

PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE

TITLE: Change University of Dayton grading system by adding A-, B+, B-, and C+ to the undergraduate scheme and A- and B+ to the graduate scheme.

SUBMITTED BY: Student Academic Policies Committee

DATE: March 23, 2001

ACTION IS: Legislative

REFERENCES ARE: The University of Dayton Bulletin

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Introduction

The grade earned by a student is a visible sign of knowledge acquired. As such, it should distinguish fairly between levels of accomplishment. There is considerable belief at this university that the use of only five grades at the undergraduate level (A, B, C, D, F), and four grades at the graduate level (A, B, C, F) does not effectively separate achievements, especially in the A, B, C ranges. For example, many faculty members believe that there should be a significant difference in undergraduate credit between a student in the high B range and a student in the low B range. At the graduate level, faculty would like to have a greater option than just two "respectable" grades, A and B. Furthermore, the proliferation of A's at the undergraduate level concerns a good many faculty. A review of undergraduate grades earned during the winter semester of 2000 revealed the following distribution: A(43.1%), B(33.9%), C(16.3%), D(4.4%), and F(2.3%).

A survey of seventy-eight colleges indicated that those who use some type of +/- grading scheme exceeded those who do not by about two to one. A survey of the university faculty (176 replies) showed that those who favor some type of +/- grading scheme exceeded those who do not by almost two to one. Discussions with the Graduate Council also indicated that the addition of +/- grades for graduate courses was desirable.

Given that we should adopt some type of +/- grading scheme, the question reduces to what specific scheme should be implemented. The faculty who favored a +/- scale preferred adding A-, B+, B-, and C+ as opposed to adding A-, B+, B-, C+, and C- by a 53% to a 47% margin. It is therefore proposed that the university adopt a grading scheme that adds A-, B+, B-, and C+ at the undergraduate level. At the graduate level only A- and B+ will be added; grades of B- and C+ are not deemed necessary.

Rationale

The following arguments are made for the additions of A-, B+, B-, and C+ to the present undergraduate grading scheme.

1. It discriminates between students who do excellent and those who are not quite at that level, A versus A-.
2. It discriminates between those in the high B range and those in the low B range, B+ versus B-.
3. It may motivate those students who realize that under the present system neither studying hard nor not at all for the final exam in some courses will change the grade they have earned prior to the final. With the proposed additions, a good final test grade is likely to increase a C grade to a C+ or a B grade to a B+. Whereas, a poor final test grade might reduce a B to a B-.
4. It provides a grade for those students who are doing very good, but who are not excellent students, a B+.
5. It is a symmetric change, two "+" grades and two "-" grades are added.
6. It avoids administrative problems, such as the following, that are introduced by adding a C- grade.
 - a. Competencies must be passed with a C. C- grades will put a greater burden on those departments that teach competency courses.
 - b. The retake policy includes only D and F grades, thereby making a C- grade in a competency course a poorer grade than a D, because it cannot be removed from the cumulative GPA.
 - c. A significant number of C- grades places the student in greater jeopardy of dismissal.
7. D+ and D- grades are not worth the extra distinction.

The following arguments are made for the additions of A-, B+ to the present graduate grading scheme.

1. At the graduate level only two grades are "acceptable," A and B. There has been strong faculty support to provide intermediate grades to reward students who are doing better than good, but do not reach the level of an A student.
2. Since a 3.0 GPA is required at the graduate level, any grade below B hurts the students' progress toward the degree. Since few C's are given at the graduate level, it was not felt necessary to introduce additional grades between a B and C.

Proposal

I. The option 1 grading system for undergraduate students will be:

Option 1: A, A -, B +, B, B -, C+, C, D, F

The Option 1 grades with their meaning and quality points are as follows.

Note: Grades are recorded to five significant figures.

A	Excellent	4.0000
A -		3.6667
B +		3.3333
B	Good	3.0000
B -		2.6667
C +		2.3333
C	Fair	2.0000
D	Poor	1.0000
F	Failed	0.0000

II. The grading system for graduate students will be:

A, A -, B +, B, C, F

The grades with their meaning and quality points are as follows.

A	Excellent	4.0000
A -		3.6667
B +		3.3333
B	Good	3.0000
C	Poor	2.0000
F	Failed	0.0000

III. Implementation

The above-defined grading systems will become effective for the fall semester of 2002.

To: Members of the Academic Senate
From: Harry Gerla, Senator, School of Law
Date: March 23, 2001
Subject: Proposed Amendment to Senate Document No. 01-02

At the Senate meeting on March 23, I will offer the following amendment to the proposal of the Committee on Student Academic Policies to amend under I. The option 1 grading system for undergraduate students.

Note: Additional language is indicated by *italics*.

Add the following under Option 1: between the grades C and D:

C -

Add the following under Note: Grades recorded to five significant figures between the grades C and D.

C - 1.6667

And that the III. Implementation clause be amended to read –

“The above-defined grading systems will become effective for the fall semester of 2002 under condition that the Academic Senate has explicitly addressed the impact of the “C -” grade upon the University retake policy and the University competency requirement.”

To: Members of the Academic Senate
From: Scott E. Hall, Senator, School of Education and Allied Professions
Date: March 23, 2001
Subject: Proposed Amendment to Senate Document No. 01-02

At the Senate meeting on March 23, I will offer the following amendment to the proposal of the Committee on Student Academic Policies to amend II. The grading system for graduate students will be.

Note: Additional language is indicated by *italics*.

Add the following between the grades B and C:

B -

Add the following under The grades with their meaning and quality points are as follows.

B- 2.6667