



Faculty Senate

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MEMORANDUM

TO: East Carolina University Colleagues

FROM: Mark Sprague, Chair of the Faculty
Andrew Morehead, Vice Chair of the Faculty
Cheryl McFadden, Secretary of the Faculty
Ken Wilson, Parliamentarian

DATE: November 5, 2012

SUBJECT: New Plus/Minus Grading System

The plus/minus system, as defined in the undergraduate catalog, is the only grading system in place at ECU for undergraduate courses. (See <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/ugcat/regulations.cfm#grading>.) Banner is aligned with this system and includes the full range of grades that may be assigned to students in undergraduate courses. The Faculty Senate passed Resolution #07-03 implementing the change from the old grading system to the plus/minus system, and the Chancellor approved it on October 25, 2007. The plus/minus grading system was a faculty-driven initiative, adopted only after the Admission and Retention Policies Committee completed a significant study of grading systems. (See <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/committee/ad/rationale.htm>.)

There has been significant confusion on campus about the "optionality" of the plus/minus grading system, reflecting in part ambiguity of the language in defining grading system vs. grading scale. A **grading system** is the set of grades available to instructors (e.g., A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc.). The grading system is used to compute grade point averages through an associated quality point formula. A **grading scale** is the range of points or performance measures in a course corresponding to the grades the students can earn (e.g., a B might be given for earning 83%-86% of the possible points in the class).

Faculty members must use the plus/minus **grading system** to report final grades. They should also determine an appropriate **grading scale** that addresses the student learning outcomes defined for the course and clearly delineate the expectations that must be met for each grade in the course syllabus. Students will rightfully expect that the quality of their work will be reflected accurately in the grades they receive.

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Carolina. An equal
opportunity/affirmative
action university, which
accommodates the
needs of individuals with
disabilities.