

March 22, 2020

To the Faculty Committee on Grading Policy,

We, the leaders of undersigned student organizations, are united in the belief that it is imperative that Chicago-Kent switch to a Pass / Fail grading system for the Spring 2020 semester.

The COVID-19 epidemic and the subsequent health and safety mandates from the State of Illinois and from the federal government have introduced unprecedented challenges for our diverse student body. For example, some students are parents — their first priority will be caring for their children while schools are closed. Some students will be called upon to care for sick dependents as the virus spreads across the country, and others will get sick themselves. Some students will not have private study areas in which to focus because of the Illinois Governor's stay-at-home order, and no student will have access to in-person academic services that may have helped them succeed in prior semesters.

These factors, without the equalizing force of a Pass / Fail system, will result in an unfair distribution of grades based mostly on arbitrary factors and circumstances. The effect will be felt disproportionately by non-traditional students of all types, including some of the most marginalized groups among us, like first-generation law students, immigrant law students, low-income students, and many others.

In sum, these extreme circumstances call for a compassionate response from the administration. Law school is an incredibly stressful experience, even without an active global pandemic. Now, in this growing crisis, worries about one's grade point average should take a backseat to our health and safety needs. The unfortunate reality is that some of us can afford to balance the demands of law school with personal survival and duties to our families and communities, and others — for reasons ranging from poverty to disability — cannot. To account for the disparate and unforeseeable circumstances that will undoubtedly confront us all in the coming months, we urge you to adopt a Pass / Fail system for the Spring 2020 semester.

Sincerely,

- Chicago-Kent National Lawyers Guild
- Black Law Students Association
- Cannabis Law Society
- Chicago-Kent Lambdas
- China Law Society
- Chicago-Kent ACLU
- Chicago-Kent American Constitution Society
- Labor and Employment Law Society
- Immigration Law Society
- Muslim Law Students Association
- National Security Society
- Hispanic Latino Law Student Association
- Disability Advocacy Law Student Association