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University of Dayton. Academic Policies Committee

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Undergraduate Academic Policies
Affected by the New +/- Grading System

Approved by the Academic Senate - October 12, 2001

Senate Document No. 00-16

PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE

TITLE: Undergraduate Academic Policies Affected by the New +/- Grading System

SUBMITTED BY: Academic Policies Committee

DATE: October 7, 2001

ACTION IS: Legislative Authority

REFERENCES ARE: (1) UD Bulletin 2001-02, Undergraduate Issue, August 2001: Section III, Admissions, pages 33-37, and Section V, Academic Regulations, pages 51-79. (2) Senate Document 99-8, University Competencies Program, pages 11, 17. (3) Senate Document 00-10B, Quantitative Reasoning Competency, page 17. (4) Senate Document 01-02, Alternative Grading System, approved on March 23, 2001.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

Background

During the 2000-2001 academic year, the Academic Senate considered and passed a new graduate grading system. This new system is a +/- system and thus the new possible grades (in addition to the grades of the current system) that may be awarded are the following: A-, B+, B-, C+, and C-. One of the conditions contained in the proposal to approve a new undergraduate grading system was the following: "...the Academic Senate must explicitly address the retake policy and the competency program..." [Minutes of the Academic Senate, March 23, 2001]. The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate referred this issue to the Academic Policies Committee with the understanding that all undergraduate policies that may be affected by the new grading system will be reviewed.

In their review of undergraduate academic policies, the Academic Policies Committee identified the following policies as potentially affected by the new +/- grading system:

(1) University Competencies Program. This program, approved by the Academic Senate in 2000 and now beginning implementation, specifies "general" competencies for all undergraduate students in four areas: Reading and Writing, Oral Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, and Information Literacy. Students may demonstrate competency in some areas by earning a grade of "C" or better in specified courses."

Question: Should the minimum allowable grade be "C-?"

(2) Retake Policy. As stated in the UD Bulletin, 2001-02, pages 64-65, students currently can retake up to 15 hours of courses for which they have received grades of "D" or "F" and, if they earn a higher grade, the original "D" or "F" will be removed from their cumulative GPA.

Question: Should grades of "C-" be included in this policy?

(3) Option 2 Grades. Under the current policy (UD Bulletin, 2001-02, page 63), some courses are specified as (and others may be taken with) Option 2 grading. The policy indicates that grades of "C" or higher are converted to the Option 2 grade of "S" (satisfactory) and grades below "C" are converted to the Option 2 grade of "NC" (no credit).

Question: Should "C-" be the lowest grade that is converted to the Option 2 grade of "S"?

(4) Transfer Credit. The UD Bulletin, 2001-02, page 35, specifies procedures for transfer students. It identifies how decisions will be made on the number of transferable hours and includes the statement, "No credit will be given for a course in which the student earned below a 'C'."

Question: Should this requirement be changed to "C-"?

Consultation

In its deliberation on the potential impact of the new grading system on the above four undergraduate academic policies, the Academic Policies Committee gathered information from and consulted with several groups: the three academic departments scheduled to offer courses that will satisfy general competency requirements (Communication, English, and Mathematics), the Competencies Implementation Subcommittee, and the Dean's Office of the College of Arts and Sciences where all of these policies are (will be) implemented for many undergraduate students. In addition, the Committee has communicated with all Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Directors about the Committee's work on the possible impact of the new grading system on these four academic policies.

Rationale

The current grading system provides for the following grades: A, B, C, D, and F. The newly approved grading system will contain the following grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, and F. The Committee developed the following premise concerning how the new system will be implemented:

- ◆ The academic performance that was awarded an "A" will now be awarded an "A" or "A-."
- ◆ The academic performance that was awarded a "B" will now be awarded a "B+," "B," or "B-."
- ◆ The academic performance that was awarded a "C" will now be awarded a "C+," "C," or "C-."
- ◆ The academic performance that was awarded a "D" or "F" will be unchanged.

Based on this premise - which was widely agreed to by those the Committee consulted - the Committee has drawn the following overall conclusion:

Any university-wide, undergraduate academic policy that refers to a grade of "C" should be interpreted, under the new grading system, as referring to the grades of "C+ or C or C-."

Therefore, the Academic Policies Committee reached the following specific conclusions:

- (1) In the University Competencies Program, a "C-" should be the lowest grade that indicates competency in competency-designated courses.
- (2) The retake policy should **not** be modified - only D's and F's should be eligible for retake.
- (3) With regard to Option 2 grading, all academic performance in a course earning "C-" or higher should be converted to "S."
- (4) The transfer credit policy should state that the credit for courses completed at other accredited institutions with grades of "C-" or higher is eligible for transfer.

Note 1: Policies Based on Cumulative GPA. Whereas the above four academic policies involve grades awarded for specific courses, there are several university-wide academic policies that involve a student's cumulative grade-point average (GPA): (1) specifications of good academic standing (1.7, 1.8, 1.9, and 2.0 depending upon the number of academic terms completed), (2) graduation requirements that include a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0, and (3) the three levels of graduation honors that are defined based on cumulative GPA. The Committee noted that cumulative GPA is a measure of *average* academic performance for a *collection* of courses and is not the same type of measure as a grade for one course. Thus, based on the premise above concerning the relationships between current grades and new grades, the committee determined that these policies that involve cumulative GPA are not affected by the new grading system and were not considered further.

Note 2: Policies of Individual Academic Units. The Committee also discussed academic policies that are developed by individual academic units and that are applied only to specific programs. These policies are not in the purview of the Academic Senate. However, the Committee urges faculty and academic leaders in the various academic units to review carefully all such academic policies in light of the newly approved undergraduate grading system.

Motions:

Based on the foregoing background and rationale, the Academic Policies Committee submits the following motions:

- (1) Under the University Competencies Program, students may demonstrate general competency in specified courses by earning a grade of "C-" or better.**
- (2) The undergraduate policy on Option 2 grading should state, "Grades of "C-" or higher should be converted to "S" while grades of "D" and "F" should be converted to "NC."**
- (3) The undergraduate policy on transfer students and credit should include the following statement, "No credit will be given for a course in which the student earned below a 'C-'."**

The three motions were voted on by the Academic Senate during the October 12, 2001 meeting and each was approved by the following votes:

Motion 1 - 28 for, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions

Motion 2 - 28 for, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions

Motion 3 - 28 for, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions