

SENATE RESOLUTION #1776

Title: Grading Policy
Date: September 30, 1994
Authors: Academic Affairs Committee
Sponsors: Senators King, Marron, Olson, Plemmons, Zeller

1 WHEREAS, Faculty Senate is considering modification of the
2 current grading scale (A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, D=1.0, F=0) to a
3 scale of fractional +/- grades (A=4.0, A-=3.67, B+=3.3,
4 B=3.0, B-=2.67, C+=2.3, C=2.0, C-=1.67, D+=1.3, D=1.0, D-
5 =.67, F=0); and

6 WHEREAS, the proposed grading scale change could further
7 complicate the divisional allocation of letter grades by
8 professors; and

9 WHEREAS, the current system has historically accommodated
10 the students of the University of Wyoming adequately; and

11 WHEREAS, the costs of the proposed change have the potential
12 of outweighing the benefits; and

13 WHEREAS, University of Wyoming students' grade point
14 averages, under the proposed system, could be less
15 competitive with students who have attended a four
16 divisional scale institution (A,B,C,D,) when applying for
17 further schooling; and

18 WHEREAS, the proposed change in the grading system could
19 deter students from attending the University of Wyoming and
20 decrease the retention rate of current students;

21 THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Student Senate of the

22 Associated Students of the University of Wyoming, that a +/-
23 grading system is not supported (See Addendum).

Referred to: Research and Information

Date of Passage: October 25, 1994 Signed: Beth A. Caviness
ASUW Chairperson

"Being enacted on November 1, 1994, I do hereby sign my name
hereto and approve this Senate action." Matthew J. Ward
ASUW President

ADDENDUM - SENATE RESOLUTION #1776

The proposal for the grading scale asserted that a +/- system would be more precise. This is hardly indisputable. It also noted that such a system would combat the current inflation of grades, which has made GPA's (grade point averages) less important criteria for assessing student success. Grade inflation is a recognized issue among University administrators and faculty, and most agree that a +/- scale would slow the inflation. Finally, the proposal's statement that the costs would not be large is supported by an official at Registration and Records.

On issues of competitiveness of the University of Wyoming, complexity of the proposed system, and universality of +/- grading scales in other institutions, there is a lack of consensus.

Competitiveness of UW

Two University advisors noted that medical, dental, and some other graduate schools adjust grade point averages of all prospective students so that the type of grades (+/- or not) at undergraduate schools are not important. Six college recruiters claimed that GPA is only marginally important to most universities and employers, and that the type of grading scale is therefore of little importance. One dean commented that the proposed scale would make little difference in University students' success after graduation. On the other hand, two other University officials insisted that the +/- grade system would be a considerable hassle for students, faculty, and staff at UW. The primary reason for their argument was that it is too speculative whether or not the proposed scale would benefit students.

Complexity of proposed scale

One dean said that the proposed system would actually make it easier for faculty to assess student grades. Two other faculty members, however, felt that since it is unclear how the scale would be implemented and who it would affect, the +/- scale would complicate the grading process. Above all, there presently is no clear plan for implementation of the proposal.

Other universities

There were two main concerns regarding grading scales at other universities. First, is it important that other schools have +/- systems? Second, is there a trend of +/- system adoption by other schools? There was no consensus on either of the concerns, and no conclusion could be drawn about either of them.

General issues

1. Student opinion is not known.
2. It is not clear how the system will be implemented and which students will be affected.

This is important information that should be known before the Senate supports the +/- system.

3. The +/- system would be a more precise scale. It is not shown that it would be more complicated, or that it would make UW less competitive. It is not known, in fact, how important the type of grading scale is to students or other institutions. GPA's seem less important at present because of grade inflation, something that this proposed system would likely target. The ASUW Senate does not support **this** proposed system because the issue is too fuzzy - the Senate is leery of supporting something that is so indefinite. This is not to say that the Senate would disapprove of a well designed and clear +/- system. A careful, more definite effort to change the grading scale would be worth future consideration.-