

April 2, 2020

Dr. Joyce Jones  
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs  
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia  
*sent via email:* Joyce.Jones@usg.edu

Dear Dr. Jones:

As the COVID-19 situation has escalated, everyone's lives have been uprooted, including the over 300,000 students across the University System of Georgia (USG). As USG institutions transition to online instruction for the remainder of the semester, students have voiced strong concern regarding grading and the new challenges they face due to COVID-19. Voicing these concerns and advocating on behalf of our students is our primary responsibility as the leaders of our respective student bodies. For that reason, we, the undersigned SGA Presidents, representing students from institutions across the university system from every sector, are writing to request the USG reconsider its decision regarding Board of Regents Policy Section 3.5 and advocate for opt-in pass/fail grading.

We know you are aware of the various, sometimes extraordinary expressions of students and others' desire to see changes to course grading, and we acknowledge the complex nature of changing grading systems. We also respect the USG's commitment to maintaining standards and rigor, which is indeed paramount. The transition from face-to-face classes to online classes has been a tumultuous leap for all stakeholders, but we, the students, are the most affected. All students, but especially those who have been made economically, emotionally, and even physically vulnerable through this crisis, find themselves facing extreme change and have justifiable concern over their ability to finish-out their semester at the same performance level they have maintained thus far.

In response to the growing needs of students, many peer institutions have found opt-in pass/fail grading as a remedy to these problems. We write to you today to share the strong sentiments across our campuses to provide this grading system for our students within the University System of Georgia as well. These sentiments were displayed this past Tuesday, March 31st, as the Student Government Association legislative bodies at both the Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of Georgia passed legislation advocating for opt-in pass/fail grading. If the implementation of an opt-in pass/fail grading system remains infeasible, we ask that alternative solutions be considered to address the complexities students face to complete their coursework due to COVID-19.

We appreciate your commitment to placing students and their success at the center of every decision. Thank you for all you have done for each of us. We ask that you share this letter with Chancellor Wrigley and Chief Academic Officer Denley expediently but as you see fit.