

Concerns regarding CUNY's Grade Policies Memo, 2021:

- a) Do you share our concerns about these four new policies below? **YES**
- b) Do you have concerns about other parts of the memo? **YES**
- c) Do you plan any communication with CUNY about this memo? **NO**
- d) Would you be interested drafting some kind of joint effort or communication? **YES**

1. ***Elimination of possible extensions for completing INCs.*** At Hunter, we allow faculty-requested extensions for the student to complete work once the original deadline for the INC has passed and the grade has turned to an FIN. The new May 22, 2021 policy eliminates this since its provision for faculty appeal requires students to have completed work by that original deadline. This would hurt a lot of students who have legitimate reasons for needing more time and who do successfully complete the coursework after the FIN deadline.
 - What about students in lab courses that are only offered once per year? For example, if a student receives an INC in a lab course that is only offered in the Fall, and must complete lab work to finish the course, that student could not complete the missing work until the next Fall semester.
2. ***Shortening of our deadlines for grade appeals to 30 days after grade is given.*** At Hunter, we time deadlines from the start of the subsequent semester: a student has to appeal a grade within the first three weeks of the subsequent semester (for in Fall for Spring grades and Spring for Fall grades). The timelines in the May 22, 2021 policy are not consistent with the faculty availability in summer or January and so are unworkable.
 - We agree and note the same concerns.
3. ***Taking the decision by dept and Senate grade appeal committees to be only recommendations to the faculty member.*** At Hunter, we take the dept level grade appeals committee decision to override the faculty member decision, but it may be appealed to the Senate (by either the student or faculty member), and then the Senate grade appeal committee decision is final. The policy in the May 22, 2021 memo that makes the rulings by appeal bodies only recommendations would completely change the nature of the appeal process and seemingly make it a pointless exercise for students and committee members. Also, note that the finality of the committee decision occurs in the Hunter College Governance Charter in the description of the Grade Appeals committee: Article VIII, Section 10: "The Senate shall establish a **Committee on Grade Appeals**, consisting of 4 faculty members, and 3 students and 3 student alternates. The Committee on Grade Appeals will consider grade appeals in which the student or faculty member involved takes exception to the decision of the Departmental Grade Appeals Committee. The Committee on Grade Appeals shall establish guidelines for procedures to be followed in its review of grade appeals and will report its decisions in each case to the parties concerned, the Department Chair, and to the Registrar. The decision of the Grade Appeals Committee is final."
 - We agree that the appeal committee's decision should override the faculty member's decision. Otherwise, if they only provide a recommendation, a lot of time and resources will be wasted if a faculty member simply disregards the appeal committee's recommendation. In addition, the final say of an appeal committee is obviously more fair to the student.

4. ***The removal of the effect a WU has on a student's GPA. We have three main concerns with this.***

First, it seems to us that this will have many negative unintended consequences. For example, it seems inevitable that more students will be "disappearing" from class as semesters progress. Inaction will have the same effect as deliberate withdrawal; borderline students will have less incentive to make the effort necessary try pass a course and may choose to not show up for the final, thus protecting themselves from F grades. The WU may come to be seen by students as an alternative in courses where the P/NC option is not allowed by their major.

Second, it undermines the reliance on the GPA as a standard by which to judge a student being in good academic standing. If the new grading definition of the WU does not allow for that kind of failure of a course (one due to inactivity) to be reflected in a student's GPA, then some other way for that to be registered needs to be found. Otherwise, how to prevent a self-funded student from remaining enrolled with a majority of WUs? If WUs do not affect the GPA of a student, then there seems nothing put in place to prevent this. The admission and retention of students could be achieved merely by their ability to pay, not by the adequacy in level of academic achievement. If there are good reasons for exempting the WU from affecting the GPA, then some additional measure of good standing needs to be found and it is in the purview of faculty to determine this.

Third, this directive concerning the WU appears to violate faculty governance of academic standards. It is unclear how given the CUNY Bylaws (Article VIII), this decision to exempt a student from academic assessment in such a case can be legitimately made by any body other than the college faculty itself or the BOT.

- We agree that this policy is problematic and note similar concerns.
- In addition, this policy clearly gives an advantage to students who do not depend on financial aid (for which there is no penalty at all for getting a WU). Such a policy, therefore, is contrary to Lehman's mission.
- We also note that this might create confusion for students who don't realize that this new policy does NOT affect financial aid penalties associated with a WU.

ANOTHER CONCERN:

That the new policies supersede and override all undergraduate and graduate program-level grading change policies currently in effect at CUNY colleges and schools Effective Fall 2021.

- The new policy about INC grades and deadlines to complete missing work, as well as the new 30-day deadline to appeal grades, are problematic for reasons listed above. However, that these policies should supersede and override all others creates another problem. Is it fair that a student who received an INC in Spring 2021 for example, when the rules were different, be submitted to these new guidelines?