

# **Student Government Association**

## **Dead Week Poll 2018**



By

**The Docking Institute of Public Affairs**

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To Facilitate Effective Public Policy Decision-Making.

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### **Prepared By:**

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Research Coordinator

### **Prepared For:**

Fort Hays State University  
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## Executive Summary

Upon the request of the Student Government Association at Fort Hays State University, the Docking Institute of Public Affairs conducted a poll of on-campus & virtual Fort Hays State University students regarding their opinions and interest in a Dead Week policy. The poll finds:

- Most students (81.6%) reported that they either have never participated or aren't aware that they have participated in a Dead Week.
- Students who said they have participated in a Dead Week policy overwhelmingly (84.9%) experienced Dead Week through an institution of Higher Learning. Institutions of higher learning includes Fort Hays State University.
- About 60% of the respondents identified themselves as on-campus students to virtual respectively in this poll.
- A significant majority (77.5%) of respondents identified themselves as either juniors or seniors at FHSU.
- More than one-third (35.2%) of the respondents indicated that they worked "30 or more hours a week." Of those that worked 30+ hours, 70.5% identified themselves as virtual students. Virtual students are much more likely to work 30 or more hours than on campus students.
- More than half (53.6%) of the respondents indicated that they "almost never" or "never" have their syllabus altered during mid-terms. Consequently, 46.4% "often," "almost always," or "always" do have their syllabus altered during mid-terms. Consensus was nearly split in half.
- About four-fifths (80.7%) of respondents indicated that an exam or quiz is scheduled during Dead Week.
- A majority (86.1%) of respondents indicated that they typically have at least 1 exam during Dead Week. The rest (13.9%) indicated they do not having an exam during Dead Week.
- Almost 9 out of every 10 (87.4%) of respondents indicated that having a stricter Dead Week policy regarding exams & new material would make them feel more prepared for their final exams.
- Slightly under half (46.4%) indicated that they "almost never" have unscheduled items assigned during Dead Week.
- A majority (65.7%) of respondents indicated that they are "often," "almost always," or "always" asked to complete large assignments during Dead Week.
- Slightly more than 70% of respondents indicated that they are not asked to do unscheduled exams or quizzes during Dead Week.

- A majority (67.1%) of respondents indicated that they have experienced a chapter exam during Dead Week.
- Slightly more than three-fifths (61.1%) of respondents indicated that they have “almost never” or “never” experienced an instructor straying away from his or her syllabus assignment calendar.
- Slight majority (54.4%) indicated that their professors introduced new material during Dead Week.
- Almost two-thirds (64.9%) of respondents indicated their professors assign too much work during Dead Week.
- Most respondents believe that *if* a university-wide Dead Week policy was present, most professors would follow it.
- Most respondents ranked having no exams or assignments introduced during Dead Week (Option E) as their most preferred Dead Week policy. An overwhelming majority, nearly three-quarters chose not having a Dead Week policy (Option A) as their *least* preferred policy. In essence, a Dead Week policy is better than no Dead Week policy given the choices.

## Research Objectives and Methods

The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (Docking Institute) at FHSU was contacted by the Student Government Association at FHSU, to conduct a poll of on-campus and virtual FHSU students enrolled in the 2018 fall semester regarding Dead Week. Dead Week is defined as the week before final examinations. The Docking Institute obtained a list of 9,787 FHSU students enrolled in the 2018 fall semester from the Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement office. Upon the client’s request, minors (under the age of 18) and students classified as freshmen were excluded. Freshman is defined as a student who has completed less than 30 credit hours before the commencement of the 2018 FHSU fall semester.

On October 15, 2018, an email was sent to all 9,787 students, inviting them to participate in a web survey. One email bounced back as undeliverable. Three follow-up email reminders were sent in the following four weeks. By November 19<sup>th</sup> at 10am CST, the end of the web survey data collection period, 1,231 respondents completed the survey. Seventeen students began the survey but did not give consent to participate in the survey. An additional 18 completions were removed because the respondents identified as freshmen students. Lastly, 39 cases were removed because they were only partially completed responses. The following results are based on 1,157 completed interviews. Given a

population of 9,679 students (9,787 *minus* 18 freshmen), 1,157 responses provide a response rate of 11.8% and margin of error of  $\pm 2.71\%$ .

## Findings from the Poll

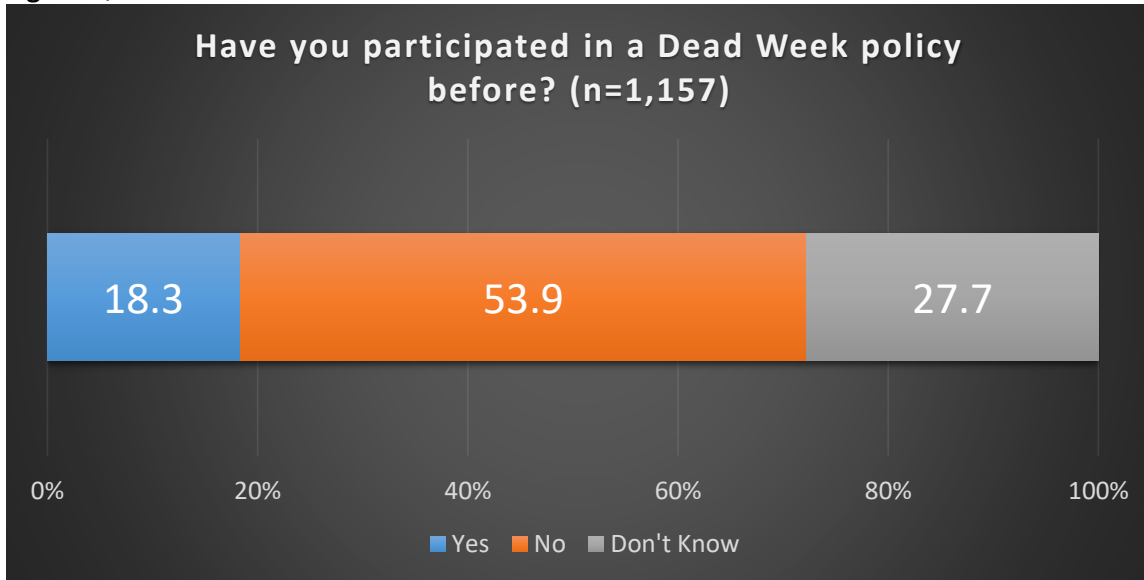
A key set of questions addressed preferences regarding a Dead Week policy (Q15). Respondents were asked to rank six policy options from 1 to 6 with 1 being the most preferred and 6 being the least preferred (please see appendix 2 a list of the options). Option E was the most preferred. Option E states, *“There is to be no exams or new material introduced during dead week. Projects, assignments, or papers may be due during this week if they have been in the syllabus since before midterms. All requirements, except for the final exam, must be completed no later than the Wednesday of Dead Week. Classes must meet during finals week. Exceptions can be made for labs or classes that meet once a week.”* The aforementioned option E is ranked as most preferred by 31% of the respondents. Option E is also the top ranked option when combined with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> most preferred options (please refer to Figure Q15).

Option B came in as the 2<sup>nd</sup> most preferred ranking at 25%. Option B states, *“Dead Day: No required class meetings, examinations, or activities may take place on the Friday immediately preceding final exams. At their own discretion, faculty members may hold additional office hours or give a review session on Dead Day provided these activities are strictly optional.”* Option B ranked second when combined with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> most preferred rankings (please refer to Figure Q15). Response was strongest with regard to Option A (“No Dead Week Policy”). Nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents indicated that not having a Dead Week policy would be their *least* preferred Dead Week Policy.

The following pages provide charts for each question in the survey. Bivariate analysis was performed to assess potential relationships among survey questions and three demographic-type variables: Student status (on-campus or virtual student), student classification (sophomore, junior, etc...), and the number of hours worked per week (see figures Q2A, Q2B, and Q2C, respectively). Few statistically significant relationships emerged, and those that did were considered statistically very weak. As such, cross-tabulation data are not shown, with the exception of the relationship between student status and number of hours worked per week (see appendix 2).

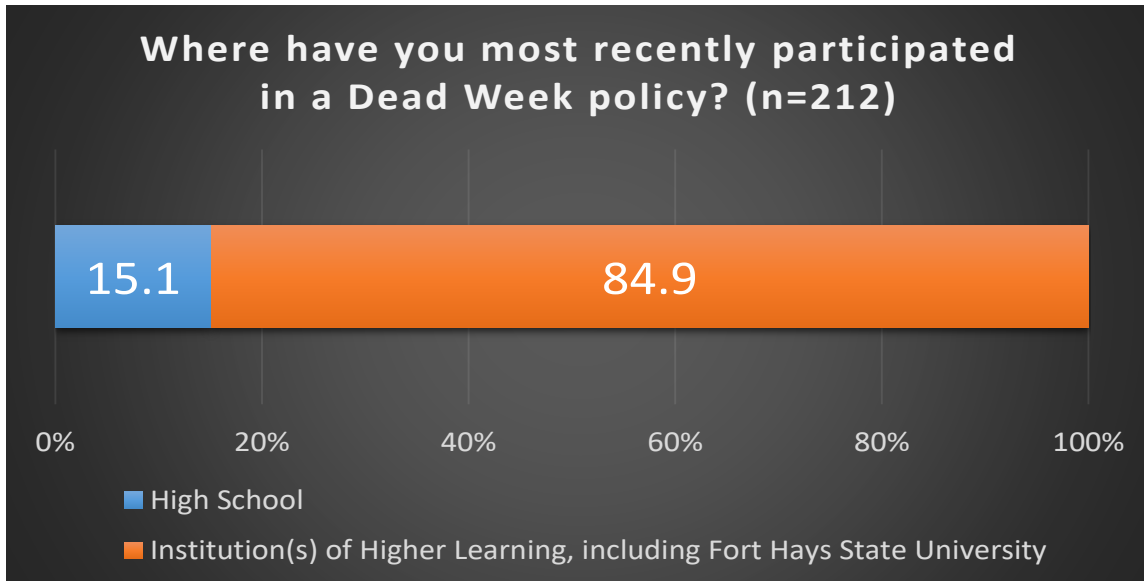


**Figure Q1A:**



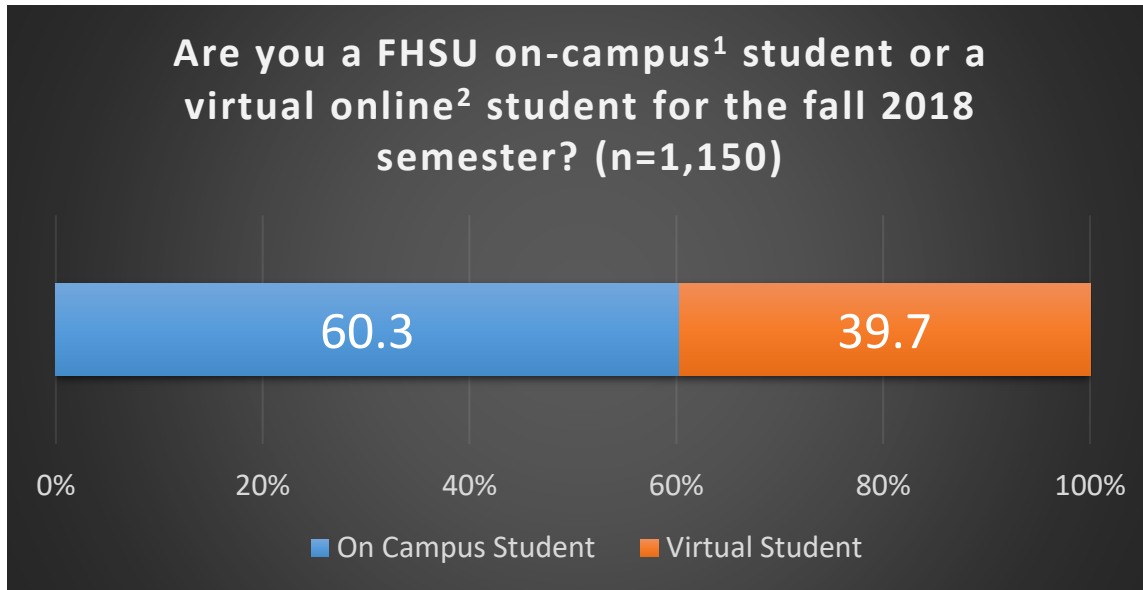
Most students reported that they either have never participated or aren't aware that they have participated in a Dead Week.

**Figure Q1B:**



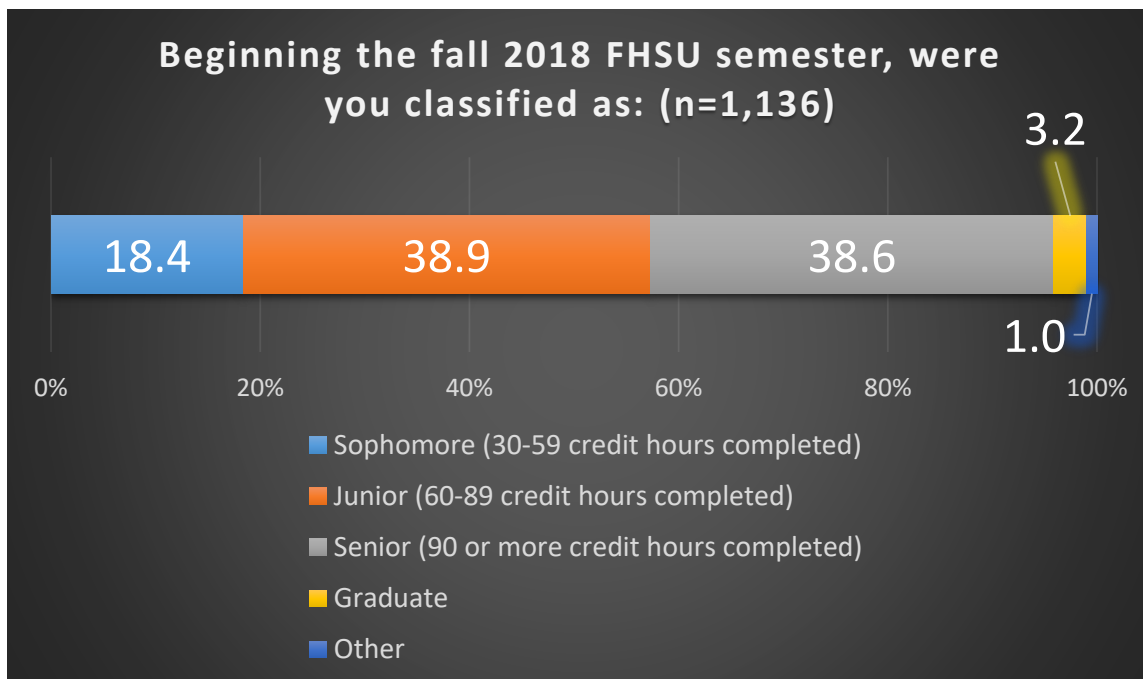
The students who said they have participated in a Dead Week policy overwhelmingly experienced Dead Week through an institution of higher learning.

Figure Q2A:



Around 60% of student respondents identified themselves as on-campus students.

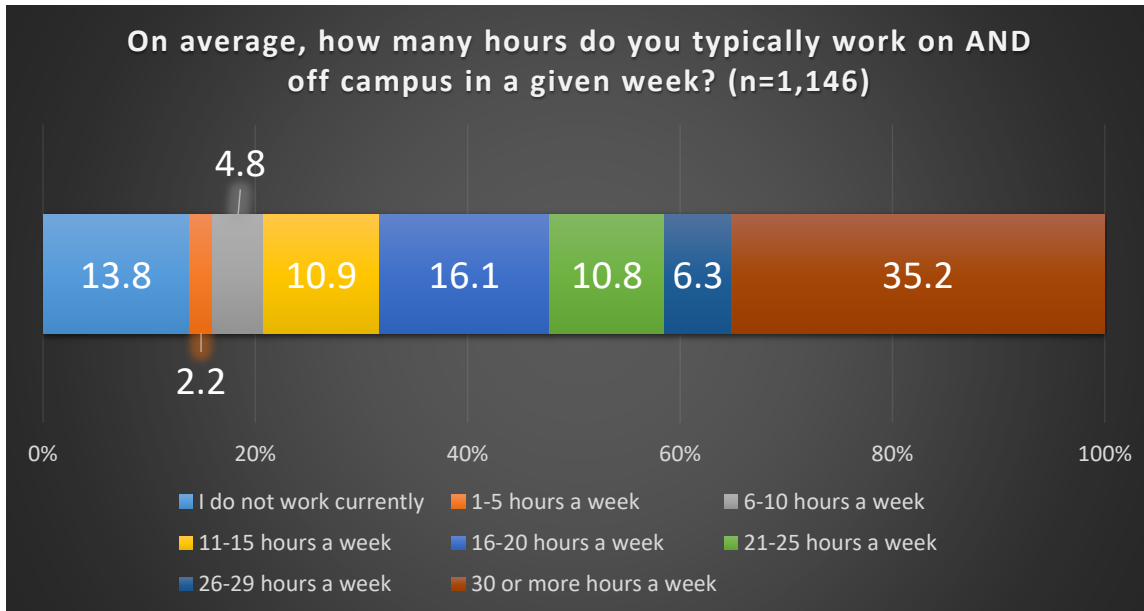
Figure Q2B:



A significant majority of respondents (77.5%) are either junior or seniors at FHSU.

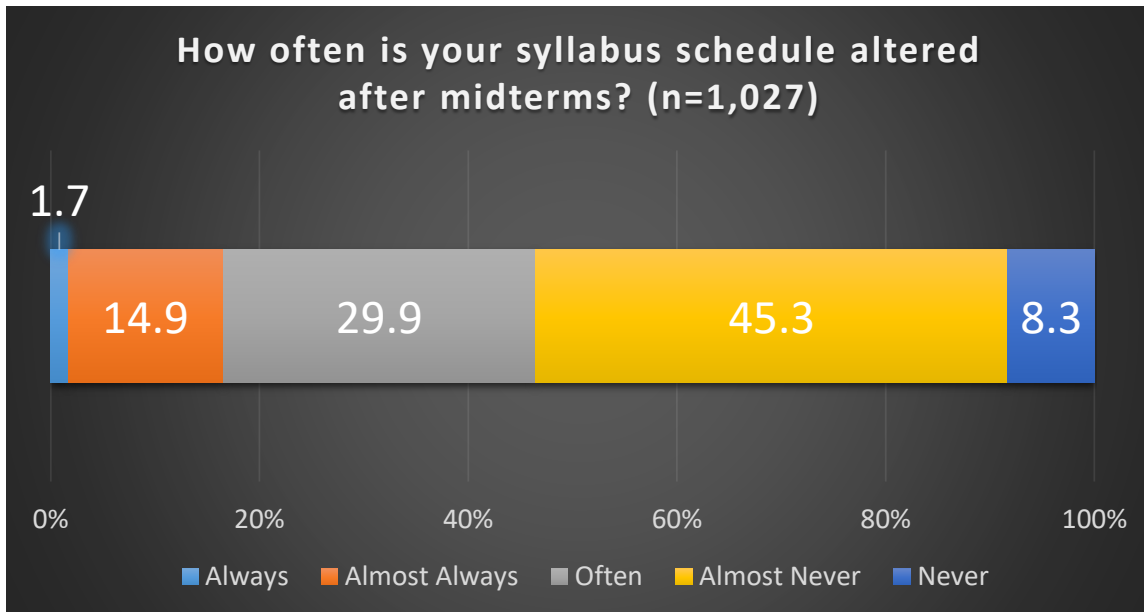
<sup>1</sup> On-campus student is defined as taking AT LEAST ONE CREDIT HOUR on campus during the entirety of the fall 2018 semester. <sup>2</sup> Virtual student is defined as taking ALL courses online during entirety of the fall 2018 semester.

Figure Q2C:



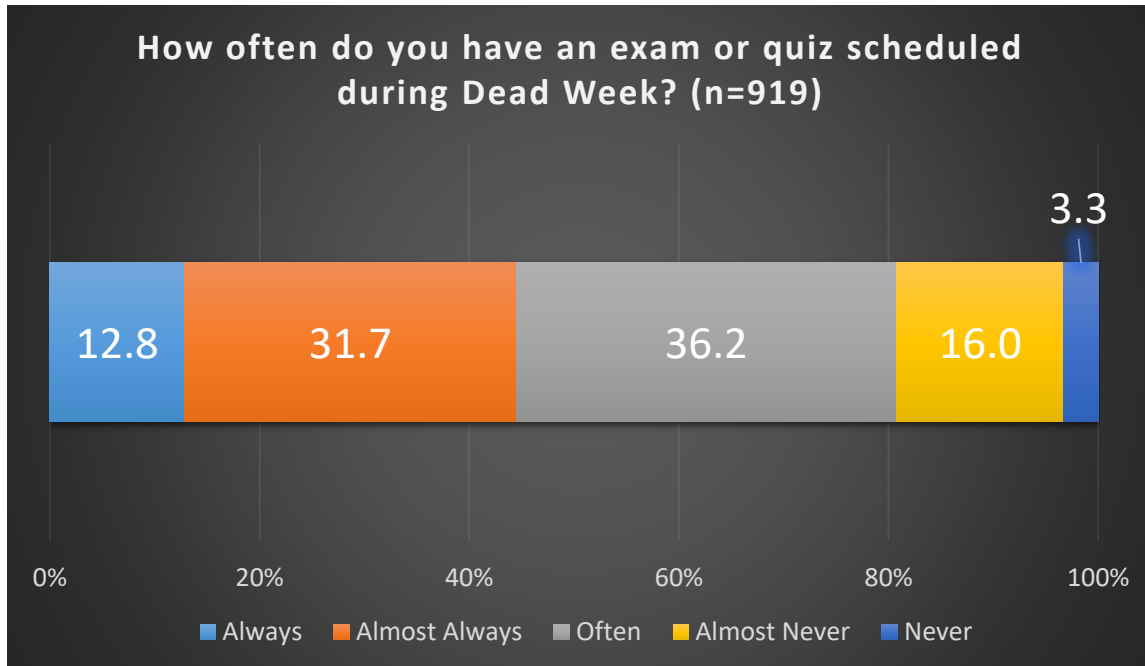
More than one-third of the respondents indicated that they worked 30 or more hours a week.

Figure Q3:



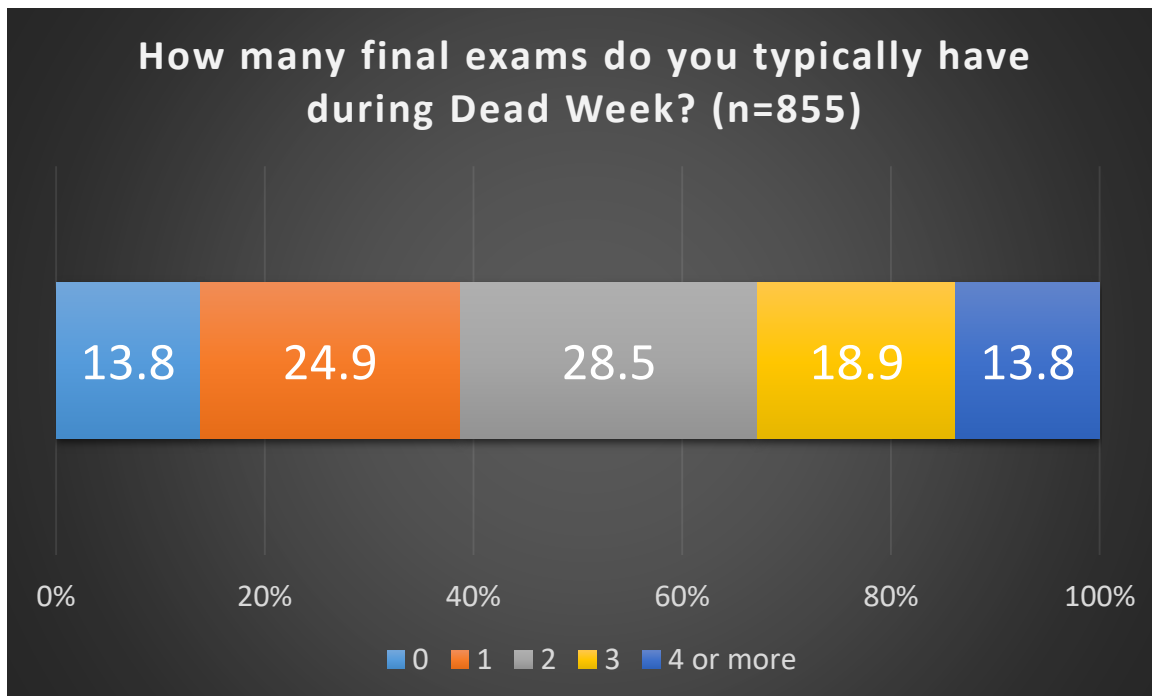
A little over half (53.6%) of the respondents indicated that they “almost never” or “never” have their syllabus altered during mid-terms.

Figure Q4:



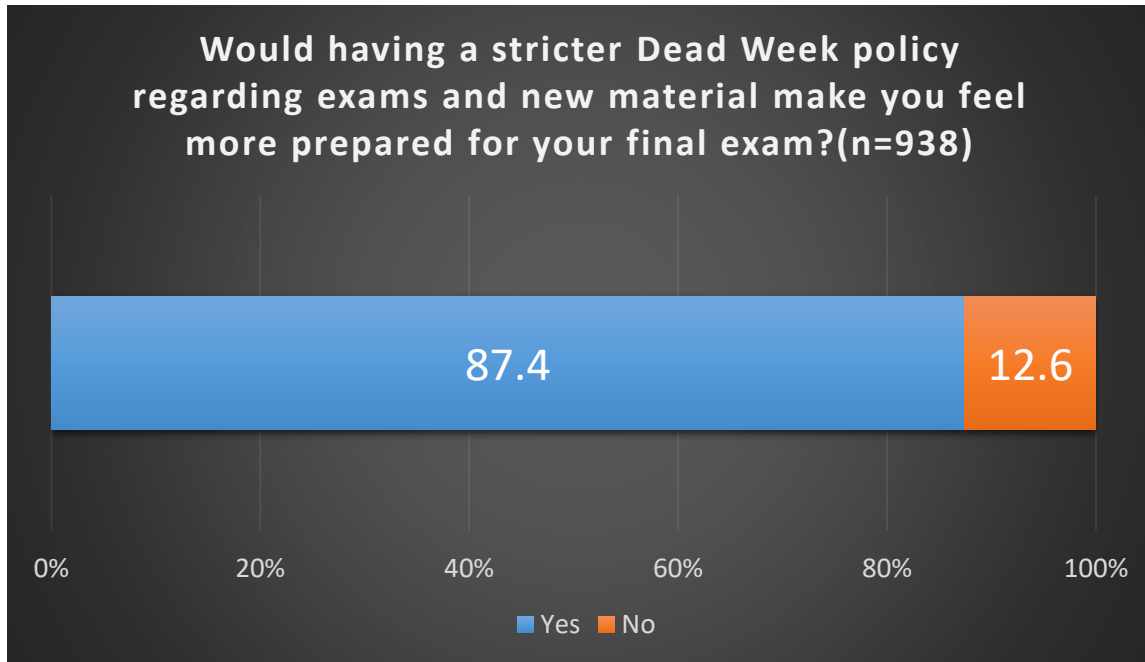
More than two-thirds (67.9%) reported that an exam or quiz is “often” or “almost always” scheduled during Dead Week.

Figure Q5:



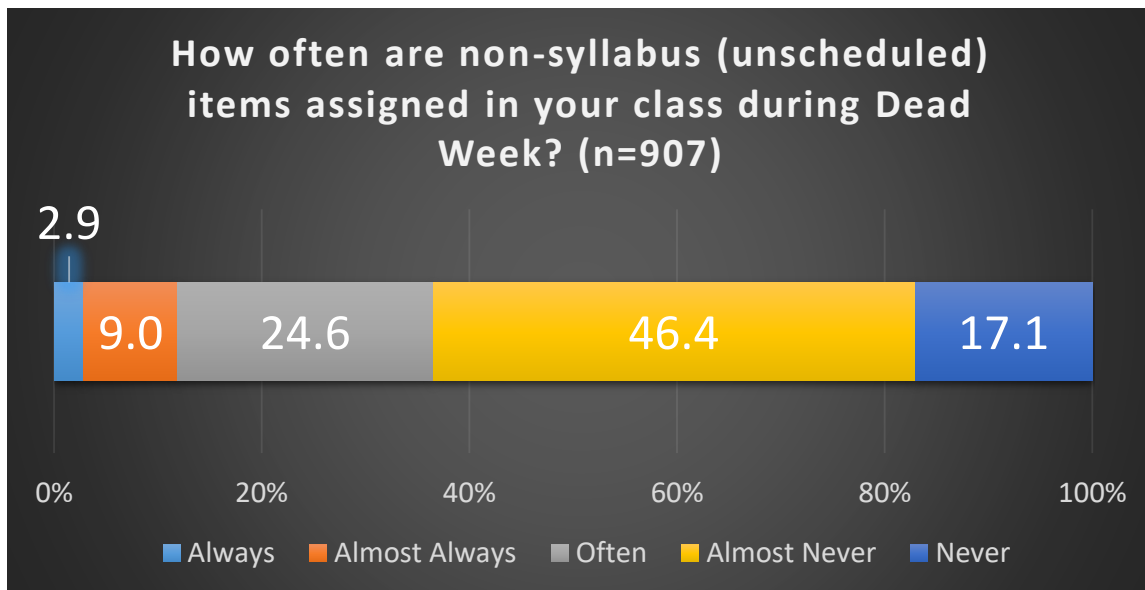
Slightly more than half (54.4%) of the respondents indicated that they typically have one or two exams during Dead Week.

Figure Q6:



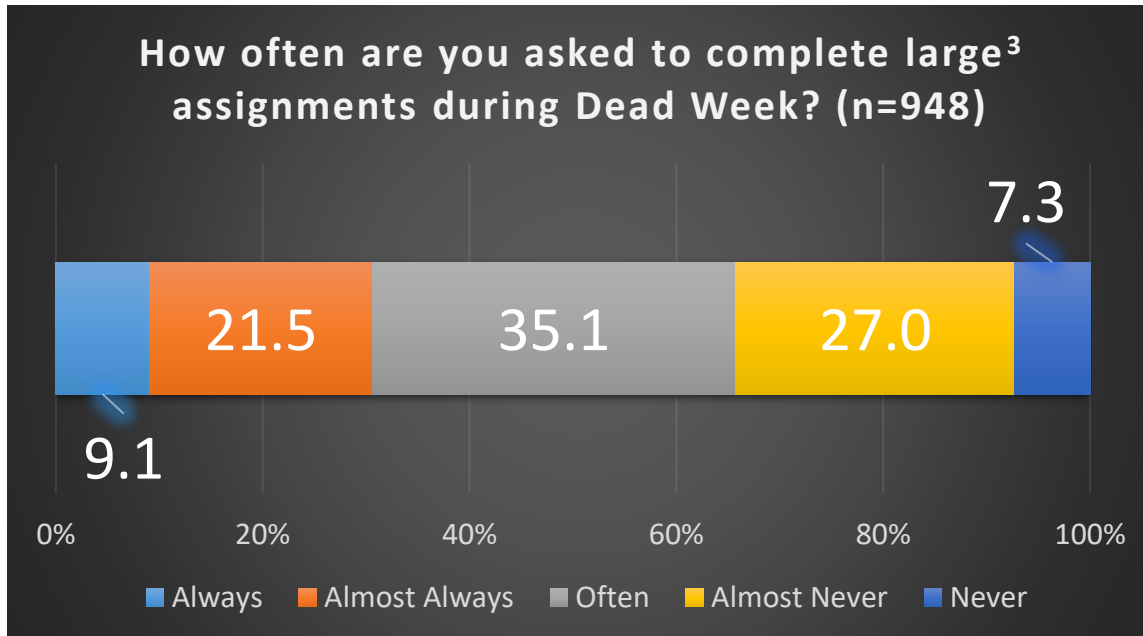
A majority (87.4%) of respondents indicated that having a stricter Dead Week policy regarding exams & new material would make them feel more prepared for their final exams.

Figure Q7:



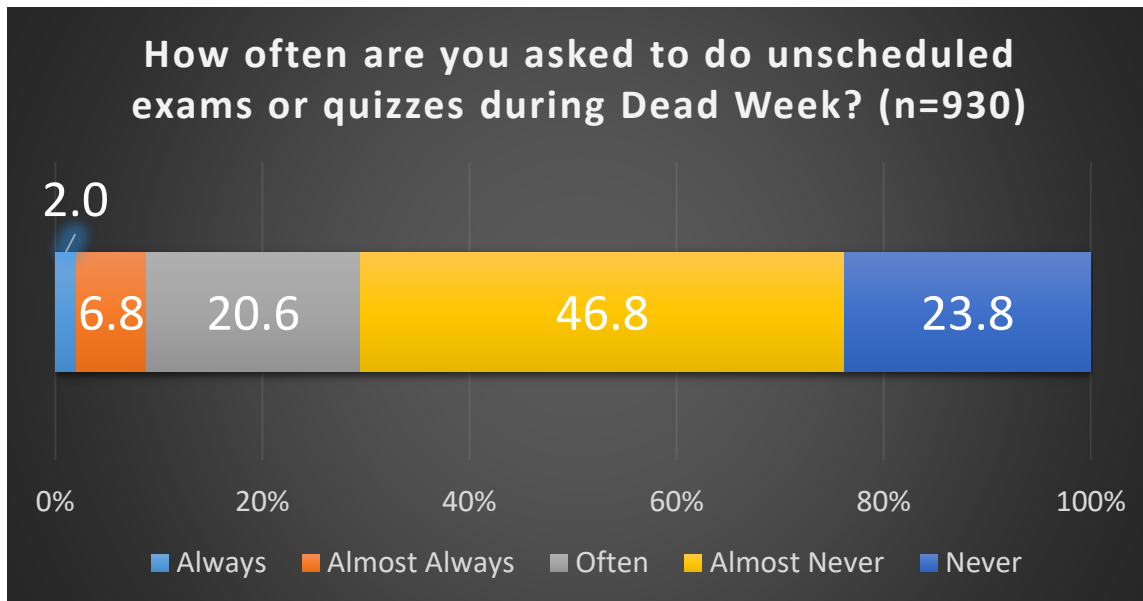
Slightly less than half (46.4%) indicated that they “almost never” have unscheduled items assigned during Dead Week.

Figure Q8:



A majority (65.7%) of respondents indicated that they are “often,” “almost always,” or “always” asked to complete large assignments during Dead Week.

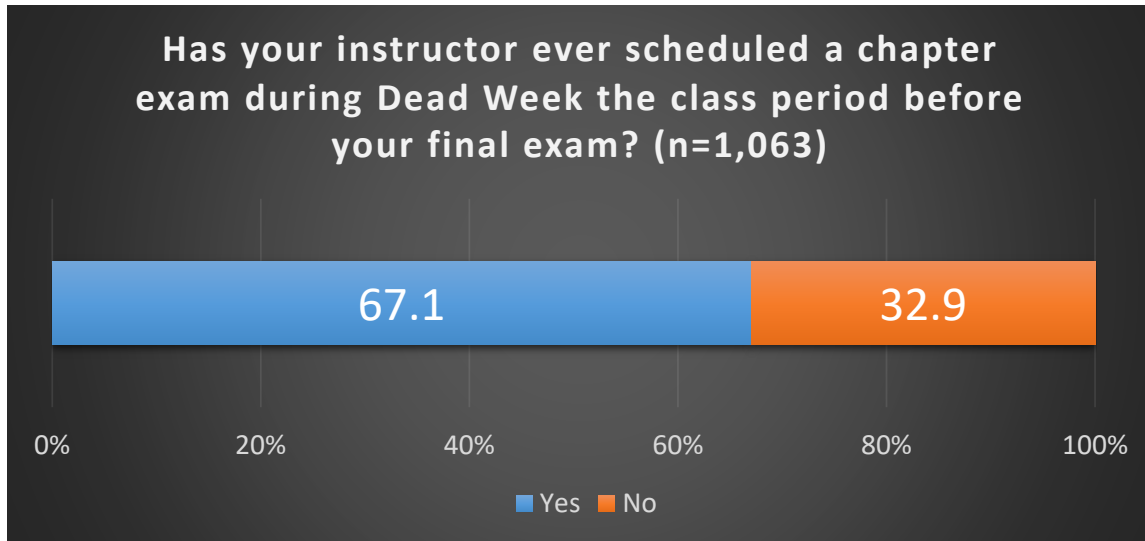
Figure Q9:



Slightly more than 70% of respondents indicated that they are “never” or “almost never” asked to do unscheduled exams or quizzes during Dead Week.

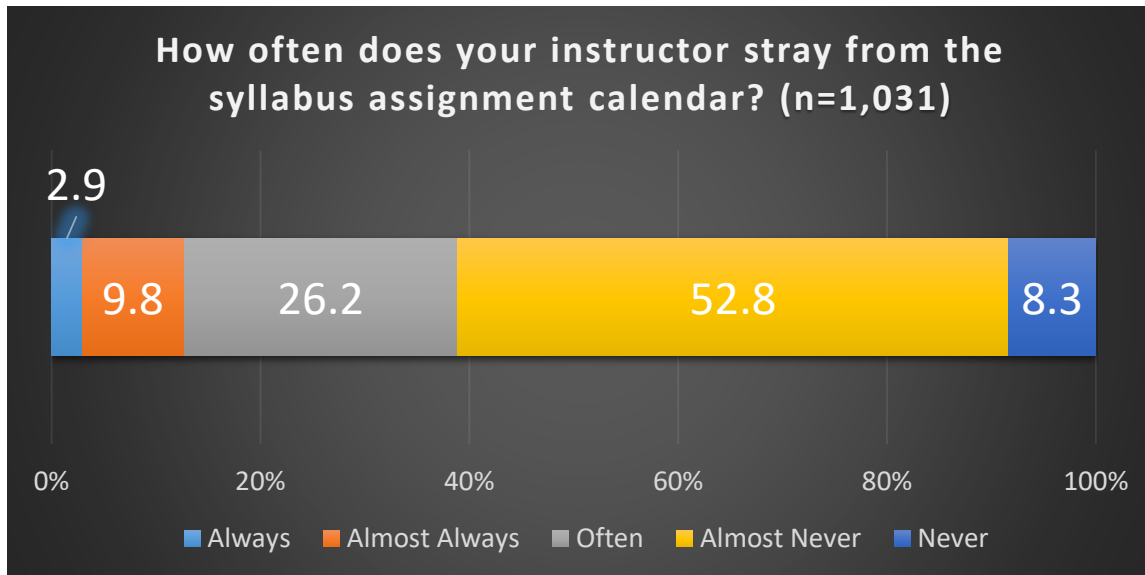
<sup>3</sup> Large meaning above average length of time to complete assignment.

Figure Q10<sup>4</sup>:



A majority of respondents indicated that they have experienced a chapter exam during Dead Week.

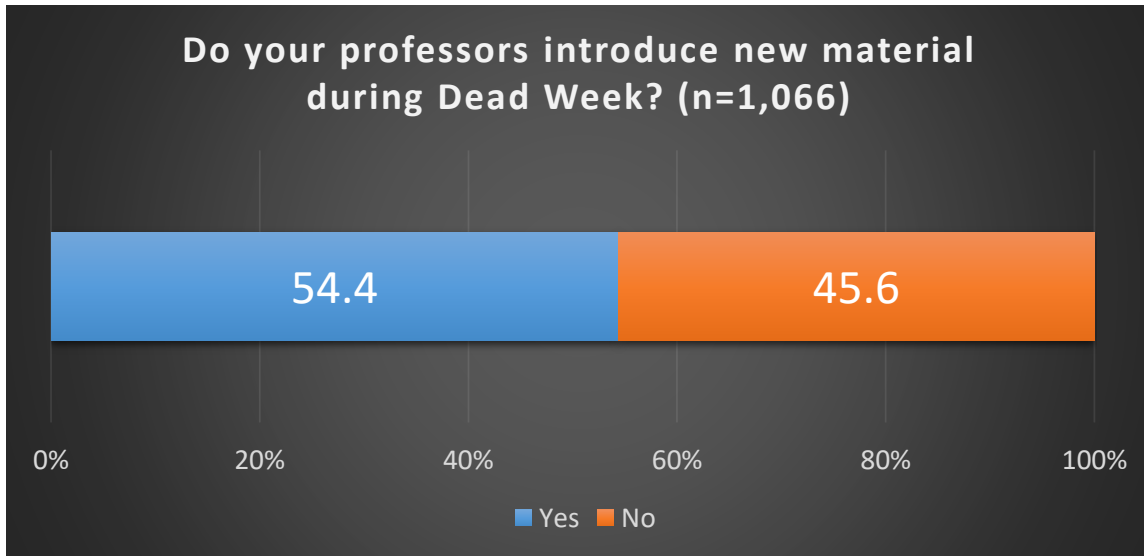
Figure Q11:



Around 60% of respondents indicated that they have “almost never” or “never” experienced an instructor straying away from his or her syllabus assignment calendar.

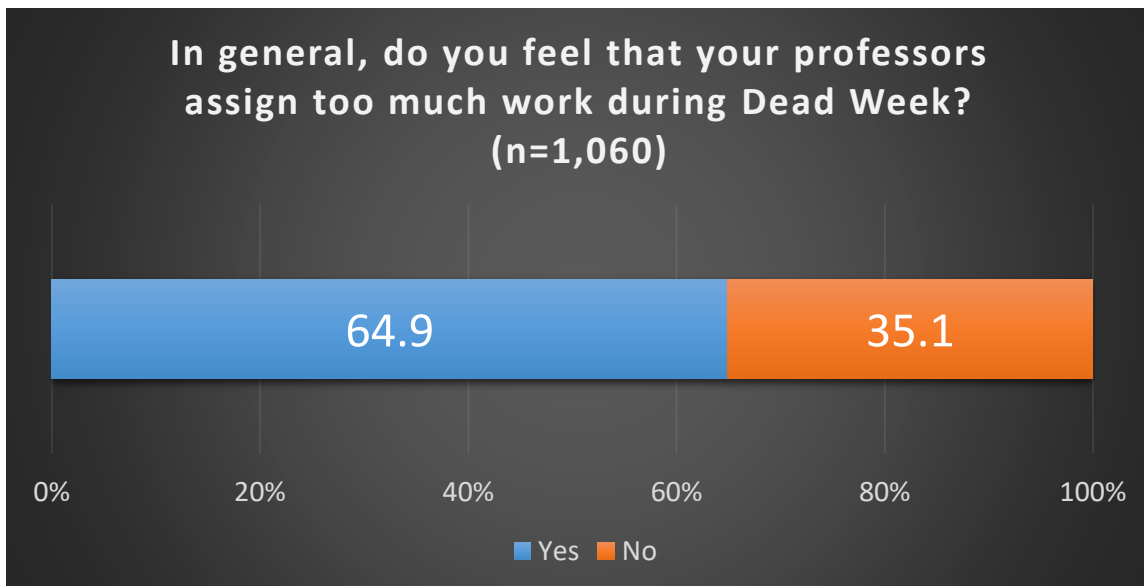
<sup>4</sup> For example, having a chapter exam Thursday of Dead Week and a cumulative final the Tuesday of Finals Week.

**Figure Q12:**



A slight majority indicated that their professors introduced new material during Dead Week.

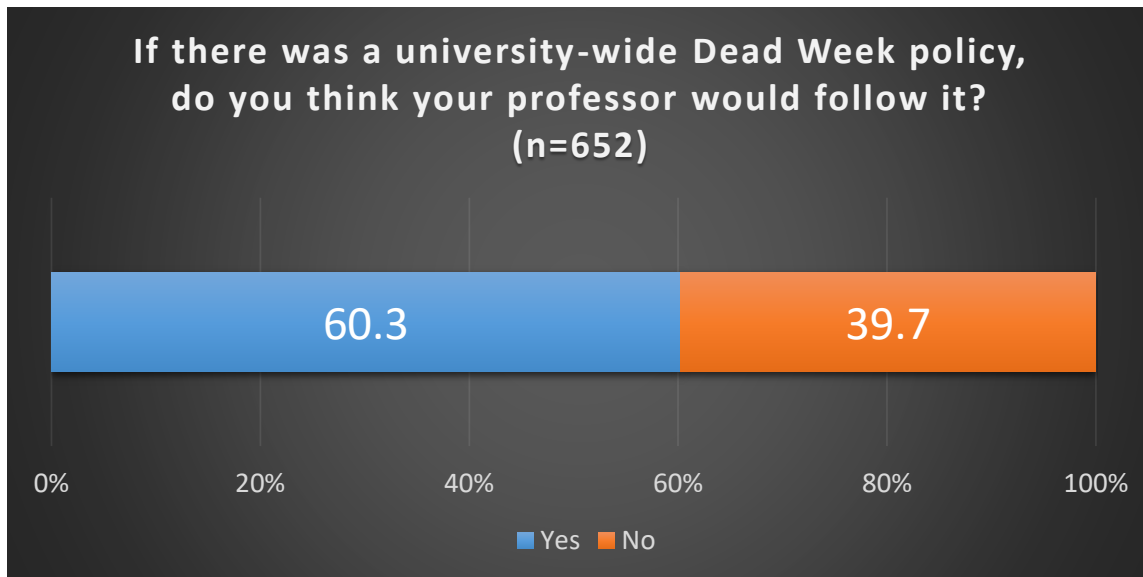
**Figure Q13:**



Almost two-thirds of respondents indicated their professors assign too much work during Dead Week.

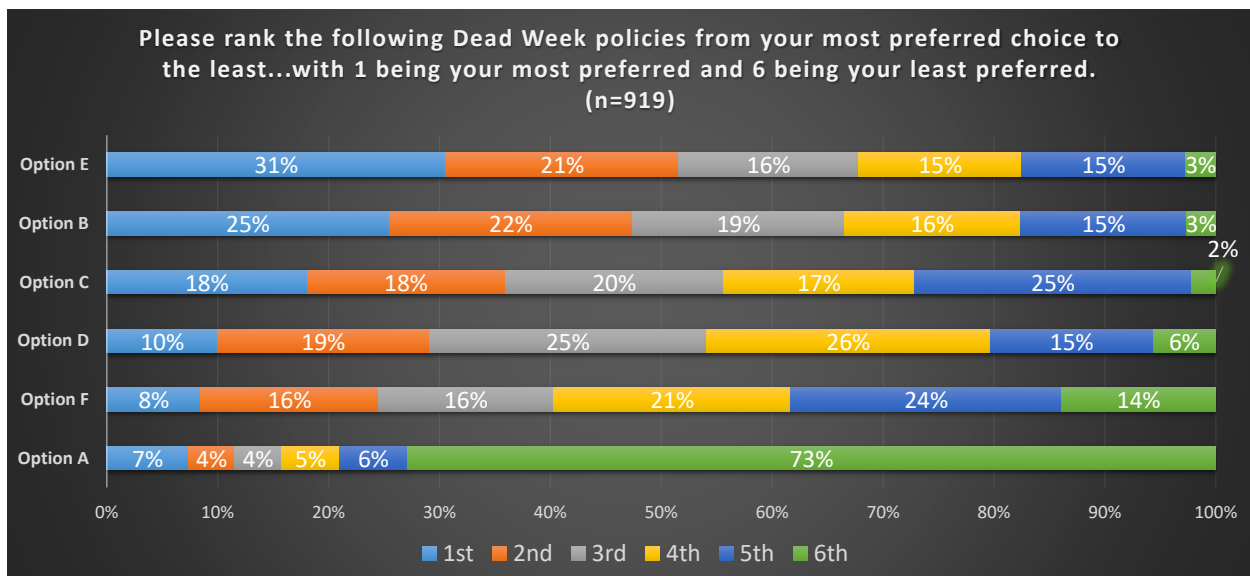


Figure Q14:



Around sixty percent of respondents indicated they believe that *if* a university-wide Dead Week policy was present then most professors would follow it.

Figure Q15<sup>5</sup>:



Most respondents ranked having no exams or assignments introduced during Dead Week (Option E) as their most preferred Dead Week policy. An overwhelming majority, nearly three-quarters chose not having a Dead Week policy (Option A) as their *least* preferred policy. In essence, a Dead Week policy is better than no Dead Week policy given the choices.

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to Appendix 1 to see key for options.

## Appendix 1: Q15 Options for Dead Week Policies Key

<b>Option A:</b> No Dead Week Policy
<b>Option B:</b> Dead Day: No required class meetings, examinations or activities may take place on the Friday immediately preceding final exams. At their own discretion, faculty members may hold additional office hours or give a review session on Dead Day provided these activities are strictly optional.
<b>Option C:</b> Dead Week would allow for only one exam or quiz to be given, per course, during the last two weeks of the semester, which includes finals week.
<b>Option D:</b> All syllabus changes must take place prior to midterms. No in-class quizzes or exams may be given on the Thursday and Friday of Dead Week. Mandatory final examinations may not be given during the Dead Week. Classes must meet during finals week. Exceptions may be made for labs or classes that meet once a week.
<b>Option E:</b> There is to be no exams or new material introduced during dead week. Projects, assignments or papers may be due during this week if they have been in the syllabus since before midterms. All requirements, except for the final exam, must be completed no later than the Wednesday before Dead Week. Classes must meet during finals week. Exceptions may be made for labs or classes that meet once a week.

**Appendix 2: Student Status Breakdown by Hours Worked**

		On Campus Student	Virtual Student	Total
I do not work currently	Count	108	47	155
		15.7%	10.4%	13.6%
1-5 hours a week	Count	22	3	25
		3.2%	.7%	2.2%
6-10 hours a week	Count	48	7	55
		7.0%	1.5%	4.8%
11-15 hours a week	Count	106	19	125
		15.4%	4.2%	11.0%
16-20 hours a week	Count	158	26	184
		<b>23.0%</b>	5.7%	16.1%
21-25 hours a week	Count	108	15	123
		15.7%	3.3%	10.8%
26-29 hours a week	Count	55	17	72
		8.0%	3.7%	6.3%
30 or more hours a week	Count	82	320	402
		11.9%	<b>70.5%</b>	35.2%
Total	Count	687	454	1141
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The chart above shows that a majority of FHSU virtual students work 30 or more hours a week. Seven out of ten (70.5%) of virtual students work 30 or more hours per week. Conversely, a majority of on-campus students work 20 hours or less. Almost a quarter (23%) work between 16-20 hours per week. The majority of students, whether on-campus or virtual, work at *least* 6 or more hours.