

## **Resolution 014**

### **A Resolution to Improve and Clarify Comprehensive Examinations or Equivalent Cumulative Assessments Across The University**

**Sponsored by: Senator Lucardi**

**Co-Sponsored by: Senator Sijgers, Senator Zentz, Senator Scott, Senator Churilla, Senator Warren, Senator Galassi, Senator Birth, Senator Bracey, Senator Harrison, Senator Brown, Senator Schlee**

***Whereas,***

The Catholic University of America requires for graduation the successful completion of a comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment whose methods of examination may include but are not limited to a research paper, senior project, senior recital, senior seminar, senior thesis, or written test which hereafter will all be referred to as both comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment.

***Whereas,***

The successful completion of the comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment relies heavily on thorough and in-depth study of material covered throughout the entirety of a student's academic career with a specific and often heavy emphasis on material covered during introductory courses.

***Whereas,***

Several departments refrain from disclosing information surrounding the nature of their respective examinations, either entirely or until the due date becomes imminent, leaving students confused and ill-prepared for a comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment whose passage is required for graduation.

***Whereas,***

To pass these comprehensive examinations or cumulative assessments, students must demonstrate proficiency in major content from the totality of their time at The Catholic University of America, often including or focusing on material covered in the introductory courses.

***Whereas,***

It is especially difficult for transfer students and students who have changed majors to prepare for these examinations or assessments if their introductory courses were not completed at The Catholic University of America or if the student was not in attendance at their respective major's orientation weekend.

***Whereas,***

Students who opt to complete a double major are discouraged from and often cannot formally declare such intention until the completion of their sophomore year. Therefore, it is possible for future double majors students to miss the early major-wide meetings held by their departments, affecting the order in which they complete their requisite courses in the secondary major.

***Whereas,***

Often, the comprehensive examinations or cumulative assessments cover material in non-required major courses. Failure to publish any sort of study materials prevents students from easily identifying their weak points in the knowledge of the major and therefore, the material on the comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment.

***Whereas,***

While several departments introduce the nature of their respective comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment very early during Freshman year they neglect to discuss the matter throughout the following three years until the comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment becomes imminent. Therefore, students complete the majority of their courses without being regularly engaged with the various aspects of their department's comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment.

***Whereas,***

Well articulated, effectively published and regularly updated information specific to each department would help students prepare for their comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment.

***Whereas,***

A designated and department-specific point of contact whose information was published on various department web pages could more effectively and perhaps more accurately answer questions regarding the nature of their department's comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment. This point of contact would be especially beneficial for transfer students, students who have changed majors, and students who have declared a double major as some students in these groups, by nature of the unique path of their education, may not have participated in the introductory course material, upon which the successful completion of a comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment relies heavily.

***Whereas,***

The clear assignment of the supervision of department-specific comprehensive examinations cumulative assessments to one individual will ensure that these examinations and assessments are conducted in the most organized, consistent and transparent manner, abetting the successful completion of comprehensive examinations or cumulative assessments across all departments.

***Be it enacted that,***

The Student Government Association Senate, acting in its official capacity as the representative of the undergraduate student body of The Catholic University of America, hereby requests:

1. Each of the Academic Departments, excluding those which have already adopted practices similar to the following, have or will effectively publish and promulgate the necessary study materials including those from previously completed courses deemed necessary for the successful completion of the various methods of examination or assessment .<sup>1</sup>
2. Each Academic Department, excluding those which have already adopted practices similar to the following, appoints a faculty or staff member to answer questions about their department's comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment.
3. Each Academic Department publishes the aforementioned person's contact information on their web page to help establish a transparent manner in which questions may be answered ensuring consistency and accuracy.
4. Each Academic Department annually reviews their expectations for the successful completion of their comprehensive examination or cumulative assessment and cross-check those expectations with the applicable course syllabi to ensure that the materials on the examination or assessment have been covered to a point worthy of being tested or assessed. If a discrepancy is found, it is requested that the department modify the examination or assessment to consider the gap between the covered material and the material required for the successful completion of the examination or assessment.

Agreed to by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_ yeas to \_\_\_\_\_ nays on this date: \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ abstaining and \_\_\_\_\_ not present.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gerald Sharpe  
*President of the Student Government Association*

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Gemma del Carmen  
*Vice President of the Student Government Association*

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Resolution 005 A Resolution to Ensure Student's Greater Success on Comprehensive Exams, Passed on November 2, 2020.