

ACADEMIC SENATE  
of  
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN LUIS OBISPO

AS-109-81/IC  
January 6, 1981

RESOLUTION REGARDING GRADE DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES

Background: Over the last several years a number of studies of the grading system have resulted in recommendations that the definitions of the letter grade system be revised. The proper role of the letter grade system is to allow a shorthand evaluation of student performance that can be easily interpreted. Both the CSUC Academic Senate and the Cal Poly Task Force on Grade Inflation have recommended that the definitions of the letter grades be made more operational and that they be more closely coupled to levels of attainment of course objectives. During the Spring Quarter of 1980, the Academic Council passed a resolution suggesting that all faculty include in course syllabi such information as course objectives and methods of evaluation, where appropriate. Such course descriptions allow each instructor to establish grading criteria and to relate measures of performance to course objectives.

- WHEREAS, The letter grade serves several purposes which include evaluating the student for retention and progress toward graduation and informing the student regarding his/her level of achievement of the learning and performance objectives established for the course; and
- WHEREAS, The University has already identified that normal progress toward graduation requires maintenance of at least a "C" average; and
- WHEREAS, The broad range of courses and activities encountered at the University and the variety of teaching styles will lead to very different evaluation methods and grading criteria for different courses and instructors; and
- WHEREAS, The level of performance or understanding in a course or activity may indicate the level of preparation for a subsequent course; therefore be it
- RESOLVED: That the catalog definitions of the letter grades should be revised to include the following:

- A - Excellent achievement of course objectives. An outstanding performance.
- B - High level of achievement of course objectives. This level of performance is well above that required for progress toward graduation or for continuation in courses for which this course is a prerequisite.
- C - Satisfactory achievement of course objectives. A level of performance which is acceptable for progress toward graduation and for enrollment in subsequent courses for which this course is a prerequisite.
- D - Achieves course objectives at only a minimum or perfunctory level. A minimum passing performance. An accumulation of such grades can result in academic disqualification from the university. It is recommended that this course be repeated prior to enrollment in a subsequent course for which this course is a prerequisite.
- F - Fails to achieve course objectives at a minimum level. An unacceptable performance which does not meet requirements for credit toward graduation.
- Cr - Achievement of course objectives at least at the level of acceptability required for progress toward graduation and for enrollment in subsequent courses for which this course is a prerequisite.
- NC - Does not achieve course objectives at a level of acceptability required for progress toward graduation. This course must be repeated prior to enrollment in a course for which this course is a prerequisite.

No single set of criteria for evaluating students can be applied to all courses. Standards must be developed for each course in accordance with the objectives of that course. Each faculty member is encouraged to identify the course objectives and the criteria to be used to determine the level of achievement of those objectives for each course that he/she teaches.