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.

Enclosure
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>0.67</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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</tbody>
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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