

**University Senate of Michigan Technological University**  
**Proposal 56-20**

**“Low Pass” grade option for Pass/Fail grade mode in response to COVID-19 Pandemic**  
**(Voting Units: Academic)**

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**Proposal:** Create a “Low Pass” grade to be included in the Pass/Fail grade options for Spring 2020. The Low Pass grade would be assigned when a CD or D is earned in a class and the student chooses the Pass/Fail option.

**Justification:**

At present, there are two grade options for Pass/Fail in Spring 2020: SCV is defined as Pass Coronavirus (grade of C or higher) and ECV is defined as Effort Unsatisfactory Coronavirus (grade of CD, D, or F).

The current pass/fail option works in favor of our students who are performing at a higher level. It allows students to remove the GPA associated with a C from their transcript, while still receiving credit for the course. Students who receive a CD or D are left with these poor grades on their transcript if they need to preserve credit for that course. A Low Pass grade would allow them to retain credit for the course, as opposed to no credit with the ECV grade.

Having a Low Pass grade option (LCV, Low Pass Coronavirus) would allow students who are:

- graduating to retain credit for the course without having to choose between postponing graduation and repeating the course or keeping the low grade and negatively impacting their GPA as they enter the workforce.
- taking a course for the third time to earn credit with a Low Pass and not be left with a CD or a D on their GPA.
- taking a prerequisite course to earn credit for it and proceed to the follow-on course the next semester, just as they would with a CD or D, without the GPA implications.

The Low Pass option offers the same benefit to students who earn a CD or D that it does to the 4.0 student who earns a B or a C. It is usually the average-to-below-average students who could really use the benefit of not having a CD or D grade count in their GPA and keeping credit for the course. If we would allow a high-achieving student to not add a B or a C to their GPA calculation but keep credit for the course, then we should allow the same for the more precarious student. The Low Pass grade option maintains a level of equity for all students.

To address these concerns, some schools (including SUNY Polytechnic Institute and Georgetown University) have adopted the P/LP/F model, while many others already have a lower threshold or have lowered their threshold for a Pass to a D/D-. At Michigan Tech, lowering the threshold for a Pass grade would make it difficult to enforce the “C or higher” prerequisite that exists in some of our classes. The transferring of credit, both in and out, also becomes problematic if the threshold for a Pass is lowered.