

SENATE ACTION FORM

No. 1260

Subject: Final Exam Scheduling

Reference to Senate Minutes dated: 4/1/24

Senate Action

MOTION: Approve the proposed recommendations outlined below.

VOTE: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Response requested:

Approval for placement in University Catalog, Undergraduate and Graduate

Approval for placement in University Regulations

Recommendation to Board for placement in Board Policy Manual

X None (sent as information item)

Other action requested/comments:

Dawit Senbet

4/5/24

Faculty Senate Chair

Date

\* \* \* \* \*

Administrative review of Senate action (unnecessary for information items):

Reviewed by VPAA/Provost. Check if comments are attached.

Reviewed by General Counsel. Check if comments are attached.

Presidential action:

Approve Reject Return to Senate for discussion/modification (comments attached)

President/Designated Administrative Officer

Date

Date of Board approval (if applicable):

PLEASE RETURN SIGNED ORIGINAL AND ATTACHMENT TO THE FACULTY SENATE OFFICE, CARTER HALL 2004, BOX 75.

Faculty.Senate@unco.edu

## Faculty Senate Resolution

**Subject:** Final Exam Scheduling

**Originator/Date:** APC 3/18/2024

**Placement(s):** None (information item)

**Approved by APC on 3/18/2024 and sent to Faculty Senate**

**Purpose/Rationale:** In Fall 2023, Senate approved a set of policies to clarify what happens if a final exam must be cancelled due to inclement weather. This provided an opportunity for us to review our current final exam schedule, which hasn't been revised in many years. A potential remedy for a cancelled final could be to reschedule the exam, but this would require dedicated time in the final exam schedule. It appears that it would be possible to build this into the final exam schedule with minimal impacts to the number of students with more than two final exams on a given day.

Initial analysis shows that by consolidating the last two blocks of each day, currently reserved for classes that start at 5pm on that day and 6pm on that day, respectively, all final exams can be offered in the first four days of final exam week. This would result in an approximate increase of 1.5% in the number of students that have more than two final exams on any given day (although the actual number is likely less, given the number of courses that use alternative final assessments such as papers or projects). Further, this analysis was done without consideration for optimization beyond scheduling Friday's exams during the four late blocks Monday through Thursday; it is likely that a schedule that does a better job could be achieved.

Benefits of the 4-day exam week:

- Students graduating Friday would not have to take scheduled exams on the day they graduate.
- Friday can be a designated make-up day in case of university closures earlier in the week.
- Friday can be a make-up day for students with three or more exams on another day.
- Friday can be a make-up day for other conflicts.
- Finishing most exams by Thursday gives instructors more time to grade.
- Finishing most exams by Thursday gives students living in dorms more flexibility in their move-out timing.
- Units wishing to hold events for graduating students prior to commencement can do that on Friday.
- Reviewing the final exam schedule would allow exams to be better balanced across the various blocks.

Possible drawbacks to the 4-day exam week:

- More students would have more than two exams on a single day. A preliminary analysis suggests that this would only happen to about 1.5% of students (130 of 9000) each semester.
- The Disability Resource Center would have to fit more exams into fewer days. This might be a challenge, but conversations with the DRC indicate that they can make this work, especially if exams are better balanced between morning and afternoon sessions. It is likely that some

students would still need to take exams on Friday when they have multiple exams on a single day, which will require faculty cooperation.

**Resolution:**

Historical documents suggest that the current UNC final exam schedule has been in place for over 40 years (set in 1983). Faculty Senate requests that the university administration reviews and revises the exam schedule to better fit student and faculty needs.

As part of this review, we encourage a careful exploration of the potential to move to a four-day exam schedule. Four-day exam schedules are common in Colorado and elsewhere (see CSU for example). If a four-day exam schedule is implemented, it is important that the official exam week continues through five days with Friday as an unscheduled exam day. In particular, student services, including housing and dining, should continue through the end of the final exam week.