Office of the President

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Senate Presiding Officer Wink’s proposed grading policy changes for Fall 2020. After consultation with student organizers and student government leaders, we believe the option to “Permit students to select CR/NC” offers the greatest benefit to the campus community at this time. I want to reiterate the necessity of this change due to the extreme nature of this pandemic, and the myriad of issues that students face outside of their control. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken our existing issues with mental health, access, and equity and amplified them severalfold. This grading change is an issue upon which many students’ futures rest and should be treated as nothing less.

Further, “CR” grades should be allowed to fulfill program and prerequisite requirements. A 2017 report by UIC Career Services indicated a list of the major employers and graduate institutions UIC students entered upon graduation.¹ Out of the 14 graduate schools and 34 workplaces listed, none of these institutions (through their respective Human Resources Departments or Admissions Offices) indicated a stigma against students opting into alternative grading systems during this time of emergency. Anecdotal evidence and student testimonials reveal that students receiving “CR” grades for prerequisite courses were prepared to handle the upper level courses they subsequently enrolled in. While it is important to acknowledge, the oft-mentioned objection that CR/NC harms student success should not be taken at face value.

We believe this option should be implemented in concert with an extension on the course withdrawal deadline (i.e. Option 3 together with Option 2), and an amnesty policy to allow students to retake failed courses at no cost in the next semester.

On behalf of myself and the entire student body, I would like to express the utmost appreciation for the Registrar’s Office in taking up this burden. I admire Professor Wink (and all of our allies; 4000+ and counting) for his leadership and drive for positive change. Hopefully, all campus leaders will recognize the importance of this policy for students, and reap the added benefit of improved enrollment and retention. I urge all members of the Senate Executive Committee to take action and support these changes to ensure a continued environment of student success and wellbeing at UIC.

Yours,

Wasan Kumar