


March 26, 2020

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Louis Santiago, Chair, Executive Committee  
College of Natural and Agricultural Science



Re: COVID-19 Response Temporary Suspension and Replacement of UCR Regulations

---

The CNAS Executive Committee discussed and is in favor of the Temporary Suspension and Replacement of UCR Regulations for the spring quarter in response to the movement to remote teaching. While everyone lauded the move by the Faculty senate to make adjustments to our academic policy so that UCR students are not negatively affected by the abrupt move to remote teaching, several committee members also pointed out aspects that deserve consideration.

1. Approval of S/NC for major requirements for a particular course should be consistent, at least at the college level. Allowing S/NCs to be approved for major requirements by department could cause inconsistencies if different majors adopt different standards and requirements. For example, if a student changes their major, or tries to apply their S/NC approved course towards another program, if that program had not approved S/NC for that course, then it might not count for the new major or program.
2. If large numbers of students request S/NC grading, we may drive up the instances of need to repeat a course due to the higher performance standard required for the "S." The standards for allowing advancement in a sequence are not exactly the same for S/NC grading and letter grades. An "S" requires a "C" or better, while "C-" is no credit. However, a "C-" would normally allow sequence advancement. Strong and savvy students request S/NC grading to relax their focus on breath/non-major classes. Average and underperforming students request S/NC grading because of difficulty in core courses.
3. There was a concern that this grading approach may work to undermine the effort that faculty are putting in to create an online learning environment.
4. There was a question as to why the only graduate student provision is in R1.1.5, and whether graduate policies are set elsewhere. If this is the case, we wondered whether the sentence in R1.1.5 should be removed. The graduate students will need greater flexibility and our support this quarter as well.