



Dear Department Chairs,

Yesterday, the Academic Senate voted to extend the Pass/No Pass and Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory deadlines to the end of Finals Week (June 12, 2020) in response to a **massive student-led advocacy effort that came about as a result of both the institutional impacts of coronavirus on learning and mental health and the impacts of the national conversation regarding police brutality against the Black community**. The intent of this change in regulation is to **alleviate pressure from students who cannot reasonably be expected to focus on their academic well-being**. The Senate also sent out a letter about support for students during finals, stating that **instructors “have significant flexibility regarding finals, as long as changes are applied consistently and if they are communicated clearly to students.”**

We recognize the empathy and compassion of our campus partners, but unfortunately, there are numerous professors, spanning many departments and campus units, who have **refused to make changes to their courses** despite recommendations from not only the Academic Senate but also administrators and students across the university. We don't see this as a lack of flexibility, but rather a **lack of compassion or understanding for the lived experience of Black students**.

We therefore want to take this opportunity to highlight some of the words of Black students in our community in the hope that it will illustrate precisely what that lived experience is, both today and every day:

- “I’m **scared** to leave my house to get groceries.”
- “I don’t know if my family is going to **live through the day**.”
- “This is **personal**. This is our **community**.”
- “UC San Diego only treats Black students better than before because of **Black students themselves**.”
- “How can I focus on assignments or exams when I am literally fighting for **my right to live**?”

We include these quotes to drive home a point, but they only represent a fraction of the lived experience of our fellow Black Tritons. **We, therefore, representing the entirety of the undergraduate and graduate student body, write to the Council of Chairs in order to prevail upon you to exercise your unique position to ensure that all students, in every department and every course, are given the best chance to succeed in light of the unprecedented obstacles they face. It is absolutely necessary that professors across the university units make immediate changes to their final exam delivery in order to accommodate every affected student, and especially those in the Black community.** In particular, we endorse a no-penalty final format as the most equitable option for all students across campus units.

We also recognize the immense burden placed on graduate students who work in dual roles as both students and instructors, particularly graduate students belonging to the Black community. We

therefore urge instructors of record to treat their TA's, IA's, readers, and tutors with humility and leniency; **consider reducing or excusing the grading workload associated with final exams.**

The Council of Chairs released a [statement](#) condemning the Zoom bombing attack on the Associated Students meeting that occurred this Sunday. We appreciate that statement of solidarity but also recognize that **the incident is only one manifestation of the broader systemic struggle that Black students in particular suffer under every day.** We see it as essential that professors not only recognize this but take action to address it. We hope that this letter will inspire a conversation within each and every one of your departments in order to convince professors that these accommodations are not just the morally correct thing to do for the student body, but **the only viable option to ensure the continued well-being of all students.**

Even as constituent components of an institution, we are all responsible for its failures. This is our time to address it. And as a self-declared student-centered campus, this is our time to prove it.

In solidarity,

Black Student Union

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