

Provost Update for the May 27, 2020, Meeting of the Valencia College District Board of Trustees

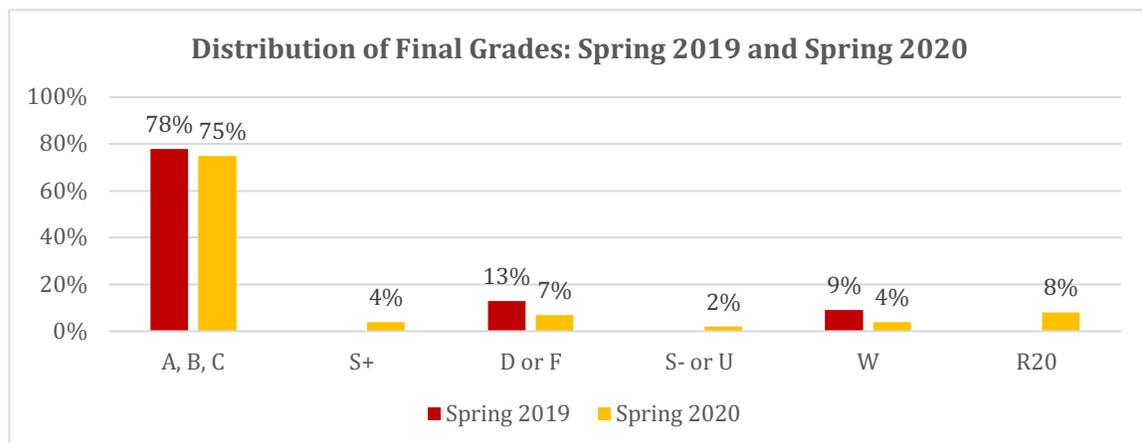
At the April 22, 2020, District Board of Trustees meeting, the Board approved new grade options and temporary academic and student affairs procedural changes in response to adverse conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These new grade options and temporary procedural changes have helped to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on students and their academic progress.

New Grade Types

The Board of Trustees approved two new grade types for the Spring 2020 term:

- a retake option, denoted on students' transcripts as R20, which allowed students to unenroll from a course in Spring 2020 without academic penalty; students electing this option who chose to retake the course in Summer 2020 had their tuition and fees for the course waived;
- a satisfactory/unsatisfactory option, denoted on students' transcripts as S+, S-, or U, which allowed students to earn credit for a course (if they passed) without affecting their grade point average. For students who elected this option, final grades of A, B, or C were converted to S+, final grades of D were converted to S-, and final grades of F were converted to U.

10,261 students elected at least one of the new grade options for the Spring 2020 term. The percentage of successful grades issued (A, B, C, or S+) were nearly identical in Spring 2019 (78%) and Spring 2020 (75%). There were fewer grades of D, F, or W issued to students in Spring 2020; instead, 8% of all final grades issued were a grade of R20.



Student feedback about the new grade options was positive. In response to an end-of-semester survey, one student shared, *"I think the choice of whether or not you want a letter grade this semester or to exclude the class from your gpa or being able to redo the course was very smart and helpful for students."* Another commented, *"The email about u/s satisfactory grades showed they really care and understand how difficult and drastic this change was for some of us."*

Of the 6,986 students who elected an R20 grade in Spring 2020, 4,958 (71%) continued in Summer 2020. In comparison, of the total population of students enrolled in Spring 2020 (45,242), 52% (23,531) continued in Summer 2020.

Temporary Academic and Student Affairs Procedural Changes

The Board of Trustees also approved several temporary academic and student affairs procedural changes in an effort to support students' academic momentum and success, including:

- *a process to approve appeals on behalf of all students who were enrolled in a second course attempt in Spring 2020 who earned an unsuccessful grade to exempt them from paying the full cost of instruction for their third attempt if they enrolled in the course in Summer 2020, Fall 2020, or Spring 2021*

In Summer 2020, 1,384 students enrolled in a third attempt of a course. Without this temporary procedural change, students would have had to submit a Full Cost of Instruction Waiver, describing the circumstances that prevented them from successfully completing the course during their second attempt. These waivers would have then been reviewed by a committee. Recognizing that the extraordinary conditions created by the pandemic would have been cited and deemed adequate for all waiver requests, this temporary adjustment allowed 1,384 students to register for a third attempt of a course without this additional procedural step.

- *a process to approve appeals on behalf of all students who were enrolled in a third course attempt in Spring 2020 who earned an unsuccessful grade to grant them permission to enroll in a fourth attempt in Summer 2020, Fall 2020, or Spring 2021*

In Summer 2020, 167 students enrolled in a fourth attempt of a course. Without this temporary procedural change, students would have had to submit a Fourth Attempt Appeal Form, describing the circumstances that prevented them from successfully completing the course during their third attempt. These appeal forms would have then been reviewed by a Dean of Students or his/her designee. Recognizing that the extraordinary conditions created by the pandemic would have been cited and deemed adequate for all appeal forms, this temporary adjustment allowed 167 students to register for a fourth attempt of a course without this additional procedural step.