

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM

TO: James D. Fielder Jr., Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission
Bernie J. Sadusky, Executive Director, Maryland Association of Community Colleges

FROM: Joann A. Boughman, *Joann A. Boughman*
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

DATE: Monday, March 30, 2020

SUBJECT: USM Adoption of Pass/Fail Grading from Community Colleges During the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis

I am writing to provide you with the USM's response to inquiries regarding our institutions' willingness to transfer community college courses that adopt pass/fail grading due to our state-wide move to remote teaching for the remainder of the Spring semester in response to the COVID-19. As I know you will agree, while we will have to remain flexible during this life-changing global pandemic, we must also continue working together to ensure the success of Maryland's transfer students. I am especially concerned about the long-term academic consequences of these events for our students as we find ourselves choosing among "the lesser of all evils" when it comes to creating optimally effective learning environments and assessment of learning outcomes.

That being said, under these circumstances, the USM agrees to transfer community college courses that move to pass/fail grading within the following parameters, which are aimed at ensuring our students' ability to succeed in the rest of their academic programs:

1. The content of the course must remain consistent with previously approved articulation agreements.
2. The "pass" grade must be applied by the community college only in situations where the student's work would have normally received a mark of C- or above in General Education English.
3. The course will transfer to the USM institution for the same credit, but the pass/fail grade will not be used in the calculation of a student's GPA.
4. Remedial courses will continue not to transfer from the community college to the USM institution, no matter what grading scale is applied.
5. The USM institutions reserve the right to require additional, diagnostic evaluations of students' preparedness before placing them in certain, upper-level courses.
6. This arrangement will be reconsidered in the Fall of 2020 for extended use if the public health crisis has not ended.

Our students' ability to succeed may be seriously affected by the various accommodations all segments of higher education are being forced to make at this time. We appreciate collaborating with you in every way possible to counteract as many of these adverse consequences for our students as possible.

CC: Jay Perman, Chancellor; USM Provosts; Antionette Coleman; Emily Dow; Chancellor's Direct Reports