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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 20, 2014

FROM: Bennie Wilson, College of Business 
Chair, Academic Policy & Requirements (APR) Committee

THRU: Academic Policy & Requirements (APR) Committee
Byongook Moon, College of Public Policy
Juliet Langman, College of Education & Human Development
Liang Tang, College of Engineering
Libby Rowe, College of Liberal & Fine Arts
Martha Fasci, College of Business
Patricia Thompson, College Sciences
Patricia McGee, College of Education & Human Development
Saadet Beeson, College of Architecture
Turgay Korkmaz, College of Sciences
Wing Chung Ng, College of Liberal & Fine Arts

TO: Rebekah Smith, College of Sciences
Chair, Faculty Senate

SUBJECT: Proposal to Amend the Plus-Minus Grading System

The Faculty Senate APR Committee recommends that the Senate not approve the proposal from the Student Government Association that the plus-minus grading system be changed to permit the award of 4.33 grade points for a course grade of “A+,” which currently results in 4.00 grade points, as does a course grade of “A.” The results of the voting process, in addition to background information and the rationale for the Committee’s recommendation are enclosed.

I certify that these results are accurate.

Enclosurc

Report of Faculty Senate Regarding SGA Proposed Change to Plus-Minus Grading System

Background: On May 11, 2010, the Faculty Senate voted to recommend, and the Provost and President subsequently approved, the implementation of the following plus-minus grading system concurrently with the grading system without plus-minus grades.

Letter Grade	Grade Points
A+	4.00
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00
D-	0.67
F	0.00

Proposal: The President of the Student Government Association (SGA) proposed that the plus-minus grading system be changed to permit the award of 4.33 grade points for a course grade of “A+,” which currently results in 4.00 grade points. His rationale was:

“This idea originally came about when I heard from some of my friends that the law schools they were applying to were taking “A+” grades as 4.33 credit as opposed to 4.0. I know that this university worries about having students graduate with a GPA above 4.0, but I am curious to know how many students would have actually graduated with that distinction last year had the proposed 4.33 been in effect. A 4.33 seems to me to be a fair compromise to having an “A-“ (above the traditionally accepted 90%), so that too is a reason why I think it is in UTSA's best interest to consider giving 4.33's to students who have demonstrated a mastery of a certain subject.”

APR Committee Considerations:

- Law schools, medical schools, and other specialized colleges and schools were not examined since there are no such schools at UTSA.
- A review of other universities shows that many top tier universities use plus-minus, as do many who do not. Of those who do, there is either no “A+” grade, or if there is, the use of 4.33 grade points for an “A+” was almost nonexistent.

- When the University of Georgia vetted the plus-minus grade issue, it found: "There are many different plus/minus systems at leading state universities. Some include an "A+" option and some do not. Universities that include "A+" as a grading option often assign it the same value as an "A" for computing grade point averages."
- There is no perceived significant dissatisfaction with the plus-minus grading system at UTSA.
- At UTSA, the plus-minus system is optional for departments to use.
- The current UTSA grading system was implemented only a little more than two year ago after vetting and approval by the Faculty Senate, the Provost, and President.
- It was decided not to provide more grade points for an "A+." The view was that "A+" has the positive affect on transcripts of further impressing potential employers & families.
- The purpose of the plus/minus system is not to give more grade points to students, rather it is to better differentiate among the various student achievement levels of a specific grade, e.g., "C-," "C," "C+," etc., as determined by the faculty member.
- While the minus grade of all of the grade categories is less than the previous grade points for the grade without a minus grade, it also higher than the plus grade of the next lower grade. Also, graduation requirements did not change—an UG student still needs a 2.0 GPA to graduate, meaning a student with a "C-" GPA (1.67) cannot graduate—this was done deliberately as a way of increasing graduation standards and to produce a better "product." The Faculty Senate supported him in the regard.
- The issue of granting grade points above the "A" and "A+" levels is similar to what is being done in high schools these days; that is, one can earn up to 5.00 grade points based on several factors, e.g., extra points for being in AP courses, taking courses earning concurrent college credit, etc.

APR Committee Vote: The proposal is not recommended.

- 11 – Number of voting-eligible committee members
- 9 - Number of members who voted (excludes chair unless to break tie vote)
- 6 - Quorum required to conduct vote
- 0 - Number voting for the proposal
- 9 - Number voting against the proposal
- 0 - Number abstaining