

R F2017.11

**A Resolution Calling for LSA Faculty to Abide by the LSA Faculty Code Regarding Final Examinations**

*A bill for the consideration of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government*

28 October 2017

Sponsors: Ryan Gillcrist, Nicholas Fadanelli, Hanna Simmons

**Whereas**, the mission of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government (hereafter LSA SG) is to “actively seek the voices of LSA students and advocate their interests to improve academic and non-academic life”;<sup>1</sup> and,

**Whereas**, every College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (hereafter LSA or College of LSA) course that has a lecture, recitation, or seminar component is allotted a time slot to hold their final exams during the official University of Michigan (hereafter University) Final Examination Period by the University Calendar Committee;<sup>2</sup> and,

**Whereas**, in recent years many faculty members, especially those whose courses receive later examination dates, hold their final exams prior to the official University Final Examination Period, and not in their designated time slot, many claiming they are not “final exams”; and,

**Whereas**, the LSA Faculty Code, the governing document for the College of LSA that is voted on and approved by the faculty, states “The official examination schedule shall be followed; an instructor may not depart from the official schedule unless prior approval of the University Committee on Examinations is obtained”;<sup>3</sup> and,

**Whereas**, although hosting exams on days and times that directly violate both the University’s official examination period and the LSA Faculty Code may benefit some students, it strips all students in such courses of the protections regarding final exams provided to them by the University and LSA Final Exam Policies;<sup>3</sup> and,

**Whereas**, numerous courses over the past few years have also migrated away from conducting final exams, in favor of final projects or papers, and do not inform the Office of the Registrar that they will not be utilizing their final exam timeslot; and,

**Whereas**, this problem, to no small degree, is both caused by and further exacerbates the lack of proper observance of the official University Final Examination Schedule - as the scheduling of these courses which do not hold final exams pushes back the final exam dates for other courses, which in turn causes more faculty members to disregard the Final Examination Schedule; and,

**Whereas**, issues regarding the lateness of the Final Examination Period, particularly during the fall semester, are valid issues which LSA SG and others are in discussions about, but frustrations over that should not be expressed by blatantly breaking both University and College of LSA policies; and,

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government. Article II

<sup>2</sup> UM Office of the Registrar - Final Exam Schedule <http://www.ro.umich.edu/exams/>

<sup>3</sup> LSA Faculty Code - Article IV Examinations - Section 1 Final Examinations

<https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/lsa-site-assets/documents/academic-affairs/policies-procedures/FacultyCode.pdf>

**Whereas,** College of LSA Dean Andrew Martin has made ensuring that final examinations for LSA courses are held during the official University Final Examination Period a top priority for the LSA Dean’s Office this year, stating in an email to *The Michigan Daily*, “This [is] a special emphasis of the dean’s office this year, making clear that it is our expectation that exams are administered during the times established by the Registrar’s Office”;<sup>4</sup> and,

**Whereas,** Dean Martin has cited in a number of conversations on this matter that, “from conversations with our students that deviating from this policy has adverse consequences for some of our students” as part of the rationale for these efforts;<sup>4</sup> and,

**Whereas,** issues surrounding student mental health are directly linked to these “adverse consequences” as many students experience increased stress and anxiety around the end of the semester, which is only compounded upon by the lack of adequate time to prepare for and notification regarding the dates, times, and locations of finals; and,

**Whereas,** LSA SG previously passed R F2017.02 “A Resolution Advocating for the Change of the LSA Final Exam Policy” in April, 2017 - which advocates for amending the final exam policy to ensure students with three or more exams on the same day are able to reschedule excess exams so they can only be forced to take a maximum of two exams on a given date;<sup>5</sup> and,

**Whereas,** many of the reasons cited in this previous resolution regarding student stress and performance around final exams is equally valid for final exams not held in the final examination period - with the compounded impact of not having the protections currently existing, or those sought in the proposed amendments by LSA SG, for students in the University and College of LSA Final Exam Policies.

**Be it therefore resolved,** LSA SG formally supports LSA Dean Andrew Martin’s statements and work regarding this project, and further calls upon all LSA faculty to abide by the LSA Faculty Code in regards to final examination scheduling; and,

**Be it further resolved,** LSA SG would look favorably upon faculty self-reporting to the Office of the Registrar if their course does not plan on holding a final exam, and for the Office of the Registrar and the College of LSA to develop policies and procedures to reduce and eliminate the number of vacant final exam time slots, so less courses holding exams have later final examination dates; and,

**Be it finally resolved,** LSA SG shall send a copy of this resolution to LSA Dean Andrew Martin, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Angela Dillard, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education, Marjorie Horton, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education, Esrold Nurse, Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs, Robert Ortega, LSA Curriculum and Enrollment Manager, JoAnn Peraino, Associate Vice Provost and University Registrar, Paul Robinson, Associate Registrar, Lisa Emery, and *The Michigan Daily*.

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<sup>4</sup> “LSA stresses strict final exam date policy” - *The Michigan Daily*

<https://www.michigandaily.com/section/academics/lsa-stresses-strict-final-exam-date-policy>

<sup>5</sup> LSA SG R F2017.02 “A Resolution Advocating for the Change of the LSA Final Exam Policy”

<https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/lsasg-assets/lsasg-docs/F-2017/R%20F2017.02%20Final%20Exam%20Policy%20Resolution.pdf>