

Syllabus Student Survey: Fall 2016

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At the request of the Academic Senate Standards and Practices Committee, the Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office conducted a survey of students in order to determine the most essential elements of an effective syllabus. The survey also addresses the Actionable Improvement Plan in the 2014 Accreditation Self-Study. This plan seeks to ensure that every student receives clear and accurate information with specific learning outcomes by implementing a system for reviewing and storing accurate syllabi for every class.

Surveys were distributed to faculty mailboxes the week of September 5, 2016. Of the 3,590 students who were invited to participate in the survey, completed surveys were received from 1,829 students, resulting in a response rate of **51 percent**.

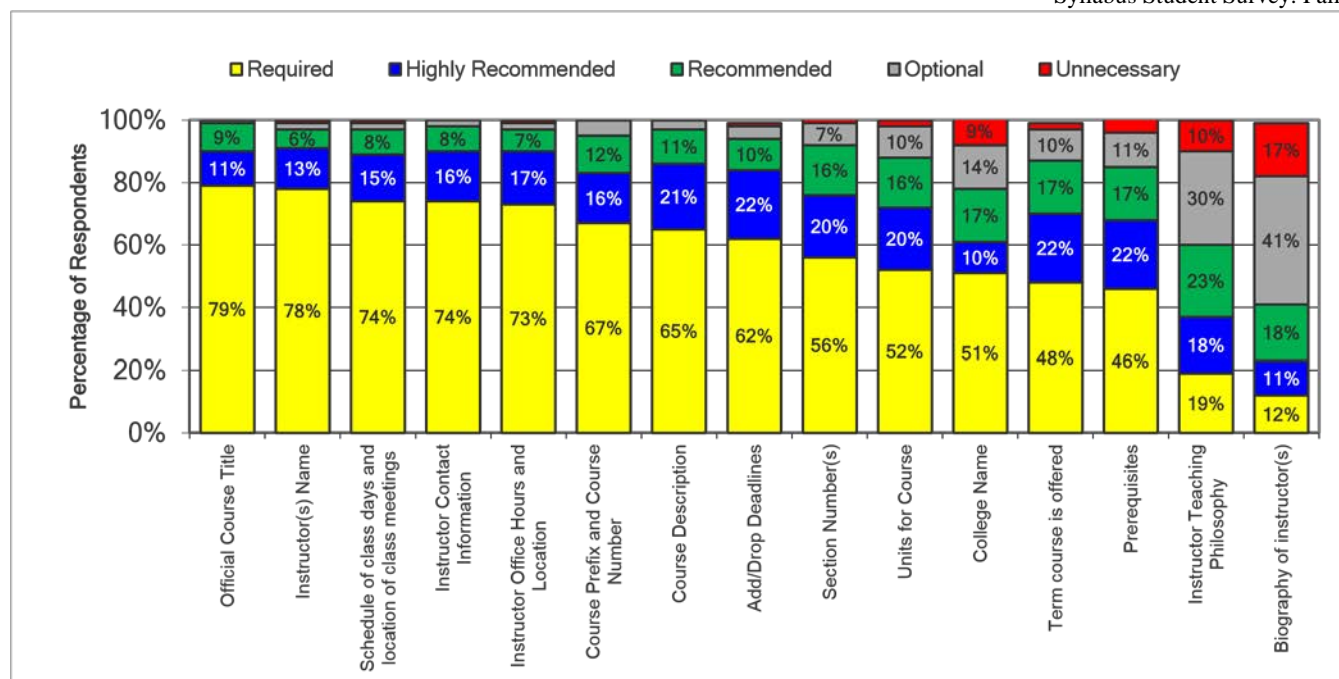
Introduction

As indicated in Table 1, more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that the following should be “required” or “highly recommended” in the introduction of the syllabus: official course title, instructor(s) name, schedule of class days and location of class meetings, instructor contact information, instructor office hours and location, course prefix and course number, course description, add/drop deadlines, section number(s), units for course, term course is offered, and prerequisites.

Table 1. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Introduction

	Required	Highly Recommended	Recommended	Optional	Unnecessary
Official Course Title (n=1821)	79%	11%	9%	1%	<1%
Instructor(s) Name (n=1817)	78%	13%	6%	2%	1%
Schedule of class days and location of class meetings (n=1821)	74%	15%	8%	2%	1%
Instructor Contact Information (n=1825)	74%	16%	8%	2%	<1%
Instructor Office Hours and Location (n=1828)	73%	17%	7%	2%	1%
Course Prefix and Course Number (n=1816)	67%	16%	12%	5%	1%
Course Description (n=1822)	65%	21%	11%	3%	1%
Add/Drop Deadlines (n=1826)	62%	22%	10%	4%	1%
Section Number(s) (n=1815)	56%	20%	16%	7%	2%
Units for Course (n=1816)	52%	20%	16%	10%	2%
College Name (n=1816)	51%	10%	17%	14%	9%
Term course is offered (n=1812)	48%	22%	17%	10%	2%
Prerequisites (n=1808)	46%	22%	17%	11%	5%
Instructor Teaching Philosophy (n=1809)	19%	18%	23%	30%	10%
Biography of instructor(s) (n=1817)	12%	11%	18%	41%	17%

Figure 1. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Introduction



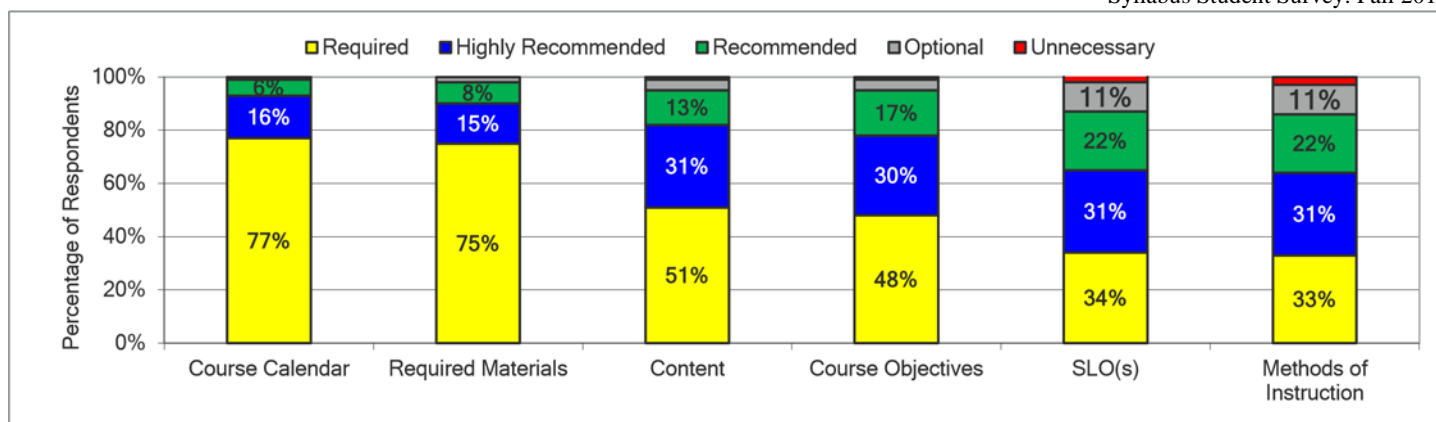
Student Learning Information

As indicated in Table 2, more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that the following should be “required” or “highly recommended” in the Student Learning Information section of the syllabus: course calendar, required materials, content, and course objectives. Less than five percent of the respondents indicated that the aspects surveyed for Student Learning Outcomes were “unnecessary” in the syllabus.

Table 2. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Student Learning Outcomes

	Required	Highly Recommended	Recommended	Optional	Unnecessary
Course Calendar (n=1825)	77%	16%	6%	1%	<1%
Required Materials (n=1821)	75%	15%	8%	2%	<1%
Content (n=1811)	51%	31%	13%	4%	1%
Course Objectives (n=1824)	48%	30%	17%	4%	1%
SLO(s) (n=1820)	34%	31%	22%	11%	3%
Methods of Instruction (n=1825)	33%	31%	22%	11%	3%

Figure 2. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Student Learning Outcomes



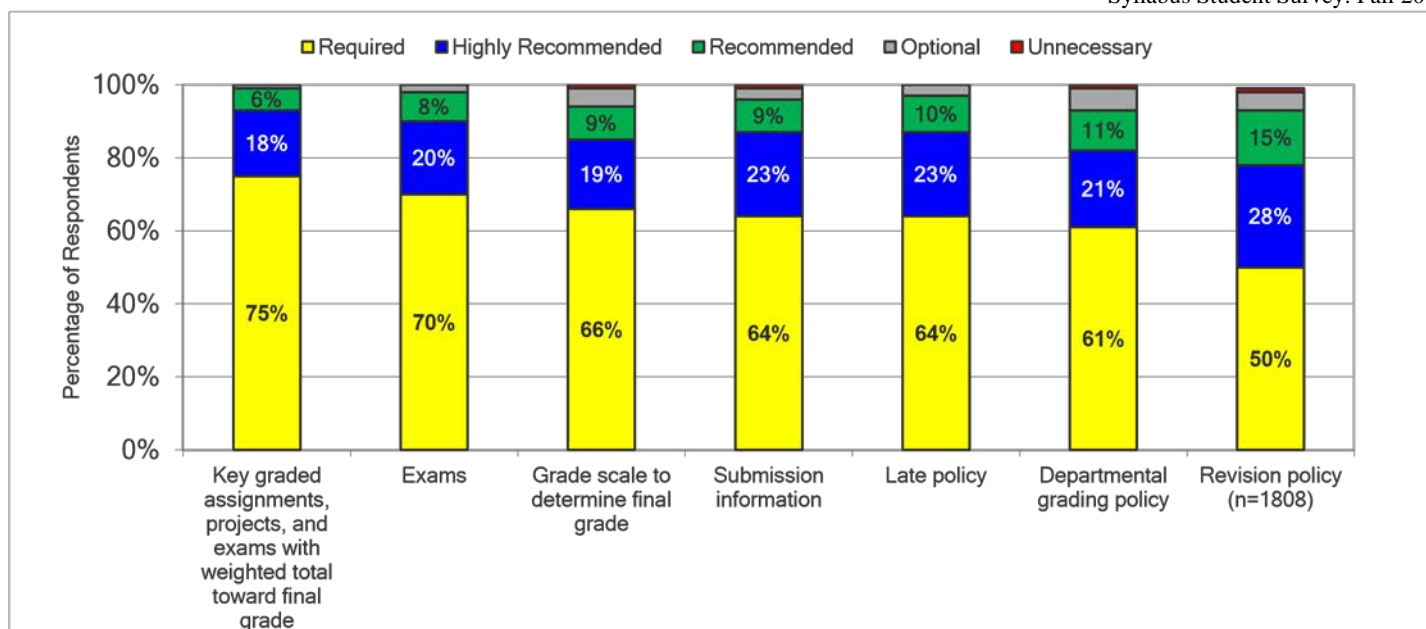
Assignments, Assessments, and Evaluations

As indicated in Table 3, more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that the following should be “required” or “highly recommended” in the Assignments, Assessments, and Evaluations section of the syllabus: key graded assignments, projects and exams with weighted total toward final grade, exams, grade scale used to determine the student’s final grade, submission information, late policy, departmental grading policy, and revision policy. Very few respondents indicated that any of the areas surveyed for assignments, assessments, and evaluations are “unnecessary”.

Table 3. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Assignments, Assessments and Evaluations

	Required	Highly Recommended	Recommended	Optional	Unnecessary
Key graded assignments, projects, and exams with weighted total toward final grade (n=1809)	75%	18%	6%	1%	<1%
Exams (n=1808)	70%	20%	8%	2%	1%
Grade scale to determine final grade (n=1813)	66%	19%	9%	5%	1%
Submission information (n=1798)	64%	23%	9%	3%	1%
Late policy (n=1811)	64%	23%	10%	3%	1%
Departmental grading policy (n=1806)	61%	21%	11%	6%	1%
Revision policy (n=1808)	50%	28%	15%	5%	1%

Figure 3. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Assignments, Assessments, and Evaluations



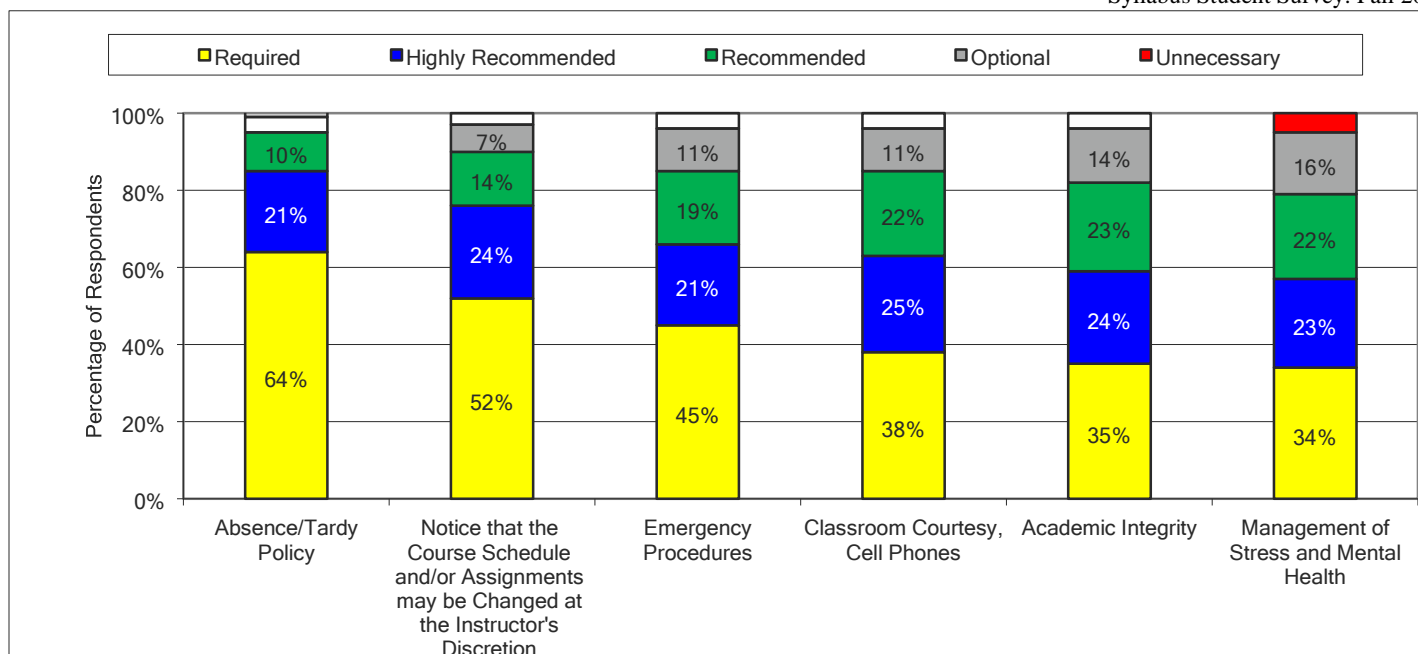
Course Policies

As indicated in Table 4, more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that the following should be “required” or “highly recommended” in the Course Policies section of the syllabus: absence/tardy policy, notice that the course schedule and/or assignments may be changed at the instructor’s discretion, and emergency procedures.

Table 4. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Course Policies

	Required	Highly Recommended	Recommended	Optional	Unnecessary
Absence/tardy policy (n=1809)	64%	21%	10%	4%	2%
Notice that the course schedule and/or assignments may be changed at the instructor's discretion (n=1806)	52%	24%	14%	7%	3%
Emergency procedures (n=1804)	45%	21%	19%	11%	4%
Classroom courtesy, cell phones (n=1801)	38%	25%	22%	11%	4%
Academic integrity (n=1803)	35%	24%	23%	14%	4%
Management of stress and mental health (n=1801)	34%	23%	22%	16%	5%

Figure 4. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Course Policies



Addendum of Services

Respondents were asked to indicate what they think the level of requirement should be for the Addendum of Services section of the syllabus, which includes a list of student services such as The Learning Center, Library, Student Health Center, Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSP&S), and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS). Forty percent indicated that the Addendum of Services should be “required”, while 27 percent indicated it should be “highly recommended”, 17 percent indicated it should be “recommended”, 13 percent indicated it should be “optional”, and 3 percent indicated the Addendum of Services is “unnecessary”.

Recommendations

Upon review of the results, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Encourage faculty to include areas identified by students as “required” or “highly recommended” in syllabi, including:

➤ **Introduction**

- Official course title ○ Instructor(s) name(s)
- Schedule of class days and location of class meetings ○ Instructor contact information ○ Instructor office hours and location ○ Course prefix and course number ○ Course description ○

Add/drop deadlines ○ Section number(s),
○ Units for course, ○ Term course is
offered, and ○ Prerequisites.

- **Student Learning Information** ○ Course calendar, ○
Required materials, ○ Content, and ○ Course objectives.
- **Assignments, Assessments, and Evaluations** ○ Key graded
assignments, projects, and exams with weighted total toward
final grade, ○ Exams
 - Grade scale to determine final
grade, ○ Submission information, ○ Late
policy,
 - Departmental grading policy,
and ○ Revision policy.
- **Course Policies** ○ Absence/tardy policy,
 - Notice that the course schedule
and/or assignments may be changed at
the instructor's discretion, and ○
Emergency procedures.

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office located in BONH-222, or call Alicia LeValley, Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.3140.