



Student Assembly R. 52: Developing a Mental Health Friendly Academic Evaluation Environment

*Sponsor: Syed Ali Khan on behalf of Saadiya Mutawakil & Alexandra Skinnion
Propose on February 10th, 2014*

1 Whereas, the Student Assembly Charter (Article 1, Section 3) states that, “The SA will have
2 the authority and the responsibility to examine any matters which involve the interests or
3 concern the welfare of the student community and to make proposals concerning those issues
4 to the appropriate officers or decision-making bodies of the University;”
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6 Whereas, many preliminary examinations are scheduled in close proximity to each other,
7 similar to end-of-semester examinations or other evaluative means;
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9 Whereas, the new academic calendar includes a shortened study period and yields more
10 exam conflicts or other “bad incidents,” which could cause and/or exacerbate mental health
11 problems;
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13 Whereas, the Cornell Strategic Plan (2010-2015) includes a goal to “Promote the health and
14 well-being of students...as a foundation for academic and life success;”
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16 Whereas, the current faculty handbook addresses this situation, by urging professors to make
17 accommodations for students with more than two exams in a 24 hour period, but limits its
18 scope to end-of-semester examinations;
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20 Whereas, the current faculty handbook acknowledges that many college and degree programs
21 use means other than examinations to evaluate their students;
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23 Be it therefore resolved, that the SA recommends that the Faculty Senate adopt and enforce
24 the following edit to Chapter 5 of the Faculty Handbook:
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26 It is university policy to discourage more than two examinations (in-class or out-of-class) or
27 examination-weighted evaluative exercises which constitute 20% or more of the grade for a
28 student in one twenty-four hour time period. Members of the faculty are urged to grant student
29 requests for a make-up examination or additional time for examination-weighted evaluative
30 exercises, particularly if their course is the largest of the three involved and thus has the
31 strongest likelihood of offering a makeup for other valid reasons, e.g. a student’s illness or a
32 death in student’s family.
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34 Be it further resolved, that this statement is removed from underneath the Final Examinations
35 and Other End-of-Semester Exercises subheading and housed under the Examinations and
36 Academic Activities heading prior to the Preliminary Examination section, to make it explicit
37 that the policy applies to all examinations and examination-weighted evaluative exercises
38 throughout the school year.
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40 Be it finally resolved, that this resolution is forwarded to the Faculty Senate, the University

1 Registrar, and the GPSA.

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3 Respectfully Submitted,

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5 Syed Ali Khan '15

6 Transfer Representative, Student Assembly

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8 Saadiya Mutawakil '14

9 President, Cornell Minds Matter

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11 Alexandra Skinnion '14

12 Vice President of Outreach, Cornell Minds Matter

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14 (Reviewed by the Student Assembly Diversity Affairs Coalition, Chair: Noah Tulsy)