Report

The +/- Refined Grading System
And Grade Standards Within Current Policies

Presented by Academic Affairs Committee
4/24/14
Agenda

- Introduction
- Report Considerations
- Explanation of Grades in Current Policies
- Impacts and Cautions
This is NOT about whether we should have a +/- system or if there should be changes to the approved +/- policy.

This is about existing policies that have grade standards within the +/- system.
- This report double-checked for impacts on current specific grade standards within existing policies
- This report does not include recommendations for policy changes
Charge to Academic Affairs Committee:
- Considering the +/- grading system, work with Dr. Fernando Naveda, the Office of Academic Affairs, and Graduate Council to review existing policies that contain a grade standard. Report to Academic Senate at the end of the year on any potential areas of concern moving forward.

A review was completed of all policies that contain a grade standard. Discussions included:
- Graduate Council
- Enrollment Management and Career Services
- Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Academic Affairs Committee
## Comparisons

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old system</th>
<th>New +/− System</th>
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<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
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<td>C</td>
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### Grade Descriptions

- **A**: Excellent performance
- **A−**: Very good performance
- **B+**: Good performance
- **B**: Satisfactory performance
- **B−**: Satisfactory performance
- **C**: Average performance
- **C−**: Minimum passing grade
- **D**: Minimum passing grade
- **F**: Failure
Undergraduate Policies

- Policy D1.1 Minors
  - Posting of the minor on the student's academic transcript requires a minimum GPA of 2.0 in the minor;

- D2.0 – Admissions
  - ‘Transfer credit at the undergraduate level will usually be granted for those courses completed with a grade of "C" or better in other regionally accredited colleges or universities and specific armed services course work which parallel courses in the program (including options, if any) for which the student is applying or is currently registered.’

  - D2.0-XI.A.d Credit for Non-traditional learning– Evaluation of Transfer Credit ‘If the course involved is in a sequence of courses, the student may be permitted to take the next course in the sequence, with credit for the previous course withheld until the student completes the second course with a grade of “C” or better. Students already in a program would follow the same procedure except that the request for credit would go directly to the department.’
D.05.1 II.A and II.A.1–Academic Probation and Suspension

- An undergraduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or above at RIT in order to remain in good academic standing.

- ‘Any degree-seeking undergraduate student whose term or cumulative grade point average falls below a 2.00 (C average) will be placed on probation.’

D 12 Graduation Requirements

- Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas ‘A cumulative grade point average of 2.00 (a “C” grade).

- ‘Associate and Baccalaureate degrees – A cumulative grade point average of 2.00 (a “C” grade).’
Graduate Policies

- D2.0 Admissions ‘Graduate applicants who do not fully satisfy all admission criteria as to grades, test scores or other credentials, but do show sufficient promise to qualify for a trial period of graduate study may be admitted on probation to the university. Such students must achieve a 3.00 ("B") program grade point average by the end of their first 9 credit hours of graduate study.’

- D.5 Grades VI B.2 (If given permission to repeat a course) ‘A graduate program grade point average manually calculated by the academic unit is used for degree certification and must be least 3.00 ("B" average) as a graduation requirement. All academic program course attempts are included in this calculation.’

- D05.1 II.B.1 Academic Actions and Recognitions
  - ‘Any degree-seeking graduate student whose cumulative and/or program grade point average (see D5.0 Grades, section VII) falls below a 3.00 after 9 credit hours (attempted or earned) subsequently will be placed on probation and counseled by the graduate program director (or his/her designee) concerning continuation in the graduate program.’
  - ‘Students on probation must raise their program cumulative and program grade point average to 3.00 within 9 credit hours (attempted or earned) or they will be suspended from the graduate program.’
D05.1 II.C  Academic Actions and Recognitions  Non-Degree-Seeking Undergraduate and Graduate Policy

◦ ‘Any non-degree-seeking undergraduate student who has a cumulative GPA below 2.00 after 15 credit hours or non-degree-seeking graduate student who has a cumulative GPA below 3.00 after 9 credit hours (attempted or earned) may not register for credit or non-credit courses without the specific approval of the department head offering the course(s).’

D12 Graduation Requirements

◦ ‘Advanced Graduate Certificate – A program cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (a "B" average).’
◦ ‘MASTER’S DEGREE – A program cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (a "B" average).’
◦ ‘DOCTORAL DEGREE – A program cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher (a “B” average) is required for graduation.’
As per Verna Hazen, Assistant VP and Director RIT Financial Aid and Scholarships

- Federal Department of Education (DOE) – general university progress and performance policies must be consistent with general graduation requirements for the university. Changes in one RIT policy area will affect another. Changes require re-evaluation and authorization from DOE. Changes would negatively impact financial aid.

- Any change in graduation requirements can have significant impact on a student’s continued federal student aid eligibility in terms of the assessment of a student’s satisfactory academic progress in his or her educational program. Grade point average is one component of the measurement of satisfactory academic progress. The major impact would be on undergraduate students.
Impacts and Cautions continued.....

- If RIT were to lower the undergraduate graduation requirement to a “C−“, the minimum GPA of “C” for undergraduate satisfactory academic progress would be higher than the minimum required for graduation. Those students with less than a “C” GPA would still be eligible to attend and graduate, but would be ineligible for federal student aid to assist with their costs. If RIT were to change the undergraduate graduation requirement to a “C+”, we would be required to increase our minimum GPA to a “C+” by the end of the second year. There would be no “grandfathering” of this increased requirement; it would apply to all students.
Standards in RIT policies are minimum standards

Is our intent to lower standards? Example: Changing from C (2.0) to a C– (1.67) lowers standards

Policy already allows for specialized higher standards where appropriate. E.g. D5.1 Probation

• In addition to the university requirements outlined below, individual colleges and/or programs may define more rigorous requirements for maintaining good academic standing. This information must be approved by the dean, clearly defined within published college policy, communicated in the university bulletin, and communicated to the Provost’s Office. For programs housed outside the college structure, the approval of the director of the academic unit is required.
NYSED Tuition Assistance Program regulations specifically ask for C (2.0)
Articulation agreements could be affected
Transfer enrollment could be affected by raising standard from C to C+ for transfer credit
Current students know the current grade standards and expectations. Making changes in standards will add further confusion

**Bottom-line** – There are many unintended consequences to changing established university grade standards and any changes require thorough analysis of systemic effects.
In every place in policy where there is either a letter grade or point value, it should be administratively edited so both letter and point value appear and policy is clear.

- E.g. .. A grade of C is required.... This would be edited to ‘a grade of C (2.0) is required’ or something similar