

AS/SA Committee membership (listed alphabetically)

Farid Barquet (SG President)

Rebecca DeRoo (CLA)

Raluca Felea (COS)

Wendy Gelbrand (Student Affairs Delegate)

Hany Ghonheim (KGC OE)

Lucas Granan (SG representative)

Neil Hair (Provost Appointee)

Brian Larson (CIAS)

Stephen Luxmore (SCB)

Corinne Mendieta (SG representative)

Bobby Moakley (SG representative) (co-chair)

Elizabeth Ruder (CHST) (co-chair)

Jennifer Swartzenberg (NTID)

Gretchen Wainwright (CAST)

Linwei Wang (GCCIS)

Brian Barry (at large)

Irene Evans (COS)

Jason Listman (NTID)

Review of the Charge:

“Investigate what elements students need to be centralized in RIT's electronic course management system and whether to require faculty to use RIT's electronic course management system. Identify the barriers for more widespread faculty use and write appropriate policy, as necessary, for full senate review.”

Part 1. Elements students need to be centralized in RIT's electronic course management system

After surveying students, it was determined that the elements that need to be centralized in the electronic course management system (hereafter called myCourses) are grades and the syllabi (which should include a description of how the final grade is calculated). Students report that while many faculty use myCourses for grades, other faculty use a variety of online portals for grades, and yet other faculty use no online grade reporting at all. Students expressed a variety of concerns around the need for online grades; and specifically for those grades to be on myCourses and not on other online platforms. The largest concern being that many students have to go through several different websites/platforms to find and calculate their grades. While some faculty use publisher's websites exclusively, other faculty use both the publisher's website for certain portions of the course and myCourses for others. Students desire grades to be posted to one centralized system where it is easy for students to track their progress. Students reported that the myCourses gradebook was easy to use and understand held them accountable for their own grades. Students also reported that they could call/email TLS for help with myCourses, but they do not know who to contact for tech support with the publisher's site. Overall, many students expressed if they if all of their grades are available in myCourses, they would be more motivated to visit office hours and have conversations with their professor if they felt that their mark was subpar. Students did not express many concerns about the lack of calculated grades in the case that individual grades were posted-bringing about the request for a syllabus with a grade breakdown.

EXAMPLE of Syllabus grade breakdown

Every class has a different composition of grades. Students request that at minimum, faculty provide a breakdown of types of assignments and the corresponding percentage. For example:

Homework: 25%

Quizzes: 15%

Tests: 25%

Final Exam: 35%

If assignments have individual weights, faculty can *elect* to list additional details. For example:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Grading Policy | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Test 1 14% 2. Test 2 16% 3. Presentation 20% 4. Homework (3-4 times) and in-Class Quiz (if any) 15% 5. Class room participation 7% 6. Final Exam 28% |
|-----------------------|--|

Part 2. Barriers for more widespread faculty use

While many faculty are already posting syllabi and grades to myCourses, some faculty are not posting grades online at all. The AS/SA Committee believes failure to post syllabi and grades online is an impediment to student success. Online syllabi and grades increase transparency and accountability.

Some faculty are posting grades online, but not on myCourses. Specifically, some faculty use online platforms developed by textbook publishers to record grades. A common feature of these sites are online quizzes that are automatically graded and output grades to a gradebook hosted on the site. Faculty expressed concern that having to re-enter those grades in myCourses was redundant and not a good use of time or other resources, if they are even available (i.e., graders). In an effort to estimate how many courses at RIT utilize publisher's platforms, the AS/SA Committee reached out to Janice Decker at Barnes & Noble RIT to determine how many of the courses require textbooks with an e-learning platform. Ms. Decker reports that book bundles or books with access to an online portal accounted for 177 titles or 9% of total books for the Spring 2018 semester. However, faculty may not necessarily be using the online access that comes with the book bundle, so 9% is likely an overestimate of the number of courses using a publisher's platform.

Meetings ILI/TLS personnel revealed that several of the large publishers have integrations in place to merge the publisher's site into myCourses. These integrations allow for publisher's site to be merged or integrated into the myCourses platform. A list of currently available integrations is available at: <https://wiki.rit.edu/display/myCoursesHR/Third-Party+Integrations>. Faculty who desire to have one of these publisher's sites integrated into myCourses can follow the online instruction in the aforementioned URL, or set up a 1:1 meeting with TLS for assistance. Of these available integrations, Cengage - MindLinks / WebAssign, MacMillan - LaunchPad, Wiley-Wiley Plus, and most Pearson products have gradebook integrations currently available. Gradebook integration is currently under review for McGraw-Hill-Campus and is expected to be available for the Fall 2018. For publishers without a gradebook integration, most, if not all, have export options for which faculty can export grades and then import into the MyCourses gradebook. A 1:1 meeting with TLS staff can assist faculty to utilize these features. Faculty should be cautious of posting grades on publisher sites not listed on: <https://wiki.rit.edu/display/myCoursesHR/Third-Party+Integrations>, as those platforms have not been vetted by TLS and may not uphold privacy standards, including FERPA.

Another barrier to faculty use of the myCourses gradebook is the concern that the myCourses gradebook is not sophisticated enough to handle complex grade calculations. Faculty using complex grade calculations can meet 1:1 with TLS staff to determine if a solution exists. If the calculation cannot be accomplished in myCourses, one potential solution is to import a .txt or .csv file to myCourses. However, it is important to note that by requiring the syllabus to contain detailed information on the grade calculation, our recommendation does not require that final grades be posted on MyCourses. For example, if an instructor gives 5 quizzes and allows the lowest 2 quiz grades to be dropped, the grades for all 5 quizzes should appear in myCourses, but the final grade calculated from the highest 3 grades does not need to be calculated in a separate column.

Part 3. Course continuity in emergencies

Use of myCourses benefits course continuity should an emergency situation prohibit an instructor from teaching a course mid-term. TLS can transfer ownership of a myCourses site to another instructor should the original instructor not be able to fulfill his / her duties. TLS has no ability to add users to publisher's platforms.

Part 4. Recommended Policy Changes to D05.8

VIII. AVAILABILITY ~~SUBMISSION~~ OF GRADES AND COURSE MATERIALS

1. It is the instructor's responsibility to ~~provide~~~~provide~~~~inform~~ students with course related information necessary to support their success ~~of their grades on completed course-work~~ in a timely manner. A syllabus and ~~t~~The completed grades for coursework are expected to be posted and accessible for students regularly throughout the course.
2. Faculty members must provide feedback for all submitted work within two weeks of the submission deadline. Posting grades to RIT's Electronic Course Management System ~~an online system is required, recommended, however returning physical copies of graded work is sufficient.~~ The two-week posting requirement is waived in the case of deadline extensions, late submission of work, any extraneous circumstances, or when explicitly stated in the evaluation criteria.

3. Faculty members must post a syllabus before the start of any credit-bearing course on RIT's Electronic Course Management System. The syllabus must contain a comprehensive grade breakdown of how the final course grade is determined.
4. Although not required, faculty members are strongly encouraged to post relevant course documents such as powerpoints and worksheets on RIT's Electronic Course Management System.
5. Students may address concerns regarding the timeliness of [posted syllabi](#) or coursework feedback by following the procedure outlined below.
 1. If a student is not receiving [syllabi](#) or coursework feedback in a timely manner as prescribed above and wishes to address the concern, the student must request a meeting with the instructor for the purpose of reaching an understanding of when coursework grades would be made available to the student. It is the student's responsibility to keep a record of the meeting occurrence.
 2. If the meeting with the instructor does not result in either a mutual understanding or if the student does not receive [a syllabus](#) or coursework feedback according to their mutual understanding, then the student may arrange a meeting with the instructor and the instructor's academic unit head to address the concern. It is the student's responsibility to keep a record of the meeting occurrence.
 3. If a meeting between the student, instructor, and instructor's academic unit head does not result in a mutual understanding regarding the timeliness of [the syllabus](#) or coursework feedback, the student may arrange a meeting with those parties and the Dean or Dean's Designee from the

college in which the course is offered to resolve any misunderstanding regarding the timeliness of coursework feedback. It is the student's responsibility to keep a record of the meeting occurrence.

4. If the meeting with the instructor, the instructor's academic unit head, and the Dean or Dean's designee does not result in the student receiving a [syllabus](#) or coursework feedback according to their prior mutual understanding, then the student's concern and records of the meetings occurrences may be used and presented by the student in a final course grade dispute (see D17.0 Final Course Grade Disputes).
5. A student may elect to bring an advocate—defined here as a current RIT faculty, staff or student member—with them to all meetings outlined above.
6. All communication regarding the arrangements of meetings shall be made using the RIT email system.
7. If at any point in the procedure outlined above the student is denied a meeting with the respective parties without a plan to reschedule, or no response is given to the student after a meeting request attempt, then the student may elect to proceed to the next step of the procedure. A student must allow 3 business days for the respective parties to initially respond to any meeting request.

Part 5. Summary and Conclusions

In sum, the AS/SA Committee finds that students desire grades and syllabi to be centrally located on myCourses. Barriers to faculty use of myCourses exist. Specifically, requiring faculty who use a publisher's web site to post grades on myCourses may create a redundancy and faculty using complex grade calculations may not be able to perform these calculations within the myCourses platform. TLS can provide support for these barriers through publisher/platform integrations and other features. The AS/SA Committee acknowledges that even with TLS assistance, the current needs of some faculty will not be met myCourses. Despite this, the committee concludes that potential for student success through policy changes to require that grades and syllabi be posted on RIT's electronic course management system outweighs the potential limitations.