

# NOTRE DAME LAW SCHOOL

NOTRE DAME, INDIANA 46556

To: Notre Dame Law School Students

From: Dean G. Marcus Cole

Date: March 29, 2020

RE: COVID-19 Response Grading

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## COVID-19 Response Grading

On Monday, March 30, 2020, the Faculty of Notre Dame Law School approved the following exception to the Hoynes Code for the Spring 2020 Semester, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: **For the Spring 2020 semester, students would be given the option of electing to have the grades for all of their Law School courses converted to Pass/No Credit; students would have until the last class day before the start of the study period to make this election.**

### Terms of the Exception to the Hoynes Code:

1. The current grading system would remain in place, but **students would have the option of making an all-or-nothing election to have the grades for ALL of their Law School courses converted to Pass/No Credit grades.** Students would not have the option of making the election for some but not all of their Law School courses.
2. **Each student would have until 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time) on Tuesday, April 28th (the last class day before the study period) to make the election** through a process to be developed by the Law School Registrar.
3. The student will make the election **to the Law School Registrar only**, and the faculty — including the instructor — will be **BLIND** to the student's election. Instructors will also not know how many if any students in their course have elected the Pass/No Credit option. A student should not reveal his or her election to any instructors before all grades for his or her courses have been submitted.
4. **Instructors will grade all students in each course on a normal basis**, including in conformity with the grading policy, and only after grades are submitted will the Law School Registrar apply the Pass/No Credit election previously made by the student. For students who have made the election, any passing grade (a D or higher or a Satisfactory grade) would be converted to a Pass and any failing grade (an F or an Unsatisfactory) would be converted to No Credit. If a student who has made the election receives a grade of incomplete (I) for a given course, the Law School Registrar will apply the election after the student receives a final grade in the course. The impact of the Pass/No Credit option on GPA and honors is discussed below.
5. This option would be available to **all Law School students, including LL.M. and J.S.D. students.**

6. The election, if made, would apply to **all Law School courses, including courses graded on an S/U basis, unless students completed all of the required coursework for a given course before March 12, 2020** (the first day when all in-person classes were suspended). For courses in which students completed all of the required coursework, including class meetings, before March 12, 2020, instructors will grade students on a normal basis.

### **GPA, Honors, and Other Considerations**

**GPA:** For a student who makes the election, a grade of Pass will not be factored into the student's semester or cumulative grade point average. If such a student receives No Credit for a given course, that No Credit will also not be factored into the student's semester or cumulative grade point average; it will simply mean that the student will not receive credit for that course.

### **Honors**

Honor Roll: Students who make the Pass/No Credit election **will not** be eligible for Honor Roll for the Spring 2020 semester.

Graduation (Latin) Honors: Students who make the Pass/No Credit election **will** be eligible for Graduation Honors based on their cumulative GPA, which will be calculated without factoring in any grade of Pass or No Credit received for Spring 2020 semester courses.

Dean's Circle Fellows: Students who make the Pass/No Credit election **will not** be eligible for designation as a Dean's Circle Fellow for the 2019-20 academic year. Students in their first year of studies during the 2019-20 academic year **will** be eligible for designation as a Dean's Circle Fellow at the conclusion of their second year of studies, even if they make the election, if they satisfy both the 14 credit hours per semester requirement for their other three semesters of legal studies and the 20 credits hours of graded Law School courses requirement during their second year of studies.

Faculty Awards for Excellence: Faculty **may** still grant a Faculty Award for Excellence to a student in each course as they normally would, and a selected student **will** still receive that award even if the student has made the election.

**Academic Good Standing:** For a student who makes the Pass/No Credit election, the academic good standing requirements of Hoynes Code section 7.2.2, and the related academic probation and academic dismissal standards of Hoynes Code section 7.2.3, will be applied based on the semester GPA of that student based on the grades reported for that student before the Law School Registrar converts those grades to Pass/No Credit.

**Transcripts:** The Law School is working with the University on developing an appropriate notation to be included on transcripts of students enrolled during the Spring 2020 semester.

**Other Effects of No Credit:** If a student who makes the election receives No Credit for a given course, that student will be able to re-take that course at a later date (if enrolled at the Law School). If the course is a required course, the student will be required to re-take the course at a

later date.

**Journals:** Assistant Dean Kevin O’Rear and Student Services Program Manager Christine Holst-Haley will work with the law student journals who consider first year cumulative GPA in selecting editors to modify their selection procedures in light of the proposal approved by the faculty.

**Limits on Pass/Fail Courses:** If a student makes the election, their Spring 2020 courses **will not** count toward the otherwise applicable limits on the number of pass/fail option courses found in Hoynes Code section 7.1.3.3.

**Hoynes Code:** If approved by the faculty, whether as proposed or in a modified form, the approved proposal would constitute an exception to any Hoynes Code provisions that would otherwise conflict with the approved proposal.

**Non-Law School Classes:** The grading options for law students enrolled in courses offered by other academic units, whether cross-listed at the Law School or not, are controlled by the relevant other academic unit. The Dean will therefore contact other academic units to determine if it is possible for the Pass/No Credit election to be extended to non-Law School classes for law students who make that election.

**Accommodations:** The Law School continues to be subject to University policies and procedures regarding students with disabilities, and will continue to implement accommodations as required by the University Office of Disability Services regardless of whether a student makes the election.