from the announced midterm schedule, and conflicts should be handled as outlined in the “Guidelines Concerning Scheduling Conflicts with Academic Requirements” (Appendix D). For large courses, the OR may be able to alert instructors, department schedulers and department chairs requesting a room for a mid-term exam to potential conflicts and/or investigate the possibility of posting such information to an internal website. The Task Force notes the importance of advance planning for reserving rooms for mid-term exams, as the campus is at capacity now for large rooms during key weeks in the semester. Such planning could be coordinated with recommendation 2.3 below.

2. Take coordinated steps to revise scheduling in the academic calendar to accommodate student desire for a longer reading period prior to final exams and to reduce scheduling conflicts for students during the final exam period.

2.1 Adopt an RRR period in the academic calendar to allow students to synthesize and review material studied and to complete final papers and projects, while maintaining faculty-student contact through review sessions, office hours, and perhaps oral or poster presentations. We support the efforts currently underway by the Academic Senate and the Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Facilities to institute this change in scheduling within the Academic Calendar. We further recommend that the RRR period take place during a five-day period coinciding with the Monday through Friday preceding the final exam period. The specific types of activities allowed during this period should be determined by the appropriate Academic Senate committee(s) and endorsed by DIVCO. We strongly urge that any activities, including oral presentations, poster sessions, attendance at review sessions, and student-faculty conferences, should be optional for students rather than required.

2.2 Modify the final exam schedule to allow four exams per day and to eliminate Saturday exams. We recommend instituting a four-per-day final exam schedule (e.g., 8-11a, 11:30-2:30p, 3:00-6:00p, 7-10p), the successful practice at other UC campuses, rather than the current three-per-day schedule. This modification to the exam schedule, in conjunction with recommendation 1.1

above, which we anticipate may decrease the number of scheduled traditional three-hour, in-class, written final examinations, will also permit the elimination of Saturdays from the exam schedule. Under the new schedule, the twenty exam groups can be accommodated over five days during the Monday through Friday following the RRR period, with students benefiting from an extra four days of study time over the two contiguous weekends.

2.3 Modify existing exam groups with particular attention to large enrollment “gateway” courses to reduce the likelihood that students taking such courses will have multiple exams on a single day. Since large enrollment lower division courses in departments such as Chemistry, Math, Statistics, Physics and Biology are most likely to have three-hour, in-class, written final exams, we urge the OR to work with the relevant deans and department chairs to schedule such courses preemptively so as to mitigate the likelihood of conflicts, using the L&S Gateway Course list as a starting point. This will be particularly important in view of the recommendation above to move to four exams per day. Conflicts with mid-term exams scheduled outside of regular class times could be addressed at the same time. The new scheduling software currently under evaluation may facilitate our ability to reduce scheduling conflicts; however, we note that such software cannot fix challenges with space availability, which are addressed in the next section.

2.4 Institute a more centralized mechanism for scheduling commencement ceremonies to eliminate conflicts with final exams. We endorse the efforts of the EVCP office to accomplish a more systematic approach to the scheduling of local commencement ceremonies to better meet the needs of students and parents, and we urge the Deans to adopt the proposal, once finalized. The proposed effort to cluster commencements around the weekend, in conjunction with the recommendation to eliminate Saturday exams, should greatly mitigate the conflicts students currently experience between commencements and final exams.

3. Enable the practice of alternate exam seating to the extent possible while minimizing disruptions to recreational sports, intercollegiate athletics, and arts events.

3.1 Ask instructors to “opt-in” to alternate exam seating rather than making it the default seating arrangement. We recommend that the OR explore the feasibility of instituting a mechanism for an “opt-in” procedure for single alternate seating in lieu of the current “opt-out” procedure. To ensure a good response rate from instructors, this could be coordinated with a routine request to departments that they notify OR by the fifth week of classes if a room does not need to be scheduled for a final exam for a course, as is the current policy. Such a communication between the department and OR could also include requests for rooms at the regularly scheduled final exam time for alternative final assessment methods, such as final presentations.

3.2 Continue the use of lapboards in Haas Pavilion seating sections successfully piloted in fall 2008. This creative solution for accommodating exams leaves RSF in normal recreational use for students, faculty and staff during exam periods, while keeping the Haas Pavilion gym floor free for scheduled team practices. Minor recreational disruption due to use of Hearst Gymnasium for final exams, however, will remain a necessity.

3.3 Address constraints on the use of large on-campus venues such as Pauley Ballroom and Zellerbach Hall. Improved lighting in Zellerbach Hall would make this venue useable for exams. In addition, the campus should arrange long-term multi-year agreements for such spaces so that students' needs for fair and reasonable final exam conditions can be balanced against the need to preserve access to the broader community.

3.4 Consider the rental of large tents as an alternative or augmentation to existing venues. These temporary structures will become particularly critical when the Hearst Gymnasium goes off-line for seismic retrofit. Tent rental and set-up is twice the cost of the current chair and table rentals and set-up in Hearst Gymnasium. However, where more cost-effective alternatives do not exist, the costs of tent rental could be built into the budgeting for upcoming facilities renovations as appropriate. If such an option is pursued, it will be important to designate a clear lead on logistics.

4. Improve the communication and dissemination of information related to final exams to instructors, students, and administrators.

4.1 Develop a communications plan for announcing the changes to the COCI procedures recommended in recommendation #1 above. We recommend that the new procedures be announced at a deans and chairs retreat and be followed up with appropriate written and electronic materials so chairs can easily disseminate the information to their faculty members and staff.

4.2 Develop a comprehensive plan for communicating about proposed changes to exam and RRR scheduling within the academic calendar. It will be important to communicate early and broadly with instructors, students and faculty who will be affected by changes to the academic calendar. We encourage an open comment period to ensure a fair hearing by all members of the Academic Senate, by undergraduate and graduate students, and by staff in academic units who will be affected.

4.3 Go "live" with the one-stop web portal on exam policies and responsibilities organized by constituency (e.g., instructors, students, department chairs). This site should be housed on the OR website and should also be systematically and prominently linked to other key sites that serve students, instructors, staff, as well as to Academic Senate websites. The web portal should also include information about recourse available to students whose

instructors violate the exam policy, including a link to contact information for the student ombudsperson. The OR should be charged to keep the site up-to-date and to check periodically to ensure that key links are still active.

4.4 Send regularly a high priority e-mail notification to instructors, deans and department chairs from the appropriate senior administrator with a link to the exam portal and upcoming deadlines. This communication should be sent approximately two weeks before instruction begins each semester and copied to relevant support staff in academic units. It should serve as a reminder to faculty and departments to adhere to current practices and procedures regarding the assessment of students.

4.5 Institute regular mechanisms for acculturating new faculty (including temporary instructors such as visiting and adjunct faculty and lecturers) to exam policies and practices at Berkeley. The Office of Educational Development has a number of tools by which it communicates with new faculty, including the new faculty newsletter. The OED Director should be encouraged to incorporate information about exams and to ensure that they are disseminated widely.

CONCLUSION

Implementing these recommendations will benefit instructors, students and their families, and staff in many ways:

- enhancing the learning environment for students by supporting innovative pedagogical approaches and strategies for student learning;
- allowing instructors and departments more flexibility in determining the optimal forms of assessment for their courses and for their program-level learning goals for undergraduate students;
- eliminating common roadblocks and streamlining administrative procedures for instructors and departmental and OR staff associated with scheduling times and venues for exams;
- reducing scheduling conflicts and attendant stress for students associated with mid-term and final exams, and for students and their families during commencement;
- equalizing the number of days of instruction in the fall and spring semesters; and
- improving communication to various campus constituencies to foster transparency and clarity about exams.

To maximize the benefit to the campus, the Task Force concludes with two overarching recommendations:

- **First, the recommendations outlined above should be implemented as a coordinated package.** We anticipate that changes likely to be welcomed by students (e.g., the institution of the RRR period and the elimination of conflicts

with commencement) will make the change to a four-per-day exam schedule, which enables an entire week of RRR days plus one or two contiguous weekends for review and study, easier to accept. From the perspective of instructors, implementing these changes in one package will minimize the work of redesigning course syllabi to adapt to changes in the number of podium days. Piecemeal implementation, in which the number of podium days might change again in order to accommodate a subsequent revision to the final exam schedule, for example, would be difficult for instructors. From the perspective of staff and administrators, a coordinated approach will ease communication, avoid conflicts, confusions and misunderstandings, and allow more effective anticipation and redress of the various domino effects of these changes.

- **Second, the campus should aim to implement these recommendations in the 2010-11 academic year.** Considerable research and work has been done within the administration and the Academic Senate to lay the foundations for these changes. Indeed, key Academic Senate committees have expressed support and enthusiasm for the institution of an RRR period as early as 2010. Moreover, preliminary feedback from students suggests that undergraduates will strongly favor these recommendations as a package. We can begin immediately to consult broadly and collect feedback needed to build this initial positive reception into a groundswell of support.

Although the goal of implementation in 2010-11 may seem ambitious, the Task Force believes it is achievable and desirable. We urge that an implementation team consisting of appropriate representatives from the Academic Senate, the OR, the Office of Teaching and Learning, and the Office of Academic Planning and Facilities be appointed immediately to develop a coordinated implementation plan that will make optimal use of the 2009-10 academic year to lay the groundwork for these changes.

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Charge Letter to the Joint Task Force on Exams, September 8, 2009
- Appendix B: Systemwide Academic Senate Regulations 770 and 772
- Appendix C: Berkeley Division COCI Handbook Section 3.2 and Petition for Final Exam Variances
- Appendix D: Guidelines Concerning Scheduling Conflicts with Academic Requirements, Endorsed by the Divisional Council, 1 May 2006
- Appendix E: Accommodation of Religious Creed
- Appendix F: CEP Informal Guidelines Concerning the Last Week of Instruction, Memos dated Nov 20, 1984 and the Feb 21, 1991.

Appendix A

BERKELEY: OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

September 8, 2008

Kristie Boering, Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) Chair (Co-Chair)
Christina Maslach, Vice Provost, Teaching and Learning (Co-Chair)
Jack Citrin, Committee on Academic Planning & Resource Allocation (CAPRA) Representative
Anne de Luca, University Registrar
Catherine Koshland, Vice Provost-Academic Planning & Facilities
Kathleen McCarthy, Academic Senate at Large Representative
Kerry O'Banion, Principal Planner, Space Management & Capital Programs
Mary Ann Smart, Academic Senate at Large Representative
Constantin Teleman, Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) Representative

Re: Joint Task Force on Exams

Dear Colleagues:

We write with a formal invitation to serve on a joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force on Exams.

Concerns about the implementation of the system-wide undergraduate exam requirement have increased in the last few years. They include questions related to exam administration and scheduling (both time and room assignments). Student complaints about informal rescheduling of exams have also increased; it appears that compliance with Senate regulations, policies and guidelines is uneven among faculty. With changes in pedagogy, many faculty members would like to explore options other than a three-hour in-class final to assess student performance. Impending renovations to facilities, such as Hearst Gym, will affect how and where we schedule finals.

It seems timely to appoint a task force to study the issues and recommend changes, where appropriate, to Senate policies and guidelines, as well as to campus practices, in order to achieve our pedagogic goals, and to respond to the scheduling challenges posed by current policy and practice. More specifically, the task force will be charged to examine and to make recommendations in the following areas:

- current Academic Senate policies and guidelines on exams (both mid-terms and finals) implementing UC Academic Senate Regulations 770 and 772, which require a written final exam that does not exceed three hours and stipulate exceptions to that requirement;
- practices with respect to scheduling of mid-terms and finals with a view to reducing conflicts for students and improving the efficient scheduling of exams;
- the impact of current practices around seating for mid-term and final exams, and their effect on the efficient utilization of space, as well as on recreational sports and intercollegiate athletics activities.
- the ways in which faculty (including visiting and new faculty) are informed about and acculturated to Berkeley campus exam standards and approaches to student assessment.

In completing its charge, the Task Force should identify and collect additional information needed to address these questions, and should consult with affected units such as Recreational Sports, with instructional specialists, and with instructors in large gateway classes as appropriate.

The Task Force will be co-chaired by COCI Chair and Professor of Chemistry Kristie Boering and Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning and Professor of Psychology Christina Maslach. Staff support will be provided by Sarah Nathe, Office of the Vice Provost-Academic Planning & Facilities; Cynthia Schrager, Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning; and Linda Song, Academic Senate.

You will be contacted regarding the scheduling of the first meeting shortly. The Task Force will meet four or five times during the Fall semester and will submit its recommendations at the beginning of the Spring semester. We appreciate your willingness to serve, and there is no need to RSVP unless you are unable to serve. If you have questions, please contact Cynthia Schrager at schrager@berkeley.edu or 3-7856.

Cordially,



George W. Breslauer
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost



Mary Firestone
Academic Senate Chair

Appendix B

770.

No student shall be excused from assigned final examinations, except as provided in SR 772(D).

772.

- A. Final examinations are required in all undergraduate courses, except as provided elsewhere in this Regulation. Whenever practicable each such examination shall be written and must be completed by all participants within a previously announced time limit. Examinations in non-laboratory courses may not exceed three hours' duration.
- B. Examinations are normally not required in laboratory courses or their equivalent, as individually determined by the appropriate Committee on Courses. At its option, the department concerned may require a final examination in any laboratory course, subject to prior announcement in the schedule of classes for the term in question.
- C. With the approval of the appropriate Committee on Courses and upon recommendation of the department concerned, the final examination may be omitted in any undergraduate course or sets of courses either once or for a longer period.
- D. At the end of the term in which a student is expected to be graduated, the student's major department may examine the student in the field of the major, may excuse the student from final examinations in courses offered by the department during that term, and, with the approval of the appropriate Committee on Courses, may assign a credit value to such general examination.

Appendix C

3.2 Final Examinations

3.2.1. Final Examination Requirements

3.2.1.1 Undergraduate Courses

Regulation 772 of the Academic Senate states that a written examination, not to exceed three hours, is required in all undergraduate courses. The examination must be given during the examination period scheduled by the Registrar's Office, unless COCI grants a variance. For graduate courses, a final examination is optional at the discretion of the instructor.

Monitoring: It is the responsibility of the instructor to arrange for and monitor the conduct of the final examination, or its equivalent, in a manner that discourages and detects academic dishonesty.

Announcements: Alternative forms of evaluation must be approved by COCI and specified at the time of scheduling courses so that the appropriate notation can be entered in the online *Schedule of Classes*. The final evaluation to be used must be announced in the course syllabus given to students at the beginning of the semester.

Exam Schedule: Final examinations in any format must not be required to be completed or turned in during the regular semester's period of instruction or during the days of "dead week."

Exam Status:

A course's final exam status (i.e., required or exempted) is linked to the course and not to a particular instructor. Instructors wishing to change a course's current final exam status must submit a new Final Exam Variance Form.

Special Cases:

Pursuant to Regulation 772B, COCI has determined that a final examination is not normally required in laboratory courses or their equivalent (seminars, fieldwork, workshops, studios, etc.) and will usually approve indefinite exemptions for such courses. However, an examination may be conducted at the discretion of the instructor.

Final examinations in Freshman and Sophomore Seminars (24, 39, and 84) are automatically approved as "TBA." It is at the discretion of the instructor to determine whether or not a final exam will be given for these courses.

Finals are optional in all Special Studies courses 97, 98, 99, H195, 197, 198 and 199. These courses default to *no exam* unless specified by the department.

New Courses

- When a new undergraduate course is created, a final exam is automatically required. The course is then assigned a final exam group based on the day and time the course is offered and it is included on the Final Examination Schedule.
- When creating a new course, an instructor must submit a course approval form and a syllabus. All syllabi must indicate the type of final examination for the course (and the relative weight of the exam on students' final grades). If the instructor is not planning to hold a final exam in a new course, the proposed syllabus must indicate the alternate examination method designed for the course.
- COCI approves new courses without final examinations, or with an alternate final examination method, (a) only when pedagogically sound and (b) contingent upon the submission and approval of a variance or exemption request.

Approved/Existing Courses

- If the instructor decides to replace a regular final exam with an alternate method of evaluation, a Final Exam Variance Form must be submitted to COCI requesting an exemption. Department chairs may approve a one-time alternate method of evaluation.
- If the instructor wishes to request a change of exam group for only one semester, a Final Exam Variance Form must be submitted to COCI requesting a variance.
- Final Exam Variance Forms can be found on the COCI website (<http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/coci.html>). In order to be accepted all Final Exam Variance Forms must be complete, meaning (a) signed by the instructor and (b) reviewed and approved by the appropriate department chair(s). COCI will not consider incomplete requests.

Reinstatement of Final Exams

- If the instructor decides to reinstate a final exam for a course that has already received an exemption, a Final Exam Variance Form must be submitted to COCI requesting the reinstatement.

3.2.1.2 Graduate Courses

Final examinations are not required in graduate courses; they are optional at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes to the schedule of a graduate course's final examination do not require COCI's approval, but the department must notify Classroom Scheduling at osoc@berkeley.edu.

3.2.2 Variances and Exemptions

COCI considers and takes final action on two kinds of requests regarding undergraduate final examinations: Variances and Indefinite Exemptions.

Variances are temporary changes affecting a final exam (e.g., rescheduling for a different exam group or replacing an exam with a term paper for one semester).

Indefinite Exemptions (often referred to simply as “exemptions”) are permanent waivers of the final exam requirement, where a final is replaced with an alternate form of evaluation. Exemptions are approved only if specific criteria are met.

A. Lower Division Courses

An examination, as prescribed by the Regulations, is required in all lower division courses, unless COCI grants an exemption or a variance. COCI does not approve exemptions for regular lower division lecture courses except in unusual circumstances.

B. Upper Division Courses

An examination, as prescribed by the Regulations, is the norm for regular upper division courses. An instructor who decides that an alternative form of evaluation is pedagogically sound, may, with the approval of the department chair, request an indefinite exemption from COCI.

3.2.3 Request Process

In order to request any change to a course’s final exam status, a particular set of steps must be completed *before the course is taught*. The approval of the department chair and COCI must be obtained in advance so that, if an exemption or variance is granted, the online *Schedule of Classes* can be updated with an appropriate amount of time to notify the students and allow them the opportunity to adjust their schedules.

3.2.3.1 Request Deadline

Except as provided elsewhere in these procedures, changes cannot be made to course exam status and schedules after the start of instruction for the semester in which the course is taught. Therefore, in order to ensure that COCI has an opportunity to consider requests in advance, all requests must be received by COCI at least four weeks before the end of instruction in the semester preceding the one in which the course is offered.

3.2.3.2 Request Submission

An electronic copy of the Final Exam Variance Form is available on COCI’s website (<http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/coms/COCI.html>). All final exam variance and exemption requests must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate department chair(s) before being submitted to COCI. Complete forms must be submitted, before the deadline, to COCI in the Academic Senate office in 320 Stephens Hall, # 5842.

In order to request an indefinite exemption or a temporary variance to substitute an alternative final evaluation, the instructor must provide detailed information to justify the exemption:

- 1) What is the course format and estimated class size?
- 2) How will the alternative evaluation, along with other class requirements, meet the primary intent of a final examination: to evaluate a student’s mastery of the

subject matter of the course? (Some form of in-class evaluation during the last part of the semester is normally expected.)

- 3) What precautions or methods are employed to avoid plagiarism or other cheating?

In order to request a change of exam group, the instructor, or appropriate department staff, must contact the Office of the Registrar's classroom scheduling staff to confirm in advance that the needed space is available. Requests submitted prior to contacting the classroom scheduling staff are incomplete and will not be considered.

In order to request the reinstatement of an exam, the instructor, or appropriate department staff, need only submit a Final Exam Variance Form (with the appropriate box checked) with the necessary signatures.

If COCI approves a final exam change, COCI staff will notify the Office of the Registrar's classroom scheduling staff, and the changes will be reflected in the online *Schedule of Classes*.

3.2.4 Late Requests

Once instruction has begun, requests for final exam changes for that semester will be approved only under very specific circumstances.

Exam Group Change: If a change of place or time is requested, it must be cleared *in advance* with the Office of the Registrar's classroom scheduling staff to ascertain that the needed space is available.

- 1) COCI must receive the petition before the Final Examination Schedule's publishing deadline, at the end of the fifth week of instruction. Requests received after the fifth week of instruction will ordinarily not be approved.
- 2) COCI requires evidence that the affected students have all agreed to the proposed change. Late forms must include a printout of the class list along with the students' signatures noting agreement with the change in date, time, and location of the final examination. Students who cannot take the exam at the new date and time must be accommodated as needed.

Format Change: If an instructor wishes to substitute an alternate evaluation format (either as a one-time variance or an indefinite exemption) COCI will only consider late requests for this change before the fifth week of instruction.

- 1) Late requests must include a printout of the class list along with the students' signatures noting agreement with the change in evaluation format.
- 2) COCI will not approve these types of changes after the fifth week of instruction and will not approve a change that does not have the agreement of all enrolled students.

Reinstatement: COCI generally will not approve the reinstatement of a final exam after the start of instruction. Instructors and departments are strongly discouraged from submitting a late reinstatement request because late approval is unlikely and would only be considered under the most extreme circumstances.

3.2.5 One-time Alternate Final Examinations

Background

Academic Senate Regulation 772 states, in part, "Final examinations are required in all undergraduate courses, except as provided elsewhere in this Regulation. Whenever practicable each such examination shall be written and must be completed by all participants within a previously announced time limit. Examinations in non-laboratory courses may not exceed three hours' duration."

The Committee on Courses of Instruction recognizes that there are varied methods to measure learning and has modified its practices to allow for greater flexibility in assessment. The Committee has approved more relaxed procedures, authorizing academic departments to approve one-time, alternate final examination methods. The procedures require departments to establish a process to review, approve, and monitor requests for alternate final examination methods. With the approval of alternate final examination methods, some classrooms may be released to be rescheduled for other exams.

The following procedures implement this change and supersede older procedures (dated April 17, 1998) pertaining to one-time variances for alternate final examination methods.

Procedures

These procedures provide for the approval of one-time alternate final examination methods in undergraduate courses as follows:

1. The department chair may approve alternate final examination methods, including, but not limited to, term papers, oral exams, take home exams, and special projects. As a guiding principle, a one-time approval for an alternate final examination method should be granted only if the alternate method is pedagogically sound.
2. The department chair is not authorized to waive the final examination requirement, schedule the final examination outside the final examination period, make a change in examination group, or conduct a common final. Such variances require the approval of the Committee on Courses of Instruction.

In addition, permanent variances for final examination methods for any course require the approval of the Committee on Courses of Instruction.

3. Alternate final examination methods must be announced in the course syllabus given to students at the beginning of the semester.
4. Final examinations in any format must not be required to be completed or turned in during the regular semester's period of instruction or during the days of "dead week".

5. A one-time approval of an alternate final examination method must be authorized by the chair of the department responsible for the course prior to the beginning of the semester.

The Office of the Registrar will provide departments with a turn-around document listing courses with classrooms scheduled for final examinations. The department must indicate which courses that are approved for alternate final examination methods do not require classrooms for the examination. This must be indicated directly on the document along with a brief indication of the reason for the alternate final examination method and the release of the classroom. The document must be approved and signed by the department chair and returned to the Office of the Registrar no later than the end of the fifth week of classes. Upon request, the Office of the Registrar will provide the Committee on Courses of Instruction with copies of these documents.

6. The authority of a department to grant one-time variances may be revoked by the Committee on Courses of Instruction, if the privilege is abused.

3.2.6 Regulations Related to Final Exams

Article 2. Examinations

SR 770 . No student shall be excused from assigned final examinations, except as provided in SR 772(D).

SR 772.

- A. Final examinations are required in all undergraduate courses, except as provided elsewhere in this Regulation. Whenever practicable each such examination shall be written and must be completed by all participants within a previously announced time limit. Examinations in non-laboratory courses may not exceed three hours' duration.
- B. Examinations are normally not required in laboratory courses or their equivalent, as individually determined by the appropriate Committee on Courses. At its option, the department concerned may require a final examination in any laboratory course, subject to prior announcement in the *Schedule of Classes* for the term in question.
- C. With the approval of the appropriate Committee on Courses and upon recommendation of the department concerned, the final examination may be omitted in any undergraduate course or set of courses either once or for a longer period.
- D. At the end of the term in which a student is expected to be graduated, the student's major department may examine the student in the field of the major, may excuse the student from final examinations in courses offered by the department during that term, and, with the approval of the appropriate Committee on Courses, may assign a credit value to such general examination.

BR A251. Disposition of Final Examinations

It is the responsibility of instructors and/or departments to return to the students their final examinations or copies of them, or to retain their students' final examinations or copies of them, for a period of thirteen months after the dates of such examinations. In the latter case, it is also their responsibility to provide a student access to his or her final examination under the supervision of the instructor or his or her designee. A student has the right to pay for and retain a photocopy of his/her examination. (Am. 4.4.94)

Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI)

PETITION FOR FINAL EXAM VARIANCES

Academic Senate Regulation 772:

- (A) Final examinations are required in all undergraduate courses, except as provided elsewhere in this Regulation.
- (B) Examinations are not normally required in Laboratory courses or their equivalent, as individually determined by the appropriate Committee on Courses. At its option, the department concerned may require a final examination in any laboratory course, subject to prior announcement in the schedule of classes for the term in question.

Instructors seeking an exemption from this requirement or seeking to reschedule final exams for a different day and time must complete this form and submit it to COCI. Department chairs may approve *one-time* final exam variances. See COCI's procedures on Final Exams. COCI's handbook can be found online at < <http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/coci.html> >.

Petitions must be received by COCI before the beginning of student enrollment for the affected course – approximately four weeks before the end of instruction in the semester preceding the course offering.

To complete this form, please provide (1) ALL Course Information, (2) ALL information requested in section I, II, OR III, and (3) ALL Required Signatures.

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor's Name: _____ Department: _____

Course Number & Title: _____

Effective Term (F/Sp/Su) & Year: _____

Course Format (Lecture, Lab, Studio, etc.): _____ Estimated Class Size: _____

I. FINAL EXAM EXEMPTION REQUEST

___ I petition for an indefinite exemption from the requirement to conduct a final exam. (Please answer BOTH questions below.)

1. *How will the alternative evaluation along with other class requirements meet the primary intent of a final: to evaluate a student's mastery of the subject matter of the course? (Some form of in-class evaluation during the last part of the semester is normally expected.)*

2. *What precautions or methods are employed to avoid plagiarism or other cheating?*

II. VARIANCE REQUEST FOR A CHANGE OF EXAM GROUP

___ I petition for a change in exam group. (If any change is approved, all students must be given the opportunity to be evaluated in a suitable place as well as at the time and in the format published in the schedule of classes.)

1. All exam group changes *must* be cleared with the Office of the Registrar's room scheduling staff to ascertain that the needed space is available.

(a) Has Office of the Registrar reviewed and approved the change? **YES** **NO**

(b) **NEW Exam Group:** _____ **NEW Date:** _____ **NEW Time:** _____

2. IF STUDENTS HAVE ALREADY ENROLLED IN THIS COURSE, the requesting instructor must provide evidence that all students have agreed to the proposed change. COCI requires a class list printout with a signature from each student.

Is the required evidence of student agreement attached? **YES** **NO**

III. REINSTATEMENT OF A FINAL EXAM

___ I petition to reinstate the final exam for this course. (COCI does not grant approval to reinstate final examinations after instruction has started.)

REQUIRED SIGNATURES

INSTRUCTOR

Date

DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Date

FOR COCI USE ONLY

Subcommittee Recommendation:

APPROVE

DENY

Comments:

SUBCOMMITTEE SIGNATURE

Date

Full Committee Decision:

APPROVED

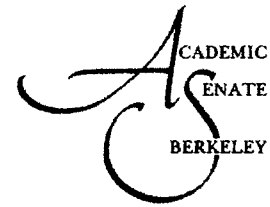
DENIED

Comments:

COCI SIGNATURE

Date

Appendix D



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Guidelines Concerning Scheduling Conflicts with Academic Requirements

Committee on Educational Policy, 2005 / 2006

Endorsed by the Divisional Council, 1 May 2006

* * *

These guidelines focus on the handling of conflicts that arise between extra-curricular activities and academic requirements, and specifically concern the schedules of student athletes, student musicians, those with out-of-town interviews, and other students with activities that compete with academic obligations. The object of these guidelines is to avoid misunderstanding and to foster a climate in which learning can take place. The basic assumption is that matriculated students—while often deeply engaged with other activities—are in university primarily to achieve academic goals.

The Scheduling of Extra-curricular Activities

Many extra-curricular activities in which students are the central participants arrange their performances, matches, debates, practices, and rehearsals to occur outside the hours students are regularly expected to be in class or to be taking final exams. This is the preferred arrangement. When such activities *are* scheduled at times that classes and exams are regularly scheduled, students should be notified of that schedule (and of potential additional late-scheduled obligations such as tournaments and special performances) before they enroll in their courses for the term in question.

Those music directors, coaches and others scheduling activities that require student absence from regularly-scheduled classes and exams should seek to minimize the number and the impact of these conflicts. In some cases rules minimizing conflicts are mandated by external national agencies and one such example already endorsed by UCB, NCAA Bylaw 17.1.5.6.1, provides a useful template for all:

Declaration of Playing Season: 2005-2006 Missed Class Guidelines:

- 1. No away competition should be scheduled during the first week of each semester unless the game is a Pac-10 conference scheduled game.*
- 2. No home or away competition should be scheduled during Final Exam Week.*
- 3. No away competition should be scheduled during Dead Days.*
- 4. No departure for away competition may occur prior to the evening of the last day of Final Exam Week. However, if all team members have completed their final exams early, travel may occur after the last final is complete.*
- 5. No travel (return trip from an away competition) scheduled during Dead Days.*

6. *No departure for an away competition earlier than 48 hours prior to the start of the actual competition and no return more than 36 hours following the conclusion of the actual competition.*
7. *In the sports of men's and women's basketball, a team may not leave campus before 3:00 p.m. the day before all away Pac-10 competitions.*
8. *No home competition starting times prior to 1:00 p.m.*
9. *When at all possible (depending on destination of trip and availability of flights) departure for all away competition will occur after noon.*
10. *No missed class time will be allowed for any practice activity.*

Course Syllabus

All major exams, papers, and project due dates, and field trips should be on the course syllabus and available to students the first day of class (or earlier if practicable). Faculty teaching courses that are structured so that this early notice is impossible or undesirable should accept the burden of accommodating students who have conflicts and who have notified their teacher of those conflicts in a timely manner.

Notification of Conflicts

It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor (or designated GSI), in writing, before the end of the second week of term of all foreseeable conflicts between the syllabus (classes, exams, project due dates, field trips) and scheduled practices, matches, games, potential tournaments, interview weeks, performances, and other activities in which the student will be participating (or *may* be participating) that would require absence from academic activities during the semester, as well as to provide a proposal for resolving these conflicts. If unforeseen conflicts arise during the course of the semester students must promptly notify the instructor and arrange to discuss the situation as soon as these conflicts (or the *possibility* of these conflicts) are known.

If, in the opinion of the instructor the student's list of foreseeable conflicts reveals multiple unresolvable scheduling conflicts the student may be advised to find another class that better accommodates his/her priorities. If systematic or frequent unresolved conflicts are evident the instructor may drop the student from the class.

Similarly, if the music directors, coaches, and others who arrange these activities have stated policies concerning mandatory attendance, punctuality, and participation, students involved in these activities must notify these individuals by the second week of term concerning academic conflicts or potential conflicts. If a mutually-satisfactory arrangement is not possible, the student may be dropped from the roster of that activity.

Missed Classes

As noted above, when occasional conflicts arise, for instance, because of job-seeking, or athletic team-related activities, or religious observance, for instance, and the student has notified the instructor at the outset of the semester, including a statement concerning his/her proposed handling of the situation (e.g. attending an alternative section one week) and discussed the matter with the instructor or designated GSI, faculty should try to accommodate the student.

If systematic conflicts occur that might, for instance, require a student to leave lecture or section early or arrive late on a *consistent* basis, and if, in the opinion of the instructor there is no mutually-workable solution, the student may be dropped from the class.

Students should be aware that, because of internal requirements (such as activities requiring students to work in specific teams during classtime, special resource-use, and similar necessities), faculty may decline to enroll students in a class who cannot be present at *all* scheduled activities.

Students are responsible for material covered during missed classes whether or not they have been formally excused; therefore it is the student's responsibility to inform him/herself about the material missed. Because of serious workload issues it is not the instructor's or the GSI's responsibility to tutor students in missed material. For this reason it is recommended that students absent from class for any reason make timely contact with several other students in the class to arrange for thorough briefing on the material they missed.

Assignments

Students whose off-campus events conflict with the due dates of projects, assignments, and such must arrange to have their work in the hands of instructors before they leave campus so that it can be evaluated and graded with the work of the student's cohort, unless the instructor has agreed in advance to other arrangements.

Exam Conflicts

Making up and proctoring exams for individual students (or groups of students) is a workload issue for faculty and GSIs. Students may be aware that alternative exams are sometimes scheduled by faculty to accommodate, for instance, DSP (Disabled Students' Program) students. Students with scheduling conflicts may sometimes be accommodated in these alternative exams. However, Campus Proctoring Services can only serve students with disabilities documented by DSP.

Furthermore, because of mechanical requirements in some classes, and the requirement to provide the same opportunities to all enrolled students, often no alternative exams will be given outside of the scheduled classrooms or the appointed hours.

Under certain circumstances and with appropriate notice (see "Notification of Conflicts" above), a faculty member may decide to assign a proxy proctor to give a midterm exam off campus at the same time that that exam is given in class. Care should be taken that conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest be avoided in undertaking proxy proctorships.

Conclusion

These guidelines are designed to foster communication between students, faculty, GSIs, and the professional staffs that orchestrate extra-curricular activities in which UCB students participate. With the timely attention of faculty, students, coaches and others to scheduling on the one hand, and notification of potential conflicts on the other, difficulties and misunderstanding can be avoided and learning will be facilitated.

Religious Creed Policy

The Berkeley campus' policy for accommodation of students who miss exams because of their religious commitment is distributed annually at the beginning of each fall semester. The most recent statement is dated August 21, 2008. The policy follows:

ACCOMMODATION OF RELIGIOUS CREED

In compliance with Education code, Section 92640(a), it is the official policy of the University of California at Berkeley to permit any student to undergo a test or examination, without penalty, at a time when that activity would not violate the student's religious creed, unless administering the examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship which could not reasonably have been avoided. Requests to accommodate a student's religious creed by scheduling tests or examinations at alternative times shall be submitted directly to the faculty member responsible for administering the examination.

Reasonable common sense, judgment and the pursuit of mutual goodwill should result in the positive resolution of scheduling conflicts. The regular campus appeals process applies if a mutually satisfactory arrangement cannot be achieved.

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Appendix F

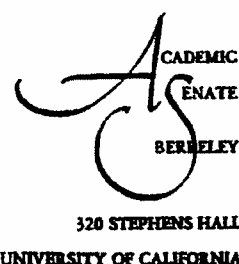
BERKELEY: OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
329 STEPHENS HALL

November 28, 1984

TO: All Faculty
FROM: Committee on Educational Policy
RE: Summary Week under the Semester Calendar

Although the Berkeley Campus does not have a "dead week", "moratorium", or "reading period" for the last week of instruction at the end of the semester, CEP would like to remind the faculty that it would be sound pedagogic practice in many courses if the fifteenth week of classes were at least partly used for summarizing material earlier assigned. No "unannounced" quizzes or significant assignments in new readings should be set. A summary week at the end of each course would give the students an opportunity to look back on all the material and to see it whole.

It would be helpful to students if all major written work in undergraduate classes were to be assigned and completed before the fifteenth week. These recommendations are not meant, however, to be adopted across-the-board for all classes. Seminars, laboratories, and other courses that do not have final examinations are not affected by the above recommendation. However, instructors in such courses should keep in mind the responsibility of their students to prepare for other courses' final examinations. We strongly recommend, furthermore, that no athletic or other extra-curricular activities planned primarily for undergraduates be scheduled during this week.



February 21, 1991

Professor A. L. Leiman
Chair, Berkeley Division

Dear Arnie:

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) still believes that it is pedagogically advisable for instructors to use the last week of instruction as a "summary" or "reading" week in preparation for upcoming finals. During such week, no new tests would be administered, no new material would be covered, no new readings would be assigned. However, this is only a recommendation and the final decision is the instructor's. Also, the recommendation should not be taken as a blanket one. For example, as stated in our memo of November 20, 1984, seminars, laboratories, and other courses that do not have finals would not be affected by the recommendation; even though instructors in such courses should want to keep in mind that their students must prepare for finals in other courses. It is finally the opinion of CEP that no athletic or other extracurricular activities involving undergraduate students should be scheduled during the last week of instruction.

Sincerely,

G. Di Palma 46

G. Di Palma
Chair

Committee on Educational Policy



yc: J. L. Heilbron
The Vice Chancellor