



**San José State**  
UNIVERSITY

*A campus of The California State University*

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**S06-4**

At its meeting of April 3, 2006, the Academic Senate passed the following Policy Recommendation presented by Senator Thames for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee.

**POLICY RECOMMENDATION:**

**FINAL EXAMINATION, EVALUATION, OR CULMINATING ACTIVITY POLICY**

**Whereas:** In a memorandum dated October 25, 1977, the Academic Vice President (an office now called Provost) cites a university policy regarding final examinations; and

**Whereas:** that quoted policy states:  
“There is to be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless the course is on the official List of Courses in which a final is optional.” and

**Whereas:** the memorandum calls for the Academic Senate to consider the policy in light of some changes in committee structure and authority and states that until such time as the Academic Senate considers the policy and the problems noted, the following procedures would remain in effect:

“1. Exceptions to the requirement of a final examination in every course may be authorized by the school dean under whose curricular responsibility a course falls.

2. Each school dean should establish a list of courses exempt from final examinations, and this list should be forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Academic Planning in September and February of each academic year. The list of exempt courses should be reviewed periodically to ensure that exemptions continue to be justified.

3. Exemptions ought not to be authorized unless a final examination appears to be an inappropriate mode of student evaluation due to the nature of the course or the mode of instruction. Exemptions may be justified in the following types of courses:

- a. Supervision and individual study courses; courses bearing the numbers 180, 184, 297, and 298.
- b. Performance courses in which it is impractical to examine each student individually in the time period assigned for final examinations; e.g. performance courses in theatre arts, music, or athletics.
- c. Production courses in which grades are more appropriately based on the evaluation of a student product or project.

d. Experimental or innovative courses in which modes of evaluation other than examinations are appropriate.

4. If exemptions are authorized for a general category of courses the specific courses within the category should be identified, and an individual instructor should be free at his or her discretion to require a final examinations. “

and

**Whereas:** no record can be found of the Academic Senate having considered the policy; and

**Whereas:** the official SJSU Schedule of Classes includes the following “Rules Governing Final Examinations” which has been perceived as campus policy for many years:

#### Rules Governing Final Examinations

1. There shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for the course.
2. The exact time, the length and place of each final examination, materials needed, and any special conditions should be carefully announced to the class in advance by the instructor.
3. Any change in the final examination schedule or procedure involving an entire class shall be arranged in advance of the scheduled examination period by request to the dean of the college, via the department office, in which the course is offered.
4. Verifiable emergency circumstances should be recognized by the instructor as a valid reason for a student to reschedule an exam. A student having exams in courses that total nine or more units in one day may request an alternative exam date from one of his/her instructors at least three weeks prior to the last class meeting (if the student and instructor are unable to agree on rescheduling, the department chairperson shall negotiate an appropriate solution). Rescheduled exams should be taken during the make-up period.
5. Students who do not take the final examination during the scheduled time will ordinarily receive an "F" grade. If eligible, however, a student may arrange with the instructor to receive an incomplete grade.
6. The instructor has the authority to exclude from the final examination any student who, because of an insufficient amount of work completed, is not entitled to credit in the course. A record of this action should be filed in the office of the department in which the course is offered.
7. Instructors who do not return final examination papers to the students should keep them on file for at least one year before destroying them.
8. Every effort should be made by the instructor to conduct final examinations in such a manner that students will feel that they are being tested fairly, and that there will be no opportunity to cheat.
9. Instructors shall conduct finals in accordance with these rules, and under conditions conducive to appropriate evaluation.
10. Department chairpersons should oversee final examinations in a manner that assures that the rules for final examinations are followed.

and

**Whereas:** the decision of what constitutes a final examination, evaluation or culminating activity should be left to the instructor of each course; and

**Whereas:** SJSU’s Final Examination Schedule allows maximum time for instruction during the regularly scheduled class meetings; and

**Whereas:** SJSU’s Final Examination Schedule is crafted so that students have time to prepare for the examination, evaluation, or culminating activity offered in each class and so that time conflicts are avoided as much as possible; and

**Whereas:** the Final Examination Schedule occasionally results in students having multiple finals scheduled within a short period of time; and

**Whereas:** the determination of exemptions from final examination, evaluation, or culminating activity is a complex matter that can best be made by each college dean for their respective college; therefore be it

**Resolved:** that the policy statements below be adopted as university policy on final examinations, evaluations, or culminating activities; and be it further

**Resolved:** that these policy statements replace the “Rules Governing Final Examinations” list in all appropriate official university publications.

Approved:

Vote: 11-0-0

Present: Gail Evans (non-voting), Sharon Willey, Rich Kelley, Lloyd Thompson, Joel Bridgeman, Terri Thames, Susan Hansen, Susan McClory, Rebecca Balderas, Alberto Gutierrez, Marian Sofish, Ben Dresher

Absent: Bill Campsey, Thomas Leddy, Caroline Fee, Deborah Griffith, Preston Rudy, Rocio Dresser

Individuals Consulted Prior to Passing the Policy: Chairs and Directors, Executive Committee of Senate

Financial Impact: None

Key People to Implement the Policy and to inform if the Policy is Passed: Deans, Chairs and Directors, faculty members

Impact On Students: None

Impact On Staff and Faculty: None

**Date to Go Into Effect: Fall 2006**

## **FINAL EXAMINATION, EVALUATION, OR CULMINATING ACTIVITY POLICY**

Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity (such as a final examination or discussion of learning outcomes) at the scheduled final examination time in each course. The college dean, under whose curricular responsibility the course falls, can authorize exceptions in writing in advance.

Final examinations may be rescheduled:

1. If there are verifiable emergency circumstances; or
2. If a student has more than 2 exams scheduled within a 24-hour period.  
In this case, the student may request an alternative exam date from any one of the instructors at least three weeks prior to the last class meeting.

In either case, if an alternate exam date and time during the regular final exam period cannot be arranged between the student and instructor, the rescheduled exam will be taken during the final exam-makeup period.

If students and instructors are unable to reach agreement to reschedule, the Provost's office will negotiate an appropriate solution.

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**ACTION BY UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT: Approved by President Don Kassing, April 18, 2006.**