

January 24, 2020

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Academic Senate

FROM: Philip Brisk, Chair
BCOE Executive Committee

RE: [Campus Review] Proposed Regulation Change: Senate Regulation R1.8.1-Final Exam Duration

The BCOE Executive Committee discussed the “Proposed Changes to Regulation R1.8.1” at our meeting on January 24, 2019.

The Committee is uniformly supportive in our belief that students would benefit from an extra reading day prior to the start of final examinations.

The Committee had mixed opinions on whether or not a switch from 3 hour final examinations to 2 hour final examinations would be detrimental to the student experience. One Committee member opined that any experienced instructor should be able to write a good quality final examination, regardless of the duration. Another Committee member opined that shortening the final examination would increase the difficulty in writing an examination that adequately covered all course topics, and would instead assess student knowledge of a more limited range of topics. A third Committee member opined that a short exam, presumably with fewer problems, would increase the negative impact of small-to-medium scale mistakes on the overall exam score. If a shortened final examination period would be considered, the Committee agreed that a switch to 2.5 hour final examinations would be preferable to 2 hour final examinations.

The Student Representative opined that taking more than two final examinations in a single day is detrimental to students, regardless of the examination length; the other Committee members concurred. The Student Representative noted that the current system, in which students are expected to plan out their final exam when signing up for classes is not ideal, due to limited availability of courses, especially in upper division. This led to a side discussion, independent from this proposal, about potential policies that could ensure that students would never be required to take more than two final exams in one day. While no Committee members questioned the benefits of such a policy, there was concern about how to implement it; in particular, there was concern about any policy that could compel a faculty member to arrange to proctor multiple final examinations for a single class. Moreover, any faculty member who was serious about enforcing academic honesty would need to write multiple exams, which would take time away from research and service activities. This remains an open issue regardless of whether or not the duration of final examinations will be shortened, and while the Committee recognizes its importance to students, no workable solution was put forward.

Philip Brisk, Chair
BCOE Executive Committee

From: [Philip Brisk](#)
To: dylan.rodriquez@ucr.edu; [Cherysa P Cortez](#)
Subject: Fwd: BCOE Executive Committee - Reducing final exam time
Date: Monday, January 27, 2020 8:34:30 AM
Attachments: [Reducing final exam time.pdf](#)

Dear Dylan and Cherysa,

Maggy is the BCOE Executive Committee's Student Representative. If possible, I would like to add her comments regarding the reduction of final exam time to the official Senate record.

Would it be necessary or appropriate for me to put this on letterhead?

Sincerely,

Philip

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject:BCOE Executive Committee - Reducing final exam time
Date:Mon, 27 Jan 2020 02:18:03 -0800
From:Maggy Harake <mhara004@ucr.edu>
To:Philip Brisk <philip@cs.ucr.edu>

Hello Dr. Brisk,

I have attached a pdf with my opinion (and support) of reducing the final exam time period from 3 to 2.5 hours. I hope this helps in supporting some further discussion about the matter.

Please let me know if there is anything else I can provide.

Thank you,
Maggy Harake

Reducing final exam time

To whom it may concern,

My name is Maggy, a 4th year Chemical Engineering undergraduate. I am the 2019-2020 student representative on the BCOE Executive committee. In addition to this, I am a Student Engagement Ambassador with the Office of Undergraduate Education and a University Advancement Ambassador.

I am writing to you in response and support of the proposal to reduce the final exam time from 3 hours to 2.5 hours in order to avoid Saturday finals. I have been in several situations where the entire 3 hours is not used, had some of my professors decide to make their finals 1 hour, give no final, or give it during week 10. This leaves students who need to travel far distances to see and be with their families in a delay. With shorter exam times, students may have the added advantage of having their finals spread throughout the week rather than stacked. Consequently, because of the way finals are scheduled, it may be possible for a student to have all their finals in one day -- something that should be avoided at all costs. Students are not in class on Saturdays so taking exams on Saturday does not make sense. Students typically use their weekends to de-stress and prepare for the following week but having Saturday finals add more stress and anxiety to an already fast-paced 10-week quarter. Having a guaranteed reading period for each student will have its benefits, as I know I will be using that to review and practice. If there is a way for the university to schedule and accommodate students and professors by reducing the exam period to 2.5 hours, I am in full support.

I would be happy to discuss this in further detail!

Thank you for your time,
Maggy Harake