

**AGENDA
POLICY COUNCIL
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

October 26, 2011
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
School of Education
IUB - Room 2140
IUPUI - Room 3138E

- I. Approval of the Minutes from September 28, 2011 Meeting **(12.14M)**
- II. Announcements and Discussions
Dean's Report

Agenda Committee
Encouraging all standing committees to post the committees' agendas to the committee website.
- III. Old Business – Diversity Topic – Ghangis Carter
- IV. New Business
Grade Policy **(12.16)(12.17)(87.36R)(87.39M)(87.42M)(94.25)(94.32M)**
- V. New Courses/Course Changes

The following new course/course change proposals have been reviewed and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee. These course proposals will be forwarded to the next level of approval unless a remonstrance is received within 30 days.

Course Change Proposals

P591 Historical and current theories of intellectual functioning. BL 4 credit hours. Supervised practice in the use and interpretation of major individually administered measures of cognitive behavior. Emphasis on ethical test use in a diverse society and linking assessment results to cognitive behavioral and self-monitoring interventions for children and adolescents. (4cr.) Change course number to P655. Justification: Course is designed for doctoral level students and has doctoral expectations.

New Course Proposals

P601 Educational and Historical Foundations of Psychology BL 3 credit hours
This course surveys the history and system of psychology from ancient Greece to the present day. Psychology is modern when it becomes a scientific discipline. We consider four specialties of this discipline: school, counseling, developmental, and educational psychology. Justification: Course is designed for doctoral level students and has doctoral expectations.

P670 Behavior Analysis and Consultation for School Psychologists. BL 3 credit hours

Course covers the principles and applications of applied behavioral analysis (ABA) to school settings.

Emphasis will be placed on problem-solving models of consultation. The influence of culture on behavior will be examined from the perspective of ABA. Graduate standing in school psychology required.

Justification: This new course fills a need in the field of education and school psychology by providing training to future school psychologists in the area of applied behavior analysis and consultation. Schools serve children with a myriad of behavioral challenges.

Education School Grades and Selection into Teaching

by Cory Koedel — August 24, 2011

In a recent article, the author documents a startling difference between the grades that are awarded to undergraduate students in education and non-education classes at universities. Students pursuing undergraduate degrees in education, the vast majority of whom go on to work as K-12 teachers, receive significantly higher grades than students in every other academic discipline. The most probable explanation is that the high grades in education classes are the result of low grading standards. This commentary discusses how the overwhelmingly favorable grades that are awarded to education students are likely to affect the composition of the teaching workforce in K-12 schools.

In a recent article I show that college students in education classes receive higher grades than students in non-education classes (Koedel, 2011). What surprises me is not that a discrepancy exists, but rather its magnitude – it's not just that education students receive higher grades, they receive much higher grades. Plenty of supporting documentation is available in my paper, but a quick example makes my point: at the University of Indiana, Bloomington, three fourths of all grades awarded to undergraduate students in education classes are A's, and over 95 percent are A's and B's (based on my calculations using publicly available data). In my paper I show that high grades in education classes are the norm at universities across the country. I also rule out two possible explanations: (1) they are not the result of education students being more able, at least observationally (in fact, college entrance exam scores suggest the opposite), and (2) they are not explained by structural differences between education and other academic departments, like differences in class size. Low grading standards are the remaining (reasonable) explanation.

The low grading standards in education programs raise a number of important questions. In my paper I briefly address three. First, do they adversely impact the accumulation of knowledge for soon-to-be teachers during university training? Based on prior research on grade inflation (Babcock, 2010), the answer is likely yes. Second, do grades play any filtering role in education programs, or provide any meaningful information to students as to whether they are a good or bad fit for the discipline? The answer is almost surely no. And third, do the low evaluation standards in education programs carry over for teachers into the workforce? This question is the most difficult to answer, but a 2009 report from The New Teacher Project (TNTP, 2009) shows that teacher performance evaluations in K-12 schools are also overwhelmingly positive. The possibility of a connection cannot be ruled out.

One indisputable point is that grades in education programs do not distinguish students by performance. In this brief note I discuss how this feature of the grading policies in education

programs is likely to influence the composition of the K-12 teaching workforce. In economic terms, I suspect that the low grading standards affect selection into the teaching profession. I am particularly worried that they encourage some low-skilled individuals to become teachers who would otherwise choose a different career, and encourage some high-skilled individuals to abandon their plans to become teachers. To be clear, there are surely many teachers whose career decisions are unaffected by the low grading standards in education programs. However, the ones who I worry about are those on the margin – the bad ones who are enticed to choose an education major because of the favorable grades, and the good ones who switch away from education because they are unable to distinguish themselves from their less-skilled peers, or are otherwise frustrated by the low grading standards in their classes.

In a 2004 study, Peter Arcidiacono provides empirical evidence consistent with both scenarios playing out on college campuses across the country. Using a nationally representative dataset, he shows that over the course of their college careers, the least-skilled college students who initially choose a non-education major move into education programs, and most-skilled students who initially choose education majors move out of education programs. This is exactly the opposite of what those of us who are concerned about educator quality would like to see.

That less-skilled individuals move into education programs over time is hardly surprising given the high grades that are awarded in education classes. With a grading scale where only 5 percent of students get worse than a B, it is easy to see why some low-skilled students shift into education programs as they receive negative grade signals in their non-education classes during college. Unfortunately, this greatly increases the likelihood that these individuals will choose a career in teaching. And even worse, they will graduate from college with seemingly high GPAs (particularly when compared to the general population of college graduates), giving potential employers little information about their true placement in the skill distribution. For a student who is struggling with college, an education major seems like a fail-safe option.

What may be going on in the other tail of the distribution is equally concerning. Why do more-skilled individuals who initially choose to major in education switch majors later? The easy answer, and a common one among economists, is that they can earn more in a non-education career. But for this to fully explain the major-switching patterns revealed by Arcidiacono (2004), it would have to be the case that these better-than-average education majors don't fully realize that they can earn more with a non-education major prior to college entry (or else they are confused about their placement in the skill distribution upon initial entry into college). I'll concede that the non-education wage premium likely explains some exits by high-skilled individuals who initially choose education majors, but other factors are also likely to be in play. For example, the smartest and most successful people who I know have the lowest tolerance for mediocrity. Could it be that education schools, in facilitating mediocre students, are turning

away some of the brightest would-be teachers in the process? I don't know the answer to this question, but given the stakes I think the possibility should not be dismissed.

With all of the potential problems created by the low grading standards in education programs across the country, let me turn the issue on its head: what benefits do the low grading standards provide? And I don't mean for adults, I mean for kids. Let me put it this way: how could it possibly harm students in K-12 schools if we imposed meaningful grade distributions in education classes, and directed the would-be teachers who perform the worst during college to different majors (or even out of college)? The only possible response I can imagine is from those who continue to believe that we have a teacher shortage, who would argue that such a policy would turn away needed teachers. But noting that we may have teacher shortages in some areas, like in STEM fields, I just don't see the evidence of a teacher shortage more generally. If we really had a teacher shortage, all of the pink slips that teachers have received as a result of the recent financial crisis wouldn't be nearly as big of a problem – the market would quickly scoop up these newly-available teachers. And teacher groups like the NEA wouldn't need to constantly guard their territory from other teacher-producing groups, like Teach for America (see NEA (2011)) Finally, even if we do have a shortage, I think it's worth considering the possibility that we would still want to keep the least-skilled teachers out of the classroom and deal with the consequences some other way (like with larger classes).

I do not understand the rationale for supporting the current system of assigning overwhelmingly favorable grades to essentially everyone in college who decides to pursue a degree in education. I can't see how this system is good for students in K-12 schools, and there are many ways that it can be harmful.

References

Arcidiacono, P., (2004). Ability sorting and the returns to college major. *Journal of Econometrics*, 121(1-2), 343-375.

Babcock, P.. (2010). Real costs of nominal grade inflation? New evidence from student course evaluations. *Economic Inquiry*, 48(3), 983-996.

Koedel, C. (2011). Grading standards in education departments at universities. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 19(23).

National Education Association (NEA) (2011). New Business Items. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/grants/33354.htm> The New Teacher Project. (2009). The widget effect: Our national failure to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness. New York: TNTP Policy Report.

Literacy, Culture and Language Education Guidelines for Department Chair Selection

All tenured faculty, tenure probationary faculty, clinical faculty, half-time faculty, and visiting instructors can participate in the chair selection of the department.

LCLE tenured faculty: Stephanie Carter, James Damico, Mary Beth Hines, Mitzi Lewison, Larry Mikulecky, Martha Nyikos, and Faridah Pawan

Faculty Previously Serving as Chair: Hines, Mikulecky, and Nyikos

Nomination Process

- The departmental faculty will meet with the Dean.
- The departmental faculty will have open meetings to discuss possible candidates and procedures. Meetings can occur via e-mail, phone, in-person, or a combination there of.
- The department will nominate a minimum of three candidates (**SEE CANDIDACY**) and proceed with a vote (**SEE VOTING PROCEDURE**).

Candidacy

- Each candidate must be tenured in order to be eligible for the LCLE Chair position.
- Each candidate can write an optional paragraph detailing his/her strengths as a future leader of the department. This information will be disseminated to voting participants.
- Each candidate canNOT decline nomination.
- The Dean will be sent a list of the candidates as well as each candidate's paragraph detailing his/her strengths as a future leader.

Voting Procedure

- The department will designate a day and a time for all participants to cast their votes.
- Faculty members will vote by secret ballot. A drop box will be placed in a monitored location.
- Voting members will cast their votes by indicating their choice for chair along with a short explanation of the rationale for their vote.
- All participants in the voting process will be asked to place their initials on a roster as they cast their votes. However, participants who are unable to vote in person may vote via e-mail, proxy, or phone.
- Votes will be counted during a department meeting. Each of the top three candidates will be ranked in terms of the number of votes that he or she received.
- The Dean and voting participants will be sent vote totals and summaries of reasons for supporting candidates.

MINUTES
POLICY COUNCIL
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
October 26, 2011
1:00-3:00 p.m.
IUB – Room 2140
IUPUI – Room 3138E

What follows is a summary of speaker contributions

Members Present: D. DeSawal, S. Eckes, E. Galindo, R. Helfenbein, R. Kunzman, C. Thompson, E. Tillema, J. Wong; **Alternates Present:** C. Reigeluth; **Dean's Staff Present:** J. Alexander, T. Brush, G. Gonzalez, B. Sherwood; **Staff Present:** J. Lawrence; **Student Members Present:** M. Benetti, E. Sanborn; **Visitors Present:** G. Carter.

I. Approval of the Minutes from September 28, 2011 (12.14M).

The minutes were unanimously approved with no abstentions.

II. Announcements and Discussions

a. Dean's Report

Dean Gonzalez discussed enrollments at the School of Education. He reported that undergraduate and graduate enrollments are both down. Reasons for this could include the way enrollments are counted (by credit hours), the new general education requirements, and changes in how students are advised to register for classes. The enrollments are now beginning to increase and level out because of the start of the second eight-week courses. The number of students reporting that they intend to major in education is also down significantly, perhaps due to the number of students admitted to IUB this year and the reasons previously stated. A report from the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette reports that enrollments in schools of education across the state are down significantly in undergraduate teacher education. Reasons for this trend could include the state of the economy, including budget cuts and teacher lay-offs, and the negative climate and criticism around teaching. This could deter students who would normally major in education from doing so.

Graduate enrollments in the School of Education are also down, mostly at the Masters level. This too could be a function of the economic downturn, the changing regulations around professional development for teachers, and salary schedules. This is also true for graduate enrollments at IUPUI. These drops in enrollments combined illustrate the need for more aggressive recruiting and a challenge in the narrative surrounding teaching and education.

An announcement was made recently that IU is decreasing summer tuition rates by 25% for in-state students and by the equivalent dollar amount for out-of-state students. The University has been getting a lot of criticism from state policy makers and the Higher Education Commission because they exceeded their recommendations

for tuition increase. The HEC recommended a 3.5% increase for research universities but the average at IU was closer to 5% because the state cut support for building rehabilitation and maintenance. Instead of rolling back tuition, which would have been disastrous because IU relies so much on tuition, President McRobbie put forward this plan. The expected result is that more students will take summer classes and there will be better utilization of building that normally aren't used during the summer, as well as a reduction in the amount of time a student will need to graduate because they will have earned the credits at a lower cost. This has significant implications for the School of Education because students may take fewer classes in the fall and spring semesters. The cost of delivering these summer courses will increase, so perhaps the minimum number of students required for each class needs to be raised. There may other solutions as well so further discussion is needed.

The School of Education publicly announced the new scholarship program for direct admits. As stated in the last meeting, this is a partnership with the Office of Enrollment Management to bring more highly qualified students to the School of Education by supplementing scholarships with additional funding if they choose to pursue an education major. This should have a positive impact on enrollment and retention as well. The new fellowships for PhD students will also have a positive effect on enrollment numbers and will make the graduate programs even more competitive nationally.

Everyone should have received an announcement calling attention to the new National Council for Teacher Quality (NCTQ) strategy of hiring students to solicit syllabi from faculty members for their national review of teacher education programs. NCTQ has been very critical of teacher preparation programs and they have announced their intentions to rank programs based on [review of course syllabi](#) [and other documents](#) against standards they have created. Many universities have refused to participate and they were sent public records requests. Faculty are free to respond to NCTQ by asking for a formal public records request. Faculty supervisors should let AIs know the appropriate way to respond should they be contacted.

- b. The announcement has been made that all standing committees are encouraged to post the committee's agendas to the committee website for more transparency.

III. Old Business. Diversity Topic- Ghangis Carter (12.22)

Ghangis Carter discussed the efforts made by his office for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students on the Bloomington campus. For undergraduate students, the greatest resources have been the Hudson & Holland Scholars Program, Groups Student Support Services Program, and the 21st Century Scholars Program. Students involved in these programs are likely to be first-generation college students from a low-income background and are likely to pass the Praxis exams on the first attempt. Document 12.22 discusses the recruitment and retention highlights from the 2010 academic year, as well as a breakdown of the size and diversity of the cohorts, and

recommendations for future recruitment and retention initiatives. Ghangis also discussed the need to reaffirm teaching as a noble profession, especially to underrepresented students. Faculty were asked to update their pictures, profiles, and research interests online, as many student look at this information when deciding which school to attend. He also stated the need for more minority teachers to be presented with accolades such as best teacher or superintendent to serve as role models for underrepresented students in the School of Education.

IV. New Business

a. LCLE Process & Procedures for New Chair (12.18)

Policy Council was asked to approve the process and procedures for their search for a new chair for their department. This document was approved in 2010. Discussion followed.

The process and procedures were unanimously approved without abstention.

b. Grade Policy (12.16, 12.17, 87.36R, 87.39M, 87.72M, 94.25, 94.32M)

Document 87.36R did pass and remains the current grading policy for graduate courses. The question was raised about whether this should be applied to undergraduate courses as well. Enrique Galindo raised the question that if grade inflation is a problem in the School of Education, as the Koedel report suggests, how should this issue be addressed? Eric Tillema discussed how classroom practices, such as assignment repetition after poor performance, enable students to earn high grades, and that this may be effective in teacher preparation courses. Dean Gonzalez spoke about the need to be able to differentiate between students either by benchmarks for learning or by an average/ranking system. He suggested that a taskforce or committee take on this issue.

The suggestion to assign this issue to the Committee on Faculty Development was unanimously approved.

V. New Courses/Course Changes

Suzanne Eckes directed the Policy Council members' attention to the new courses/course changes. The courses are open for faculty remonstrance for 30 days.

**** The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m. ****

1. The following definitions of letter grades are a guide to the evaluation of student performance and an indication to students as to what level of performance earns a given grade.

- A. Extraordinarily high achievement; shows unusually complete command of the course content and exceptionally high degree of originality and/or scholarship.
- A- Outstanding achievement; thorough command of the course content.
- B+ Very good work; above average in performance and comprehension.
- B Good work; solid and acceptable performance.
- B- Fair; acceptable performance on most but not all aspects of the course.
- C+ Not wholly satisfactory; marginal performance on several aspects of the course.
- C Marginal; minimal performance or comprehension regarding important aspects of the course.
- C- Largely unsatisfactory; inadequate performance or comprehension regarding most aspects of the course.
- D+ } Unacceptable work; performance or comprehension falls substantially
D } below acceptable standards.
D- }
- F Wholly unacceptable; little or no command of the course content.

Counseling by the department is recommended if the final grade is C or below; Student's suitability for continuation in the program should be reconsidered if the final grade is below C-.

2. The above definitions are to be applied to all levels of graduate courses in the School of Education. In 400 and 500 level Education courses taken for graduate credit the modal grade is expected to be B. This means that more Bs (including B+ and B-) will be awarded than any other grade. Cs should not be unexpected, particularly in larger enrollment classes. Students in 600 and 700 level Education courses are assumed to be more highly selected and more highly motivated than those in lower numbered courses, consequently they are expected to perform very well. It would not be unusual, therefore to have distributions with more A's than any other grade in these classes.

NOTE: The School of Education requires an average of 3.0 to remain in good standing. No grade lower than a C counts toward a degree. Any graduate program expects students to earn more A's than C's, but C's will be given for marginal work.

In order to make implementation of these guidelines more likely, the Graduate Program Committee also recommends the following.

3. Department chairs are instructed to review the grade distributions of every faculty member in their department and monitor adherence to these guidelines.

94.25

November 16, 1993

COLLEGE POLICY COMMITTEE SUPPORT FOR TEACHING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past 18 months the College Policy Committee has been heavily involved in the issue of teaching and learning on the IUB campus. Our interest and concern were strongly influenced by the Bloomington Faculty Council Commission on Teaching and COAS Teaching Task Force Reports. The College Teaching Task Force has recently completed and distributed a second report that focuses on the academic environment for undergraduates, and includes many recommendations. There is support on the College Policy Committee for all of these recommendations and very strong support for most of them. We submit to you three recommendations that we believe will contribute to an improvement in the academic environment.

A "more challenging academic environment" is the phrase currently in vogue that is used to describe the need for change. What this typically means is that we think students should dedicate more time and effort to their academic pursuits relative to their non-academic pursuits. Both more time and higher quality time appear to be needed. Since learning takes place primarily on the basis of student effort, these higher expectations are appropriate. Our teaching will be most productive when we inspire, induce, and--yes--demand a more focused student effort as the basis for academic success.

The responsibility for setting standards obviously belongs to the faculty. Students experience many conflicting demands on their time, including academic, social and economic pressures. While from our own experience we understand and sympathize with this universal problem, we as faculty must ensure the primacy of the learning experience. Therefore it is our responsibility to create a more challenging academic environment. On the Bloomington campus we provide over 70% A's and B's for an average of 12 hours of study time per week by full time students. Almost everyone says that the Dean of Faculties study on students' use of time has "flaws" (was there ever an empirical study that did not?) but we have not found either students or faculty willing to claim that the results clearly miss the mark. Students tell us in candid conversations that if we want more student effort we will have to set a higher standard.

When we accept responsibility for the student's success, or fail to establish a framework that expects concentrated effort from them throughout the semester, they will "game" us down to low academic standards. They have done this already and the primary fault is not their's. Much less learning goes into their degree than could have been accomplished--including less knowledge, perspective, analytical skill, self discipline, planning and organizing skills, and personal responsibility for their own success. The student suffers the most from this state of affairs in terms of lost potential. The faculty and the institution also lose substantially over a long period of time, including the loss of academic reputation, and the "sense of malaise about our commitment to teaching" (Faculty Council Commission on Teaching, Report, 2/21/92, p.1).

We are not alone in addressing these issues. There is clearly a nationwide concern with the

declining quality of undergraduate education. However, improving the academic environment, whether nationally or locally, will not come from some highly focused effort with an expectation of immediate results. Such an approach could do great harm. Neither will it come exclusively, or even importantly from exhortations to faculty to put more effort into their undergraduate teaching. We have had exhortations and guidance for many years, and most of us are putting more effort into undergraduate teaching. Improvement will come from many modest, but significant changes in policies--and time. It is in this spirit that the recommendations of the COAS Task Force on Teaching are made.

All policies have unintended consequences. It is our judgment that the unintended consequences of the FX and eight week automatic withdrawal policies are negative and sufficiently strong to override their intended positive contribution to the academic climate by a significant margin. These are policies whose real genesis was the claimed irrelevance of grades as an appropriate index of standards that grew out of the campus milieu during and after the Vietnam war. Their academic rationale was that they would complement student learning efforts. Over time they have extensively been turned into a substitute for student learning efforts that erodes standards of preparation and thus the classroom atmosphere.

The indexing proposal, known locally as the "Edgerton Proposal", may have the long term effect of slowing or even reversing the grade inflation of the last 25 years. Whether it does or not, it will have other desirable consequences described below.

1. The COAS Policy Committee recommends that the FX policy be eliminated.

Learning in the university requires from the student a serious commitment to one's courses and a sustained, responsible effort to develop skills and master material. There is widespread agreement among faculty that the current FX policy militates against such commitment and responsibility. It encourages students to withhold their wholehearted commitment to a course by leaving open until the course's end the option of cancelling the final grade from their record. Moreover, if the grade is low, but not an F, it leads students to request that faculty give them an F. Faculty find such requests upsetting and even demeaning, to them and to the students involved. The FX policy has already been eliminated by the College, the Business School, and the School of Journalism. Other withdrawal policies and academic bankruptcy remain in place for students with good reasons to withdraw from courses or to eliminate extraordinarily poor performance from their record.

2. The COAS Policy Committee recommends that the Edgerton proposal be implemented.

This grade indexing proposal for reporting grades on official transcripts states that alongside the student's final grade is printed the ratio of all those students receiving that grade or higher to the total number of students receiving final grades; e.g. 27/150 on a transcript would signify that 27 students out of a class of 150 received the indicated grade or higher.

Grades reported with ratios will provide an important context for those reading the transcripts and will better communicate the meaning of the grade in a particular class. For a variety of reasons, undergraduate admissions and scholarship organizations such as Phi Beta Kappa are

now indexing grades in different ways, sometimes by identifying grade distributions, sometimes by only counting grades in certain courses. This proposal seeks to index grades for all undergraduate courses. People who read undergraduate transcripts are generally well informed about their meaning. Under this policy they will be given information that will help them to evaluate performance in large introductory and intermediate courses; at the same time they will realize that smaller seminars and upper division-courses are more selective, and that overall higher grades in such courses are to be expected. Both faculty and students will see that easy grading will disadvantage students who attain a high level of scholarship. The results should increase student responsibility, encourage students to take difficult courses, and better reward excellence in demanding courses.

3. The COAS Policy Committee recommends that the final date for automatic withdrawal be set at the Wednesday after the end of the fourth week of classes in a semester.

Students should be in an academic climate that requires them to take responsibility for a course early and prevents the delay of commitment until midterm. Just as drop and add, although a necessary device for settling registration problems, compromises the early sessions of a class, so does late automatic withdrawal diminish the sense of mutual commitment in a class. Especially when classes require student collaboration and serious student participation, early commitment to the course is tremendously important. Four weeks should be sufficient time to make such a decision. Moreover, there will still be opportunity to apply for special permission to withdraw in extraordinary circumstances. Shortening the period for automatic withdrawal will undoubtedly create some problems (some of these are addressed below) but it will indicate our strong desire that both students and faculty make a serious mutual commitment to learning at an early point in the semester.

We should be concerned about the impact of this policy change on Freshmen. However, we do not believe the current automatic withdrawal policy is, on balance, a positive factor in the package of policies that address the trauma and uncertainties in their adjustment to college life. It allows their "naivete" and, all too often, their poor study habits to continue for at least a half semester. There should be significant feedback during the first four weeks of beginning level courses. For higher level courses feedback is still important, but we should expect students to develop self-assessment skills.

There will be numerous adjustment problems for both students and faculty with this policy change. To ease these problems we recommend that there be a phase in policy that shortens the automatic withdrawal period by one week each semester for two years.

We recognize that there is no magic to a four week automatic withdrawal period as compared, for example, to a three or five week period. An alternative policy at Penn State has an early withdrawal period of three weeks, and an extended withdrawal period of four through eleven weeks. However, a student cannot use this extended withdrawal period for more than sixteen credit hours of withdrawal during their undergraduate career. While the policy committee recommends a four week automatic withdrawal deadline, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss effective alternatives.

We believe the proposed policy changes will have both a symbolic and a substantive effect on the academic climate for undergraduates, and will provide long run benefits to both students and faculty.

87.39M

Minutes
Policy Council
March 4, 1987

Approval of Graduate Grading Guidelines (document 87.36). Professor Cunningham introduced the topic by stating that this policy was adopted from Instructional Systems Technology's current grading guidelines. He stated that the information contained in document 87.36 constitute guidelines, not standards.

Professor Gregory asked if these guidelines were a guise for a distributive grading system. Professor Schwen commented that IST faculty had come to an agreement that the norms for grading had inflated over time; and by establishing guidelines, faculty think they are now doing a better job of distributing grades. Professor Goodman thought the advantage of a public statement would be to provide the same meaning to all students.

Professor Guskin stated that such guidelines would give the message that these are acceptable grades for doctoral students, but questioned how to best deal with the transition period. Professor Molenda said that such guidelines have not hampered IST students, and the "A" students are still receiving "A's." Professor Arnove stated that under such guidelines, all students could reach high standards, and these guidelines should not be confused with absolute standards. Professor Molenda commented that there has been no dissent from IST faculty, and the anticipated negative trade-offs have not emerged.

Due to the lateness of the hour, Dean Mehlinger recommended that a vote be taken regarding the spirit of the document; and if it passed, specific wording changes could be presented at the next Policy Council meeting. Twelve voted in favor of the guidelines, and two were opposed. Professor Cunningham will present the revised document at the next Policy Council meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

87.42M

Minutes
Policy Council
March 25, 1987

Approval of Graduate Grading Guidelines (document 87.36R). Dean Kuh introduced the topic and explained that at the last Policy Council meeting, the approval of graduate grading guidelines was passed in principle, but members requested some revisions in the document's wording. Professors Molenda and Cunningham worked on document 87.36 and the revised document was sent to members for their perusal. Dean Kuh explained that this document comes moved and seconded from the Graduate Program Committee. Discussion followed.

Student member, Rachel Brooks, raised a question as to whether students' transcripts would carry explanations of the new guidelines when they are sent to prospective employers. Professor Schwen reported that when IST implemented this policy two years ago they had found that the transcript is the least important document in the student's file that is sent to prospective employers. Faculty are important mediators in the selection process, and he supports sending the grading guidelines as part of a student's file. In practice, he explained that the IST grading policy has not harmed the student. Professor Mikulecky asked if any attempt had been made to coordinate the School of Education's grading guidelines with any other schools or departments across campus. Professor Molenda responded that the descriptions in document 87.36R are similar to the School of Library and Information Science. Professor Guskin commented that the significant changes pertain to more B's being awarded than any other grade, and department chairs reviewing the grade distributions of faculty members within their department and monitoring adherence to these guidelines. The motion to adopt document 87.36R "Guidelines for Grades in Graduate Education Courses" was approved.

Professor Goodman recommended that Policy Council distribute the document as widely as possible, and faculty distribute the guidelines in their classes each semester. Dean Kuh said these guidelines would be on Administrative Council's next agenda, and he would also ask Professors Cunningham and Ochoa to find effective ways to ensure the document's distribution. Professor Molenda stated that he thought these guidelines would be a relevant item for the Task Force on Instruction to monitor. A motion was made, seconded and approved for the Task Force on Instruction to make an annual report to Policy Council regarding the implementation of the grading guidelines for graduate education classes.