

Passed: 23-0-0

**SENATE RESOLUTION #2619**




**TITLE:** ASUW Recommendation on Plus/Minus Grading System  
**DATE INTRODUCED:** April 10, 2018  
**AUTHOR:** Chief of Legislative Affairs Jones; Executive Simental  
**SPONSORS:** Senator Frauendienst, Garcia, Gunter, Mulhall, and Stromberg

1. WHEREAS, it is the duty of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming (ASUW)
2. Student Government to serve our fellow students in the best manner possible; and,
3. WHEREAS, Senate Resolution #2362 supported having letter grades without plus/minus; and,
4. WHEREAS, Senate Resolution #2288 which supported a switch to a plus/minus grading
5. system was failed by the ASUW Senate; and,
6. WHEREAS, currently there is no uniform requirement for professors to utilize a plus minus
7. grading scheme in their classes; and,
8. WHEREAS, in the past surveys in regards to plus/minus grading have been lackluster; and,
9. WHEREAS, this most recent survey has a methodology to be considered statistically relevant
10. as outlined in Addendum A; and,
11. WHEREAS, students were also in support of not having an A minus option with 81% of
12. students supporting a whole letter grade system across departments; and,
13. WHEREAS, the survey found that student motivation is not linked to having a plus/minus
14. system implemented in the classroom; and,
15. WHEREAS, students would find themselves to be more motivated to work towards an A grade
16. and being more successful academically if the A minus letter grade was not implemented;
17. THEREFORE, be it resolved that the ASUW Student Government supports the
18. removal of A minus letter grade from the current grading scheme; and,

19. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that the ASUW Student Government supports the  
20. implementation of a uniform grading scheme through the University of Wyoming across  
21. departments if it rejects the use of A minus letter grade.

Referred to: Advocacy, Diversity, and Policy

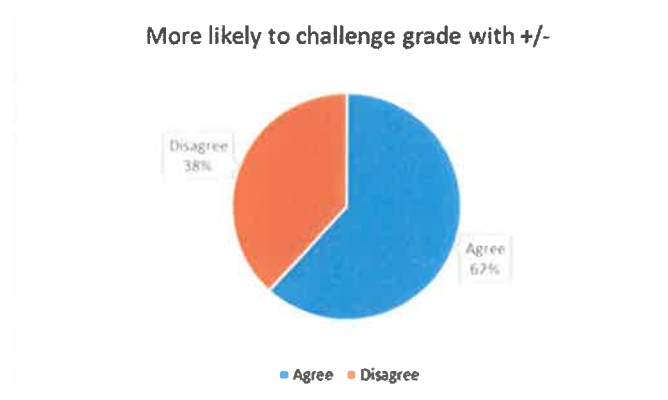
Date of Passage: 4/17/2018 Signed:   
(ASUW Chairperson)

“Being enacted on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018, I do hereby sign my name hereto and  
approve this Senate action.”   
ASUW President

## Addendum A

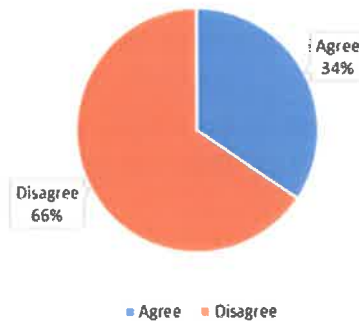
The survey method consisted of a proportional stratification of all eight colleges, excluding the College of Law. A survey consisting of 9 questions was distributed to 3,700 undergraduate and graduate students out of which we received a response rate of over 10 percent. With an adequate rate of response to ensure 95% confidence in our results, data was analyzed using a one-sided proportion z-test with an alpha value of 0.05. Data was processed using the R software program.

We had sufficient evidence to support the claim that over 50% of students who responded to this question are more likely to challenge their grade in a class using +/- over a class using a whole letter grade system ( $z = 6.780188$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ).



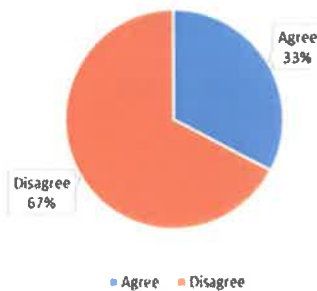
We had sufficient evidence to support the claim that more than 50% of respondents believe the +/- system does not benefit low achieving students ( $z = 6.824187$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ).

+/- Benefits low achieving students



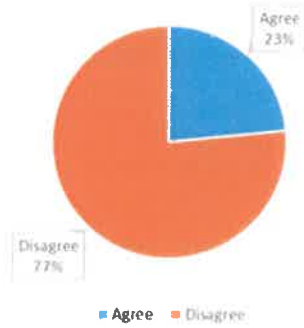
We had sufficient evidence to support the claim that more than 50% of respondents do not believe the +/- system increase their motivation to *earn* a better grade in the class ( $z = 6.824187$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ).

+/- Increases motivation to earn a better grade



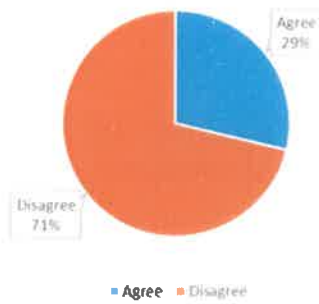
We had sufficient evidence to support the claim that over 50% of respondents do not see the +/- system working to increase student motivation in *learning* the course material ( $z = 6.81541$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ).

+/- increases motivation to learn course material

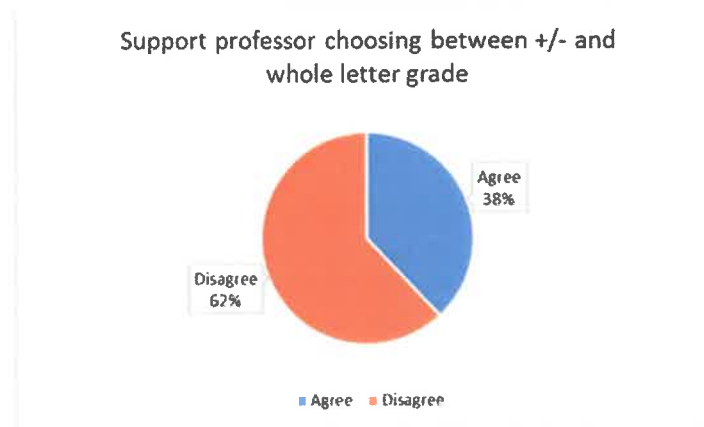


We had sufficient evidence to support the claim that over 50% of students do not support a +/- system with an A+ option ( $z = 6.81541$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ).

Support +/- if there is an A+ option

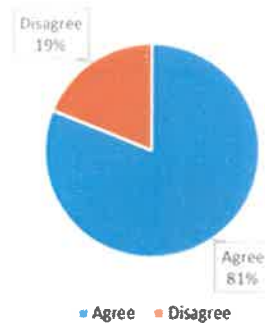


We had sufficient evidence to support the claim that over 50% of students do not support their professor choosing between the +/- and the whole letter grade system ( $z = 6.824187$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ).



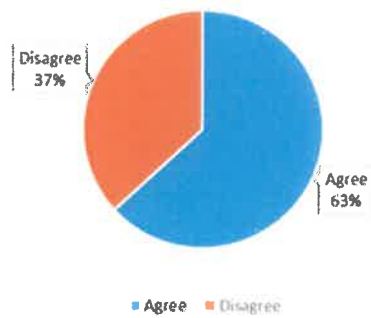
We had sufficient evidence to support the claim that over 50% of students support the whole letter grade system across all departments ( $z = 6.806621$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ).

Support whole letter grade across all departments

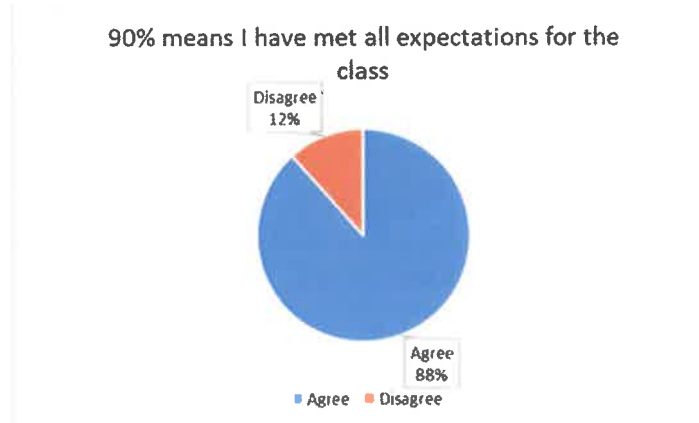


We had sufficient evidence to support the claim that over 50% of students would feel more motivated to work towards an A if the +/- system did not have the A- option ( $z = 6.81541, p < 0.0001$ ).

No A- motivates you to work towards an A



We had sufficient evidence to support the claim that over 50% of students believe that getting a 90% grade in a class means they have met all expectations for the course ( $z = 6.824187, p < 0.0001$ ).





## Conclusion

Based on the survey results we have sufficient evidence to conclude that both undergraduate and graduate students do not consider the plus/minus system to be beneficial.

Both questions inquiring about student motivation to earn the grade versus learning the material show students do not see an increase in either motivation to *earn* a better grade, nor *learn* the material with a +/- system in place. Results also show students do not agree with the current option of allowing professors to choose the grading scheme as they see fit. The survey shows with 95 percent confidence that more than half of those surveyed prefer a uniform straight letter grade system across all departments.

Specific opinions on the A-, A letter grades were also part of the survey results. Over 50 percent of students do not support an A+ option, but instead support the elimination of the A-. Based on this analysis, students shared they would feel more motivated to work towards an A letter grade without the A- option, also sharing they believe obtaining a 90% or above in a class means they have met all expectations for the class.

A recommendation based on these results would be to consider the removal of the A-, completely removing +/- from the A grade. Students do not agree with the negative weight of the A- letter grade when factored into the grade point average and often give up working for the A altogether. Based on these results we could predict an increase in student motivation and overall class performance if there is no A-.

A removal of the +/- system should also be considered. A common argument is that the +/- system actually benefits low performing students by increasing GPA as reflected in a high C versus a low C. Survey responses show students do not agree with the idea that lower performing students benefit from the plus/minus system. Results show there is no increased sense of motivation to perform at a higher range of A, B,C, or D given +/- does not increase motivation to merely earn a better grade nor better learn the course material.

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