

Charge AA 2

Academic Affairs Committee : 2016-2017

Charge AA 2:

Develop a best-practices white paper to encourage consistent grading, given the recent introduction of +/- grades and the acceptance that inconsistencies exist with alignment of letter grades to number grades.

Subcommittee: Matthew Fluet, P. Venkataraman

History:

- In 2015/16AY, AAC charged to examine possible changes to grading system, including further refinement of **A** and **D** grades.
- Over 450 instructors responded to a Clipboard survey:
 - No majority support for **A+**, **D+**, or **D-** grades.
 - Many responses to the qualitative short-answer questions:
 - A lack of consistency in the use of +/- letter grades across the university
 - Different mappings from percentage grades to letter grades
 - Different opinions about the influence of +/- letter grades on GPA
 - Questions about the "right" interpretation of +/- letter grades

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As is the case with many issues like this, people with much greater expertise have done significant work in the area. As a deliverable, we submit a brief document highlighting some of the many dimensions that instructors should consider with regard to grading, along with pointers to relevant resources.

Deliberate Grading

- Introduction
- Background
- Addressing Misconceptions
- About Grades and Grading Practices
- Conclusions and Suggestions

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“Ultimately, final course grades are the sole responsibility of the course instructor. A single, institute-wide system for consistent grading would not be appropriate for the diverse collection of colleges, departments, and programs found at RIT nor would a top-down imposition of grading practices be effective. Rather, consistency is achieved bottom-up through the activities of peer instructors coordinated at the department- and college-levels. Moreover, if instructors are deliberate in their decisions about grading, then differences should not be taken as inconsistencies, but rather as part of the ongoing self-dialogue that characterizes higher-education.”

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Additional Recommendations

- Senators bring to the attention of constituents and initiate dialogue
- Deans and department heads solicit action from faculty as appropriate
- Include on the Academic Affairs - Faculty website
- Reference in “Beginning of Semester” reminders from Provost’s Office
- Include with “New Faculty” orientation materials

Charge AA 3.1 and AA3. 2

Academic Affairs Committee : 2016-2017

Charge
AA 3. 1: Count the number of cases at RIT each year where issues or disputes regarding academic matters have not been resolved in the opinion of the petitioner (faculty, instructional staff, graduate/undergraduate students), with the petitioner having applied thorough and good-faith efforts, and exhausting all available informal and formal means to resolution. Hence recommend whether or not a university policy should be drafted to establish a University Academic Appeals Board (UAAB)

Charge
AA 3. 2: Draft a university policy that establishes a University Academic Appeals Board (UAAB) to address issues and disputes regarding academic matters that remain unresolved in the opinion of the petitioner (faculty, instructional staff, graduate/undergraduate students), with the petitioner having applied thorough and good-faith efforts, and exhausting all available informal and formal means to resolution.

Subcommittee: Joseph Miller, Minseok Kwon

Academic Affairs Committee : 2016-2017

Charge Count the number of cases at RIT each year where issues or
AA 3. 1: disputes regarding academic matters have not been resolved in the
 opinion of the petitioner

The AAC is **unable to determine the number of cases** that have proceeded beyond resolution at the College level - :

- There are **No cases (Academic Affairs/Provost Office)**
- **No response (Legal Affairs, Ombudsman)**
- There are **strict privacy concerns** about discussions of such cases in open forums

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Actions by AAC:

No individual survey (privacy concerns)

Informal survey of associate/assistant deans (5 questions)

- **How often do you have situations crop up when students in your college have issues of academic disputes?**
- **What processes are set in place in your college, to accommodate this dispute process? Describe.**
- **Are those disputes archived and used to set future policy for the college (if similar academic disputes were to occur in the future)?**
- **For *graduate students* (as opposed to undergraduates) how are disputes handled?**
- **What is your initial reaction to a centralized board at the university level that would serve as the ultimate authority on academic disputes?**

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Response Summary:

- Number of disputes between 0 and 6 disputes per year.
- All of these disputes were handled within current policy.
- Most disputes resolved within the college. There are not many disputes that reach the Provosts office.
- There number of cases involving graduate students is even less. It was believed that the current policies also applied to graduate students.
- In view of current practices being adequate there does not appear to be any need for a centralized board. It was felt to be another bureaucratic overload. Diminishes the roles of current administrative officers.

Most of the disputes revolved around **academic integrity matters** in the case of an **undergraduate student**, particularly **grade disputes**

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Additional Discussions:

- This charge was initiated several years ago by the director of graduate studies to address concerns about academic issues involving graduate students.
- Academic disputes of Masters and PhD students will differ from undergraduate students and may require different type of actions.

AAC Suggestion: Since RIT is seeking to increase graduate enrollment significantly these concerns should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Council.

The charge also requires consideration of academic disputes not resolved satisfactorily in the case of **faculty and instructional staff**. The committee were not sure how to get this information in the light of personal and confidential issues. It is not clear who would own this information and how they can be accessed.

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The committee felt that we were trying to address a problem that does not exist.

At this time the AAC **does not recommend** that a university policy should be drafted to establish a University Academic Appeals Board (UAAB)

Charge AA 5

Academic Affairs Committee : 2016-2017

Charge Review RIT Policy D 2.0 and modify as needed in order to
AA5: clarify/update the amount of transfer credit allowable for an
undergraduate degree

Issue to be addressed:

Questions have arisen with respect to the amount of transfer credit a student can receive for completion of a two year degree. Review is needed to determine if a modification to current policy language is warranted in order to provide clarity of intent and consistency in interpretation.

Subcommittee: Tracy Davis, Scott Wolcott

Current Status: Transfer Credit is decided by Policy D 02.0 (Admission) and D12.0 (Graduation Requirements)

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From RIT Registrar Web Site:

Undergraduate

The Basics

RIT awards transfer credit for courses completed at other regionally accredited colleges and universities only. Transfer credit at the undergraduate level will only be granted for course work completed with a grade of "C" or above (see RIT Grades policy). There is **no limit on the number of credit hours that can be awarded**, however, a recipient of a **two-year associate degree cannot receive more than 60 semester credits for that degree**. Regardless of the total amount of transfer credit awarded, a **minimum of 30 semester credit hours needs to be completed at RIT in the college granting the degree for Associate and Baccalaureate degree candidates**.

Who evaluates my transfer credit?

Transfer credit is evaluated by the academic school or department in question and the College of Liberal Arts. Official transcripts from each college or university previously attended must be sent to the RIT Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

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Undergraduate Policy D02.0 – I A

Under no circumstances can a recipient of a **two-year associate's degree from another institution receive more than two years' transfer credit for that degree.** However, **applicable courses successfully completed beyond the associate's degree at the upper division or equivalent level may transfer to the student's intended program.** RIT residency requirements must be satisfied. (See Policy D.12) .

AAC does not recommend any changes to Policy D2.0.

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Undergraduate

Policy D 12 – II C (original)

A minimum of 30 credit hours shall be successfully completed in residence at the university in the college granting the degree (inclusive of service courses). If the student has successfully completed 30 credit hours in residence, a petition may be submitted to the dean to study 10 credit hours in absentia in the final year of the degree; at a minimum, 20 of the final 30 credit hours are to be completed in residence.

Philosophical approach:

- . Clarity
- . Degree granting unit is fully capable and obligated to ensure the integrity of their degree.

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Policy D 12 – II C (Proposed revision - AAC)

A minimum of 25% of the total semester credit hours required for the degree shall be successfully completed in residence at the university in the college granting the degree. The degree granting program shall decide which specific courses and semester credit hours shall count towards the residency requirement.

Motion: Modify Policy D12 as above.