

Grading Policy Proposal History:

- After an informal discussion on 11-07-16, AAC requested that a proposal be put forward.
- First draft presented to Faculty Senate (11-30), Department Chairs, Program Directors, and Division Chairs (12-01), and Graduate Council (12-06).
- Final draft presented to AAC (12-05), GAAC (12-13), and Faculty Senate (12-14).
- Action:
 - GAAC on 12-13 voted to approve the proposal as it relates to graduate programming: 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, 2 absent.
 - AAC conducted final review via email and a vote of approval was called on 01-03: 8 in favor, 3 abstentions.
 - Faculty Senate on 12-14 agreed to hold their vote on 01-11, after they have received formal recommendations from both GAAC and AAC.

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The following individuals have signed [the final proposal](#):

Crystal Comer
Dal Liddle
John Zobitz
Michael Kidd (abstention)
Eileen Uzarek
Debbie Shapiro
Keith Gilsdorf
Scott Krajewski
Karen Kaivola

All Department Chairs and Program Directors were asked to talk with the faculty in their department or program, to provide feedback, and to indicate whether the department or program supports the policy. The following chairs/directors have also expressed their support on behalf of their department (others have not responded; no departments have denied support):

American Indian Studies
Education
English
Chemistry
Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies
Health, Physical Education, and Exercise Science
Nursing
Political Science
Psychology
Social Work
Theater

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT EXCERPTS

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AAC 12-05-16 DRAFT MINUTES

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1. 1st R Academic Policy Proposal: Grading Policy: Letter Grade System, P-Grade and Minimum Grade Standard

AAC discussed grading policy at previous meetings, most recently on 11-7. This is AAC's first reading of a formal proposal. The draft proposal was reviewed by Faculty Senate on 11-30 and Department Chairs, Program Directors, and Division Chairs on 12-1. It will be reviewed by GAAC on 12-13. Final approval by the full faculty will be required.

Dean Gort described the three aspects of the proposals: 1) move from numerical grades (4.0, 3.5, 3.0, etc.) to letter grades (A, A-, B+, etc.), 2) reset the undergraduate passing grade (P-grade) from 2.0 or higher (current) to C-/1.67 or higher, and 3) align the p-grade policy with Augsburg's transfer grade policy, which would be accomplished with part 2. On 4-27-15 AAC approved a proposal from the AU subcommittee to accept transfer credit for coursework with a grade of C-/1.67 or higher. The policy cannot be applied with Augsburg's current numerical system.

After some questions from committee members it was noted that the minimum grade change from 2.0 to 1.67 for developmental and core curriculum courses would not require individual course revision proposals to AAC. The change would be made if the policy is approved. This proposal does not include changing any cumulative grade requirements. Departments are permitted to set their own major cumulative GPA requirements.

Initially the proposers did consider including a standard grading scale in the proposal (e.g. 93 = A, etc.) but did not include it because converting grades to the same percentages across all programs is unrealistic. Departments are encouraged to set their own departmental standards. It was noted that the proposed p-grade of C-/1.67 will not lower standards; departments may readjust their grading scale so that the work that previously would have earned a student a 2.0 will now result in a C-/1.67. It was suggested that the Deans should evaluate average GPAs per department before and after the change, if approved.

It was noted that the default prerequisite grade requirement is 0.5. This would change to D-/0.67. Departments may set higher prerequisite grade requirements; many STEM major courses require a 2.0 or higher. This proposal is not asking departments to change, though adjusting to fit the new p-grade of C-/1.67 would be recommended. It was noted that higher grade requirements in sequenced courses can "derail" a student's success for a year or more. Cumulative GPA requirements, rather than individual course grade requirements, are a better student-success practice.

It was also noted that the current course repeatability threshold is 1.5 (i.e. a student may repeat a course if the grade earner is 1.5 or less). Should this be adjusted to 1.33? Some schools have no policy and students are permitted to repeat any course any number of times. A federal financial aid policy disallows repeating a course more than twice. Crystal noted that Augsburg's new Director of Student Financial Services may want to weigh in on a discussion about repeat policies. AAC agreed the issue could be revisited at a later meeting.

One issue with the proposal is in the C-/1.67 p-grade. Departments will be encouraged to reset course-specific minimum grade requirements from 2.0 to 1.67 in order to match. Departments that maintain 2.0 minimum grades must communicate to students that they should not elect P/N grading. In Augsburg's current system there is no way to prevent a student from electing P/N; the students would need to be monitored on a departmental level. At present there is no oversight or faculty approval for electing P/N.

AAC will review the proposal once more after more faculty groups have reviewed the formal proposal.
Tabled.

GAAC 12-13-16 DRAFT MINUTES

[GAAC 12-13-16 Agenda Packet](#)

4. 1st R Academic Policy Proposal: Grading Policy

Dean of Arts and Sciences Amy Gort attended the meeting to discuss the Grading Policy Proposal. She explained that with current grading policies, Augsburg is an outlier in higher education and there are ways in which our numerical (4.0, 3.5, 3.0, etc.) scale can disadvantage students. Adopting letter grades (A, A-, B+, etc.) will add more nuance to grades and help external bodies, such as graduate schools, understand Augsburg grades. Amy and Crystal presented the proposal at Graduate Council on 12-06 and revised the proposal to reflect the Program Directors' wishes to maintain a minimum passing grade of B/3.0.

One aspect of this proposal is a common grading scale for both graduate and undergraduate courses (see chart on p.6). At present the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs have different "explanation of grades" tables.

A member commented that the descriptor "satisfactory" at the C/2.0 grade seems inaccurate. Is it realistic to expect that the same descriptors can be applied to both grad and undergrad? Others added that "acceptable" could be an alternative; depending on the program, some grades of <3.0 can be applied to a graduate degree (e.g. MBA permits no more than two courses with a grade of 2.5 or below). Amy noted that if the proposal is approved, a grade of "2.5" will no longer exist; Deans will work with the programs to discuss how any instance of 2.5 should be translated (C+/2.33 or B-/2.67).

Some concerns were expressed that the proposal would change traditions of how grades are interpreted or understood at Augsburg, particularly the P-grade change from 2.0 to 1.67. Others members noted that this would only require a shift in standards; departments would update their grading scales so that the minimum

objectives met would match the new minimum passing grade of 1.67. Faculty will not be asked to pass students who otherwise would have not passed before the grading change.

Members questioned how this proposal was brought forth. It is driven by admissions and enrollment, the faculty, administration? Discussion on the grading issue began at AAC earlier this fall; the committee requested that a proposal be put forward. The need for the policy change has been informed by a transfer credit policy approved at AAC in 2015.

A motion was made to approve the proposal as it relates to graduate programs, with the recommendation that the descriptor “satisfactory” be reconsidered to better represent graduate program requirements and with the acknowledgement that graduate programs determine departmental grading policies. **MSC.**

FACULTY SENATE 12-14-16 DRAFT MINUTES

[Faculty Senate 12-14-16 Agenda](#)

AAC Grading Policy Proposal

Associate Registrar Tom Kelsey and Dean of Arts and Sciences Amy Gort attended the meeting to discuss the Grading Policy Proposal. The proposal was updated earlier in the day with the addition of a comment by Michael Kidd, abstaining from approval on behalf of Languages and Cross-Cultural Studies. AAC’s first reading of the proposal was on 12-5; their next meeting is scheduled for 1-9. AAC may review the final proposal and vote online over winter break. GAAC reviewed and approved the proposal on 12-13 as it relates to graduate programs.

Amy described the proposal’s conception, explaining that switching from numerical to letter grading has come up periodically over many years and this fall AAC requested that a proposal be put forward. Approving this proposal will allow an AAC decision made in April 2015 to be applied in transfer credit evaluations. The proposed changes will align Augsburg with policies at peer and common transfer institutions. It was noted that a common refrain at CAP/UCAP is the need to make Augsburg more competitive; approving the proposal would do so and “meet students where they are.” Senators questioned how many students leave Augsburg due to grading issues, or if there is an estimate of how many students do not consider Augsburg because their credits would not transfer. Tom Kelsey estimated that dozens of students leave; it is difficult to predict how many prospective students are lost.

It was emphasized that this proposal would not “lower standards” and no faculty are being asked to accept poorer work. Changing the p-grade from 2.0 to 1.67 is a metric shift, not a change in learning objectives; if students are required to earn 74% to earn the minimum grade 2.0, they can be held to the same standard - 74% - with the minimum grade of 1.67.

It was noted that departments will be asked, but not required, to change minimum grade requirements to align with the proposed P-grade of C-/1.67. The most common minimum passing grade is 2.0; if departments maintain this requirement, they will need to communicate with students that they cannot elect P/N grading, though systematically nothing will prevent them from doing so. Departments will need

to monitor students' grades to ensure that P/N is not elected for any course in which is minimum grade requirement does not match the default P-grade.

Doug asked for a sense of the Senate on the proposal. No vote will be taken until AAC has made their formal recommendation. There was expressed agreement that the proposal should move forward as expeditiously as possible. The next scheduled Faculty Senate meeting is 1-11; the January Faculty Meeting is scheduled for the following day. Senators agreed that the proposal could be distributed to the full faculty for a reading period with the notice that it is pending Faculty Senate approval.