

March 31, 2020

Responding to the ongoing disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Albany Law School's faculty has voted to adopt substantial changes to the grading policy for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester.

In this system, faculty will calculate and submit letter grades. Students, after receiving their letter grades, will have the option to elect to receive the letter grade awarded in any or all classes as they were submitted by their professors. Students who do not elect to receive a letter grade will receive P/NC by default. No Credit will be given only for grades of "F."

Uncoupling class rank and GPA: While students will get the benefit of improving their individual GPA by electing certain letter grades, Spring 2020 grades will not be used for purposes of class rank. Class rank will remain the same as at the end of Fall 2019.

Additionally, no student will be academically dismissed at the end of the Spring 2020 term; no student will lose a scholarship; and the 1L curve will be raised to a "B" median. Details of the P/NC policy as adopted by faculty are defined in the chart below.

Finally, the faculty voted to administer Spring 2020 final exams remotely, in an open book and open note format. (The format of the ALA II final exam, which is meant to closely simulate a bar exam, will be determined at a later date.) More details will be announced.

Grading, Spring 2020

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| Grading Spring Courses | For all Spring 2020 courses, faculty will submit letter grades in the usual manner and will adhere to the modified Uniform Grading Policy set forth below. |
| Grades will Be Reported as P/NC | NC (No Credit) shall be adopted rather than F. (This would prevent the inclusion of 0 quality points in any GPA calculation.) |
| Courses Affected | All courses for which grades were not entered prior to March 13, 2020. For example, Spring 1 courses in the Online Graduate Program and Professor Brescia's Legal Profession grades will not be subject to this policy. |
| Courses Normally Graded P/F and Courses the Student Already Elected to Take P/F | Courses that are normally graded P/F, like the field work credits in the Field Placement Program, Semester in Practice, and the Pro Bono Scholars Program, will continue to be graded as P/F. A student who has previously elected to have a letter-graded course be graded as P/F, shall receive a P if the final letter grade for that student would have been any grade other than an F. Since the student has already made the election to take the course pass/fail, the student will not be |

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| | <p>allowed to elect to take the letter grade and the letter grade will not be reported to the Registrar.</p> <p>The change to NC would apply. F grades would be reported as NC.</p> |
| Curve – 1L | The Uniform Grading Policy shall be amended, only for the spring of 2020, to reflect that 1L courses are required to have a B median. |
| Curve – Upper Level | The Uniform Grading Policy for upper division courses shall remain in place. |
| Academic Dismissal and Probation | <p>1. No student will be academically dismissed at the end of the Spring 2020 term.</p> <p>2. Current 1L students who, by the close of the Fall 2020 term, have failed to maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA will be subject to dismissal in accordance with the rules laid out in the Student Handbook.</p> <p>3. A current 1L student will get one additional regular semester to achieve a 2.25 cumulative GPA before being placed on academic probation. If at the end of the additional regular semester, the student’s cumulative grade point average is less than 2.25, the student shall be placed on academic probation for the next regular semester. If the student does not achieve a 2.25 cumulative GPA in the next regular semester, the student will remain on probation and have one additional regular semester to achieve the 2.25 cumulative GPA required to be in good standing or will be subject to academic dismissal.</p> <p>Robust counseling will be given to any student who appears to be substantially behind and/or at risk, notwithstanding the temporary moratorium on academic dismissals.</p> |
| Retaking Required Courses | Our current rules require that a student who receives a grade of D+, D, D-, or an F in any required course is not eligible for graduation until the course is retaken and passed with a grade of C- or higher. For purposes of retaking Spring 2020 courses, the actual letter grade earned in the course will be used to determine whether the student will be required to retake the course. |
| Students Affected | J.D., LL.M., M.S. whether residential or online. |
| GPA | <p>A student’s term and cumulative GPA for Spring 2020 will be calculated using those letter grades the student elects to take.</p> <p>NC would result in a student failing to earn the credits for the course, but an “F” would not be calculated into their GPA.</p> |

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| Class Rank | While students would get the benefit of improving their individual GPA by electing certain letter grades, Spring 2020 grades would not be used for purposes of class rank. Class rank would remain the same as it was at the end of fall 2019. |
| Transcripts | Transcripts will contain a notation that says, "Due to COVID-19, all grades are reported as Pass/No Credit with students given the option of electing the letter grade earned" |
| The Following Decisions Are Based on GPA: | |
| Latin Honors | <p>3L Latin Honors will be based on each student's cumulative GPA after Spring 2020 as described above.</p> <p>Because there is no numeric limit on competitors, no student is disadvantaged. Graduating students on the cusp of earning <i>cum laude</i>, <i>magna cum laude</i>, or <i>summa cum laude</i> would be able to do so.</p> |
| Dean's List | <p>There will be a Spring 2020 Dean's list for upper level students based on letter grades earned in Spring 2020.</p> <p>The 1L Dean's List is computed based on cumulative GPA for the first two semesters. Cumulative GPA will include all grades received in the fall semester and those letter grades elected in the spring semester.</p> |
| Moot Court, Semester in Practice, Study Abroad, and Journal Write-on Competition | <p>Eligibility will be based on cumulative GPA after Spring 2020, including elected grades.</p> <p>Because there is no numeric limit on competitors, no student is disadvantaged.</p> |
| The Following Are Decisions | |

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| Based on Class Rank: | |
| Journal Grade-on | Eligibility would be determined by class rank at the end of Fall 2019. |
| Sponsler Fellows, Academic Prizes, and Teaching Assistants | Same as above. |
| Foundations Program | To be determined; under discussion by the Academic Affairs Committee. |
| Scholarships | No student will lose his or her scholarship in Spring 2020. |



ALBANY LAW SCHOOL

EXPLANATION OF GRADING SYSTEM LETTER GRADES AND NUMERICAL EQUIVALENTS

Professors evaluate student work by written examination, except where such examination is inappropriate, such as in seminar, practice court or workshop, and legal research and writing courses. Some professors count classroom participation in assigning final course grades.

Grade definitions include:

- A: EXCELLENT- Demonstrating superior ability in the fulfillment of course requirements.
- B: GOOD- Demonstrating skill and proficiency in the fulfillment of course requirements.
- C: SATISFACTORY- Demonstrating basic competence in the fulfillment of course requirements.
- D: PASS- Demonstrating minimal competence in the fulfillment of course requirements.
- F: FAILURE- Failing to demonstrate competence in the fulfillment of course requirements.

Within each of the above categories (except "Failure") pluses and minuses may be added to differentiate levels of accomplishment within a category.

Grades are scaled as follows:

| Letter Grades | Numerical Equivalents | Minimum grade required to attain * | |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|------|
| A+ | 4.3 | Top 10% | 3.80 |
| A | 4.0 | Top 25% | 3.52 |
| A- | 3.7 | Top 33% | 3.47 |
| B+ | 3.3 | Top 50% | 3.24 |
| B | 3.0 | Top 75% | 3.06 |
| B- | 2.7 | Minimum grade required for graduation | 2.25 |
| C+ | 2.3 | * based on May 2020 graduating class | |
| C | 2.0 | | |
| C- | 1.7 | | |
| D+ | 1.30 | | |
| D | 1.0 | | |
| D- | 0.7 | | |
| F | 0.0 | | |

Effective January 2013, elective pass/fail is an option with professor approval.

CLASS RANK INFORMATION/GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Albany Law School students are ranked by their grade point averages in relation to other members of their class. Usually, more than half of the members of a graduating class have cumulative grade point averages in the 2.99 to 2.30 range. One consequence of this “bunching in the middle” is that significant differences in class ranks may reflect insignificant differences in corresponding grade point averages.

The following lists show the cumulative grade-point averages (G.P.A.) and corresponding class ranks (Rank) for the Classes of 2020 and 2021 in descending order, in increments of approximately 10.

| Class of 2021 | | | Class of 2022 | |
|---------------|------|--|---------------|------|
| G.P.A. | RANK | | G.P.A. | RANK |
| 4.24 | 1 | | 4.18 | 1 |
| 3.87 | 9 | | 3.86 | 9 |
| 3.74 | 19 | | 3.74 | 19 |
| 3.60 | 29 | | 3.64 | 29 |
| 3.47 | 39 | | 3.52 | 39 |
| 3.38 | 51 | | 3.40 | 51 |
| 3.30 | 62 | | 3.24 | 62 |
| 3.21 | 74 | | 3.15 | 74 |
| 3.15 | 84 | | 3.09 | 84 |
| 3.07 | 94 | | 3.04 | 96 |
| 2.98 | 106 | | 2.98 | 106 |
| 2.88 | 119 | | 2.94 | 119 |
| 2.79 | 130 | | 2.84 | 130 |
| 2.67 | 140 | | 2.78 | 140 |
| 2.44 | 150 | | 2.64 | 150 |
| | | | 2.53 | 160 |
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Please Note: Albany Law School has a grade scale that includes the grade of A+, which has higher quality point associated to it than the A grade. As such, when students receive grades of A+ it raises their cumulative GPA above the 4.00 GPA mark. When ranking occurs for a class year that has multiple students with a cumulative GPA above 4.00, it creates an environment where the top 10 percent of students in that class have a cumulative GPA in the 3.70's. In these cases, employers may want to look at the top 15 percent of the class to reach the 3.60 mark, which is closer to the top 10 percent when the highest cumulative GPA is a 4.00.

FACULTY POLICY ON UNIFORM GRADING

First-Year Courses:

All courses given in the first year of study shall be graded according to a uniform policy. Each professor shall award grades in his or her section so that the median GPA of those grades is a 2.70, with a presumptive distribution of grades as follows:

Presumptive Distribution*

A's – 20 - 25%

B's – 45 – 50 %

C's – 20- 25%

F's – 0 -15%

*The percentages assume that the grades in each letter category are divided equally among Letter+, Letter, and Letter-.

Upper-class Courses:

Each instructor of a multiple-section course, except the first-year required courses, shall award grades in his or her course or section so that the median GPA in that course or section shall be between 3.0.

The Dean or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall have the power to dispense with the application of this uniform policy when equity, fairness, and the purposes underlying the policy seem to so require.

For both first-year and upper-class courses, adjustments to establish the proper mean should be made before the grades are initially submitted on the anonymous number grade sheets to the Registrar's Office. If grades may be raised for class performance, however, the mean of the grades initially submitted must be low enough to accommodate grade changes without causing a deviation from the uniform mean.

EFFECTIVE WITH THE CLASS OF 2021:

A student who receives a grade of D+, D, or D- in any required course is not eligible for graduation until the course is either retaken or an upper division course that covers and reinforces the same subject matter is taken and passed with a grade of C- or higher. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in consultation with the Academic Affairs Committee will create a list of courses that qualify as the upper level "match" that will satisfy this requirement and publish the list on an annual basis.

For purposes of this rule, required courses are all courses in the first-year curriculum, Constitutional Law II, Evidence, and Legal Profession or Professional Responsibility Seminar.

- a. The appropriate section for any repeated work will be subject to administrative approval.