

December 12, 2025

ELIZABETH H. SIMMONS
Executive Vice Chancellor

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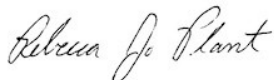
SUBJECT: Exception to Policy on Distance Education Courses for Summer 2026

Dear EVC Simmons and Interim AVC-EI Alvarado,

At its December 8, 2025 meeting, Senate Council endorsed the Educational Policy Committee's response to the proposal requesting a limited exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses in Summer 2026 to allow courses that have been submitted for R-course status during the 2025-26 academic year, but are not yet approved, to be offered remotely on a one-time basis in summer 2026. Details regarding EPC's approval are in the attached memo.

We look forward to working with Academic Affairs to improve Summer Session going forward so that we can better meet student needs while addressing concerns about course quality and academic integrity.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Jo Plant
Chair
San Diego Divisional Academic Senate

Attachment

cc: Akos Rona-Tas, Senate Vice Chair
Maruth Figueroa, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Retention and Success
Ashley Hill, Senate Associate Director
Lori Hullings, Senate Executive Director
Judy Kim, Dean, Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs
Stanley Lo, Chair, Educational Policy Committee
John Moore, Dean, Divisional of Undergraduate Education
Alison Sanders, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs

December 12, 2025

PROFESSOR REBECCA JO PLANT, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Exception to Policy on Distance Education Courses for Summer 2026

At its meetings on October 20, 2025 and November 24, 2025, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) discussed the proposal from the Administration for a one-time exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses for Summer 2026. The exception would allow a course to be offered online for Summer 2026, without formal approval of the R-course designation, provided a proposal for an online course was submitted during the 2025–26 academic year but is still pending approval.

For historical context, EPC approved a limited-term exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses to allow any undergraduate or graduate course to be offered online for Summer 2024 and 2025 without formal approval of the R-course designation. EPC approved the limited-term exception for Summer 2024 and Summer 2025 only and was not open to considering another exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses beyond Summer 2025. At that time, EPC requested that following Summer 2024, the Administration identify academic units that are offering online courses during Summer Session without the R-course designation and reach out to those units with a reminder that there is only one Summer Session remaining that a course may be offered online without the R-course designation. EPC was disappointed to receive another proposal from the Administration at the beginning of Fall 2025 requesting an additional exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses, albeit in a modified format that indicates some minimal progress.

Following extensive discussion and deliberation, EPC approved a one-time exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses for Summer 2026 to allow a course to be offered online without formal approval of the R-course designation if the online course proposal has been submitted in CourseLeaf and reaches the Registrar Reviewer 1 step by March 10, 2026. The Summer Session Office will be responsible for verifying that courses meet the criteria for an exception to the Policy for Summer 2026.

The Committee reached this decision, which was not unanimous, in recognition of the critical importance of substantial online course offerings in the summer for students' advancement toward their degrees, for graduate students' professional development to serve as instructors of record, and for the university's financial health. Significant concerns were expressed, however, regarding the haphazard nature and at times compromised quality of instruction in online courses that were not thoughtfully and carefully designed to be offered without formal approval of the R-course designation. Concerns regarding pervasive issues of potential violation of academic integrity in assessments in online course offerings were also raised. It is on account of these concerns that EPC previously determined to approve the limited-term exception for Summer 2024 and Summer 2025 only, and committee members were dismayed that those concerns do not seem to have been taken more seriously.

To address the latter concern at least partially, committee members decided that permitting in-person exams for online courses in Summer could mitigate some of the concerns related to academic integrity. Moving forward, online courses are permitted to offer in-person exams.

In conclusion, EPC reached the decision, which was not unanimous, to grant a one-time exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses for Summer 2026. This exception allows a course to be offered online without formal approval of the R-course designation, provided the online course proposal has been submitted in CourseLeaf by the designated deadline. EPC determined that students should not be penalized for the lapse in communication and action regarding the expiration of the current limited-term exception after Summer 2025. The Committee will not

consider another exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses beyond Summer 2026. EPC requests that the Administration distribute this memo to all academic units.

Sincerely,

Stanley Lo, Chair
Educational Policy Committee

cc: J. Coomer, Senior Senate Analyst
L. Hoang, Educational Policy Committee Vice Chair
L. Hullings, Senate Executive Director
A. Rona-Tas, Senate Vice Chair