

Adopted: May 16, 2006

**ACADEMIC SENATE  
of  
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY  
San Luis Obispo, CA**

**AS-647-06**

**RESOLUTION ON  
GRADING OF CULMINATING EXPERIENCE GRADUATE COURSES**

1 **Background:** Open-ended research courses that represent the culminating experience for  
2 graduate students are either Project (usually 539, 596 or 598) or Thesis (599). Completing  
3 requirements for these courses often delays degree completion for graduate students. Under the  
4 present grading policy, RP grades (Report in Progress, formerly the “SP” grade) are valid for  
5 three years, after which they are automatically changed to NC grades. This policy is a problem  
6 for many students who are unaware of it and believe that the seven-year time limit is the only  
7 deadline they have for degree completion. When an RP grade is changed to NC, the student must  
8 re-register (2-9 units) in the course(s) in order to graduate. If the student no longer lives in  
9 California, s/he must register as an out-of-state student. This is a disincentive for these students  
10 to complete their degrees. In addition, changing an NC to a letter grade is extremely difficult,  
11 even when the faculty advisors request it.

12  
13 Since there is no real reason for a more restrictive time limit, the proposed resolution would  
14 eliminate the three-year time limit for thesis/project completion and allow RP grades in those  
15 courses that represent the culminating experience in the program (the specific courses noted  
16 above, as well as similar culminating experience courses that may be developed) to remain valid  
17 throughout the existing Title V-mandated, seven-year time limit for degree completion.

18  
19 WHEREAS, Current policy on grading in Project (539, 596, 598) and Thesis (599) courses sets  
20 a limit of three years on the length of time that RP (Report in Progress) grades  
21 may remain without being converted to a letter grade; and

22  
23 WHEREAS, If the culminating experience (539, 596, 598) or thesis (599) has not been  
24 completed within the three-year period, the RP grade converts to an NC (No  
25 Credit) and the student must re-enroll in Project/Thesis classes in order to receive  
26 credit and a grade. In addition, the units with NC grades remain on the transcript;  
27 and

28  
29 WHEREAS, Graduate students are required to complete all graduate work, including Project  
30 and Thesis work, within seven years, it is recommended that RP grades in 539,  
31 596, 598 and 599 courses be valid for the seven-year time period. If a student  
32 requests and is granted an extension of the seven-year limit, the RP grades in

33 those classes should remain valid until the new time limit is reached; therefore be  
34 it

35  
36 RESOLVED: That RP grades given in Project (539, 596, 598 and other numbers that may be  
37 assigned) and Thesis (599) classes remain in effect during the seven-year window  
38 provided for completion of the degree; and be it further

39  
40 RESOLVED: That if a student requests and is granted an extension of the seven-year limit, the  
41 RP grade in Project/Thesis classes shall remain valid until the new time limit is  
42 reached.

43  
44 RESOLVED: That this policy change be applied immediately and retroactively to all students at  
45 any stage of progress toward a graduate degree.

Proposed by: Graduate Studies Committee

Date: March 29, 2006

Revised: April 18, 2006

Revised: May 8, 2006

Revised: May 16, 2006

State of California  
**M e m o r a n d u m**

**CAL POLY**

SAN LUIS OBISPO  
CA 93407

To: David Hannings  
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: May 23, 2006

From: Warren J. Baker  
President

Copies: R. Detweiler, D. Conn, S. Opava

Subject: Response to Senate Resolution AS-647-06  
Resolution on Grading of Culminating Experience Graduate Courses

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This will formally acknowledge receipt and approval of the above-subject resolution. Please extend my thanks to the Graduate Studies Committee and the Academic Senate for aligning Cal Poly policies with the existing Title V-mandated, seven-year time limit for degree completion.

Attachment