



MEMORANDUM

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DATE: May 23, 2005

TO: Rosario Diaz-Greenberg  
Secretary, Academic Senate

FROM: Karen S. Haynes *Karen Haynes*  
President

Robert Sheath *Bob Sheath*  
Provost

SUBJECT: GEC Resolution on Syllabus Guidelines

We are writing to acknowledge having received this resolution on guidelines for preparing course syllabi.

Our campus already requires "course expectations and requirements [to] be communicated in the course syllabus," and further requires that "Each syllabus will also contain a statement on the instructor's scheduled office hours" [General Catalog 2004-2006, page 69]. This resolution provides guidance to faculty on how to communicate those expectations and requirement. Particularly important for our campus, as we head into our WASC re-accreditation cycle, is the inclusion of course learning objectives in syllabi.

We thank the General Education Committee for taking the lead in developing these guidelines, and the Academic Senate for approving them. We are forwarding them to the College Deans and to the Faculty Center and asking that these be brought to the attention of all faculty members.

KSH/RS/DJB/mab

Attachment: Resolution on Syllabus Guidelines

- cc: Neal Hoss, Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services  
Rick Keith, Vice President for External Affairs  
Pat Worden, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs  
Linda Holt, Chair, Academic Senate, 2005-06  
Staci Beavers, Chair, General Education Committee, 2004-05  
Mark Baldwin, Interim Dean, College of Education  
Vicki Golich, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Dennis Guseman, Dean, College of Business Administration  
G.H. "Bud" Morris, Interim Director, Health and Human Services Programs  
✓ David Barsky, Associate Vice President for Academic Programs  
Carmen Nava, Director, Faculty Center

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**Resolution on Syllabus Guidelines**

**Background:** It is the intent of this resolution to publish guidelines, with the full backing of the Academic Senate, for the development of course syllabi. The intent is that colleges, departments and programs will suggest that faculty utilize them in preparing their courses.

This idea was originally generated in the GEC, due to a substantial number of syllabi that did not provide sufficient clarity in course objectives and goals for reviewers to understand how the courses would meet GE criteria. Therefore, the Senate proposes these guidelines in order to facilitate communication of course objectives to the curriculum review committees and to students who enroll in those courses. More broadly, since syllabi are potentially viewed as binding contracts between the student and faculty, greater clarity and more complete information in the syllabi may help protect all faculty and the University from possible litigation.

There are several benefits to establishing guidelines for syllabus development. These include:

- (1) Making curriculum review more efficient;
- (2) Helping new faculty to write syllabi;
- (3) Helping all faculty to address larger curricular goals;
- (4) Helping in the assessment of course learning objectives needed for curriculum and accreditation reviews;
- (5) Helping students understand course objectives and requirements;
- (6) Decreasing number of student grievances filed, and simplifying the resolution of grievances that are filed;
- (7) Protecting the faculty and the University from legal actions;
- (8) Aiding students in transferring coursework to other institutions.

Therefore, the Academic Senate of CSUSM resolves that the following items are suggested for all syllabi:<sup>1</sup>

1. Course Number.\*
2. Course Name, as it appears in the catalog.\*
3. Semester
4. Meeting times
5. Instructor(s)
6. Office hours
7. Faculty contact information (i.e., faculty e-mail address and campus phone number)
8. Course description: The course description can be taken verbatim from the catalog.\*
9. Prerequisites and/or corequisites.\*

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<sup>1</sup> \*Indicates a detail that is highly recommended for a "sample syllabus" for prospective curriculum review.

10. Course learning objectives, including specific General Education learning objectives (if applicable). The course learning objectives should communicate to the students what they can expect to learn.\*
11. Materials required/requested/recommended for purchase to complete course.
12. Course requirements (i.e., number of exams, assignments, etc.). If there are special requirements, such as attendance at outside events or Service Learning activities, these should be listed as well.\*
13. Grading standards, including point schemes or other schemes for indicating relative weight of assignments, and attendance policies, where applicable.\*
14. Policy on late work and/or missed exams.
15. A statement about how the writing requirement is satisfied in the course.\*
16. Schedule, at a level of detail sufficient to allow readers to understand roughly what percentage of the course is spent on different topics.\*
17. Readings.\*
18. Academic Honesty statement, as required by the Student Academic Honesty Policy (the following is a distillation of the "such as" example in the Policy):

"Students will be expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the Student Academic Honesty Policy. All written work and oral presentation assignments must be original work. All ideas/material that are borrowed from other sources must have appropriate references to the original sources. Any quoted material should give credit to the source and be punctuated with quotation marks.

Students are responsible for honest completion of their work including examinations. There will be no tolerance for infractions. If you believe there has been an infraction by someone in the class, please bring it to the instructor's attention. The instructor reserves the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty, in accordance with the general rules and regulations of the university. Disciplinary action may include the lowering of grades and/or the assignment of a failing grade for an exam, assignment, or the class as a whole."

Incidents of Academic Dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students. Sanctions at the University level may include suspension or expulsion from the University

19. ADA statement. Example: Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations must be approved for services by providing appropriate and recent documentation to the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 5205, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TTY (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with me during my office hours in order to ensure confidentiality.