



University Senate TRANSMITTAL FORM

Senate Document #:	11-12-31
PCC ID #:	N/A
Title:	Proposal to Change the Minimum Average in all Courses Applied to Undergraduate Major Requirements Report
Presenter:	Robert Buchanan, Chair, Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee
Date of SEC Review:	4/5/2012
Date of Senate Review:	4/19/2012
Voting (highlight one):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On resolutions or recommendations one by one, or 2. In a single vote 3. To endorse entire report
Statement of Issue:	<p>With the implementation of plus/minus grading in Fall 2012, minus grades will be accepted in all University-wide policies that currently define requirements as a D, C, B or A grade. A grade of D- will be accepted as the lowest passing grade. According to the Provost's Implementation Plan for plus/minus grading, many academic departments and programs require minimum course grades that do not specify a plus (+) or minus (-). If an academic unit does not wish to accept plus or minus grades in satisfaction of any given requirements, the unit must submit a formal request for an exception to the University-wide Implementation Plan. The intent of the proposal is to create a minimum campus standard for completing undergraduate degree requirements at the University. As a result of implementing such a campus-wide undergraduate minimum standard, many academic units would no longer need to submit degree requirement program proposals changes for their majors in FY13, which would significantly reduce the number of undergraduate program proposals that departmental, college/school, and the Senate Programs, Curricula, & Courses (PCC) Committee would have to review.</p>
Relevant Policy # & URL:	III-7.00(A) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii700a.html

<p>Recommendation:</p>	<p>The APAS Committee recommends the following addition to University of Maryland College Park Policy III-7.00(1) University of Maryland Degree Requirements (Appendix 1), and asks that the change be implemented prior to July 1, 2012:</p> <p>Section B. 4. "Grade Point Average" in Policy III-7.00(1) University of Maryland Degree Requirements should be edited to include the following statement (Appendix 2):</p> <p>"Beginning with students matriculating in Fall 2012, to be awarded a baccalaureate degree, students must have a minimum C (2.00) cumulative grade point average across all courses used to satisfy major degree requirements. Individual department, college, school, or program requirements may exceed this minimum."</p>
<p>Committee Work:</p>	<p>Throughout its review, the APAS Committee consulted with the proposer, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and the President's Legal Office for advice. The APAS Committee also reviewed peer institution research, and analyzed data from the Office of the Provost, during its discussions.</p> <p>On Tuesday, March 27, 2012, the APAS Committee drafted and voted to approve a recommendation regarding cumulative grade point average across all courses used to satisfy major degree requirements. The text of the recommendation was then reviewed by the President's Legal Office for appropriateness.</p>
<p>Alternatives:</p>	<p>The Senate could choose not to endorse the committee's recommendation that undergraduate students must have a minimum C (2.00) cumulative grade point average across all courses used to satisfy major degree requirements. The possibility that some undergraduate students could earn the required 2.0 cumulative GPA for graduation, but have less than a 2.0 cumulative GPA in the subset of courses required for their major, would remain.</p>
<p>Risks:</p>	<p>There are no associated risks.</p>
<p>Financial Implications:</p>	<p>There are no related financial implications.</p>
<p>Further Approvals Required: <i>(*Important for PCC Items)</i></p>	<p>Senate Approval, Presidential Approval</p>

Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee

Senate Document 11-12-31

Proposal to Change the Minimum Average in all Courses Applied to Undergraduate Major Requirements Report

March 2012

BACKGROUND

At the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year, the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) charged the Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee with reviewing the University of Maryland Policies Concerning Academic Transcript and Calculation of Grade Point (GPA) Average. The SEC asked APAS to make a recommendation concerning whether the University should reconsider its grading system. While the University Senate voted in December 2005 to adopt a weighted plus/minus grading system, and the President approved the policy, implementation of the system was delayed by the Office of the Provost in 2006. After further research and review, the APAS Committee recommended in April 2011 that the Office of the Provost develop an implementation plan for the transition to plus/minus grading.

Following a review of the potential issues related to implementation of plus/minus grading, and an analysis of the potential effects on students, the Office of the Provost developed an implementation plan for plus/minus grading (Appendix 3), as requested by APAS. This plan was endorsed by the APAS Committee in October 2011, and the committee recommended that full implementation of weighted plus/minus grading take place at the beginning of the Fall 2012 semester. The Senate approved this recommendation on November 9, 2011, and the President endorsed the plan on November 21, 2011.

The Provost's Implementation Plan states, "For currently enrolled students, cumulative GPA calculations will include grades granted under both the prior and present grading policy as of the effective date of implementation. University-wide requirements currently in place for a specific letter grade will be converted to accept a minus grade. Following implementation, academic programs may revise the letter grade requirements for specific courses, entry requirements to a program, or courses for graduation, by submitting requests through appropriate processes."

IMPACT ON CURRENT PROCEDURES

With the implementation of plus/minus grading in Fall 2012, minus grades will be accepted in all University-wide policies that currently define requirements as a D, C, B or A grade. A grade of D- will be accepted as the lowest passing grade. According to the Provost's Implementation Plan, many academic departments and programs require minimum course grades that do not specify a plus or minus. If an academic unit does not wish to accept plus or minus grades in satisfaction of any given requirements, the unit must submit a formal request for an exception to the University-wide Implementation Plan.

A memo from the Provost's Office to the Deans in December 2011 explained that changes in requirements approved by the end of the Fall 2012 semester will be effective in Fall 2013. This will allow the review by the Senate PCC Committee to be completed by December 2012, which will provide enough time for the University to give timely notice of the Fall 2013 changes, as well as for changes to be made to the Undergraduate Catalog, etc.

The memo explained that implementation will take place in two phases: 1) By Fall 2012, the Registrar will be prepared to make GPA calculations, and changes in University publications and communications defining minimum required grades will be completed, and 2) By Fall 2013, consideration of proposed changes in degree requirements and course prerequisites submitted by academic units will be completed.

The Provost's memo also explained that a change in required grades (e.g., if a program considers requiring a grade of C rather than a C-) for individual courses in a major constitutes a change in degree requirements. The memo confirmed that, under University policy, any change in degree requirements applies only to newly entering students, with all currently registered majors having the opportunity to complete their degree under existing requirements. All proposals to modify degree requirements should be considered through established University procedures, including review in department and college committees and then by the Senate Program, Curricula, and Courses Committee and, as appropriate, by the Graduate Council and its PCC Committee.

COMMITTEE WORK

On February 24, 2012, the APAS Committee was charged by the SEC with reviewing a new proposal regarding a minimum campus standard for completing undergraduate degree requirements at the University. The APAS Committee met with the proposer, an Associate Dean in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS), on February 27, 2012. At the meeting, the proposer explained the rationale behind the proposal and provided a thorough explanation of the current situation. The proposal would require that all undergraduate students earn a minimum course grade of C- in each course used to meet major requirements and a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 in all courses used to meet major requirements. The proposed minimum GPA is in addition to the minimum of 2.0 in all courses that students need in order to graduate.

The proposal is the result of recognition that, with the implementation of the policy as approved by the Senate, undergraduate students could earn the required 2.0 for graduation, but have less than a 2.0 in the subset of courses required for their major. This proposal would remedy that situation and it would standardize the requirement across the campus. According to the Provost's Office, a very preliminary review of recent graduates shows that, in fact, no student who recently graduated was in this situation, so passing this legislation would likely not to have a negative impact on undergraduate students.

The committee received input from the Provost's Office during its review, including the suggestion that individual departments should be able to determine what the minimum passing grade will be for courses in their major programs, rather than having a campus-wide requirement of a C- in every required course. The committee agreed, and decided not to recommend that the minimum grade for any required course be set as a C- campus-wide.

The committee discussed this issue at both its February and March 2012 scheduled meetings. The committee also reviewed the following peer institution policy research, as provided by the proposer:

- UCLA: "Students must have an overall GPA of 2.0 in all of their UC coursework, and a 2.0 GPA in the major coursework."
- UC Berkeley: Grade requirements vary by department with most majors requiring a 2.0 cumulative GPA in their major coursework.
- University of Michigan: Grade requirements vary by department with most majors requiring a 2.0 cumulative GPA in their major coursework.
- University of North Carolina: A C (2.0) grade is essentially required in general education, major course work, and major field of study. "To graduate with a baccalaureate degree, students must...attain a final cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0. Students also must satisfy all General Education requirements and complete at least 18 semester hours in the major field with a grade of C or better (C- does not qualify)."
- UNC-Chapel Hill: Students "must complete a major field of student as prescribed by the department or curriculum. Although a specific grade point average in the major is not required, a minimum of 18 hours of C or better (C- does not qualify) in the major is required. Selected majors require 21 hours of C or better grades in the major."
- University of Illinois: Grades of 2.0 for general education and curricular courses are required. "Students must earn a cumulative GPA of 2.00 (C) or better in all courses taken on this campus included in their major GPA." Some departments require a higher cumulative GPA for graduation.

RECOMMENDATION

The APAS Committee endorses the proposer's intent of creating of minimum campus standard for completing undergraduate degree requirements at the University of Maryland College Park. As a result of implementing such a campus-wide undergraduate minimum standard, many academic units should no longer need to submit degree requirement program proposals changes for their majors in FY13, which will significantly reduce the number of undergraduate program proposals that departmental, college/school, and the Senate PCC Committee will have to review.

On Tuesday, March 27, 2012, the APAS Committee drafted and voted to approve a recommendation regarding cumulative grade point average across all courses used to satisfy major degree requirements. The text of the recommendation was then reviewed by the President's Legal Office for appropriateness.

The committee recommends the following addition to University of Maryland College Park Policy III-7.00(1) University of Maryland Degree Requirements (Appendix 1), and asks that the change be implemented prior to July 1, 2012:

Section B. 4. "Grade Point Average" in Policy III-7.00(1) University of Maryland Degree Requirements should be edited to include the following statement (Appendix 2):

Beginning with students matriculating in Fall 2012, to be awarded a baccalaureate degree, students must have a minimum C (2.00) cumulative grade point average across all courses used to satisfy major degree requirements. Individual department, college, school, or program requirements may exceed this minimum.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Current Policy III-7.00(1) University of Maryland Degree Requirements

Appendix 2 – Recommended Change to Policy III-7.00(1) University of Maryland Degree Requirements, in Bold and Blue Font

Appendix 3 – The Provost's Implementation Plan for Plus/Minus Grading, Fall 2011

Appendix 4 - Charge from the Senate Executive Committee, February 24, 2012

Appendix 5 – Proposal from Katherine Pedro Beardsley, February 15, 2012

Appendix 1

III-7.00(A) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT 1 AUGUST 1991;
AMENDED 19 NOVEMBER 2009

A. Policy

General requirements for undergraduate and graduate degree programs at UMCP are outlined below. Requirements for graduation at UMCP vary according to the character of work in the different colleges, schools, departments, and other academic units. It is the responsibility of the colleges, schools, departments, and other academic units to establish and publish clearly defined degree requirements. These requirements must be approved by the President. The responsibility for knowing and meeting all degree requirements for graduation in a particular curriculum rests with the student. Specific degree requirements are listed in the Undergraduate Catalog and University of Maryland at College Park Graduate School Catalog with the description of each program.

B. Undergraduate Degree Requirements

1. Residency Requirement

- a. All candidates for undergraduate degrees from UMCP must take a minimum of 30 credits at UMCP. These must include a minimum of fifteen credits in courses numbered 300 or above, including at least twelve credits in the major field.
- b. Normally these 30 credits will be the final 30 credits counted toward the degree. However, credits from University-approved study abroad and internship programs, and a maximum of 6 credits that are not part of such programs, may be included in the final 30 if approved in advance by the dean of the academic unit from which the student expects to receive the degree.

2. Enrollment in Majors

A student must be enrolled in the major program from which he or she plans to graduate when registering for the final fifteen hours of the baccalaureate program. The requirement applies to the third year of the combined pre-professional degree programs.

3. Credit Requirements

No baccalaureate degree will be awarded in instances where fewer than 120 credits have been earned. Many undergraduate curricula at UMCP require more than 120 credits. It is the responsibility of the student to become familiar with the requirements of particular curricula.

*To earn a baccalaureate degree at UMCP a minimum of thirty credits must be taken in residence.

4. Grade Point Average

A minimum 2.00 grade point average is required for graduation in all curricula. A higher average may be required by the individual department, college, school, or program.

C. Second Degrees and Second Majors

1. Second Degree Taken Sequentially

A student who has completed requirements for, and who has received one baccalaureate degree and who wishes to earn a second baccalaureate degree from UMCP must satisfactorily complete the requirements of the second degree and enough additional credits so that the total including all applicable credits earned at UMCP, or elsewhere is at least 150 credits. In no case will a second baccalaureate degree be awarded to a student who has not completed thirty credits in residence at UMCP. Approval of the second degree will not be granted when there is extensive overlap between the two programs.

2. Second Degree Taken Simultaneously

A student who wishes to receive simultaneously two baccalaureate degrees from UMCP must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 150 credits (180 credits if one of the degrees is in Special Education). The regularly prescribed requirements of both degree programs must be completed. As early as possible, and in any case, no later than one full semester before the expected date of graduation, the student must file with the departments or programs involved, as well as with the appropriate deans, formal programs showing the programs to be offered to meet the major, supporting area, college, and general education program requirements. If two colleges are involved in the double degree program, the student must designate which college is responsible for the maintenance of records. Approval of the second degree will not be granted when there is extensive

overlap between two programs.

3. Second Major

A student who wishes to complete a second major concurrently with a primary major of record must obtain written permission in advance from the appropriate deans. As early as possible, but in no case later than one full semester before the expected date of graduation, the student must file with the department or programs involved and with the appropriate deans, formal programs showing the courses to be offered to meet requirements in each of the majors and supporting areas as well as the college and general education program requirements. Approval will not be granted if there is extensive overlap between the two programs. Courses taken for one major may be counted as part of the degree requirements of the other and toward general education requirements as appropriate. If two colleges are involved in the double major program, the student must designate which college is responsible for the maintenance of records.

D. Graduate School Degree Requirements

1. Requirements Applicable to All Master's Degrees

a. Programs

The entire course of study undertaken for any master's degree must constitute a unified, coherent program which is approved by the student's advisor and graduate director, and which meets Graduate School requirements.

A minimum of thirty semester hours in courses acceptable for credit towards a graduate degree is required (some degree programs require more than thirty credits) ; in certain cases, six of the thirty semester hours must be thesis research credits. The graduate program must include at least twelve hours of course work at the 600 level or higher. If the student is inadequately prepared for the required graduate courses, additional courses may be required, which may not be considered as part of the student's graduate program. With the exception of pre-approved Combined Bachelor's/Master's programs, credits to be applied to a student's graduate program for a master's degree cannot have been used to satisfy any other previously earned degree.

b. Grade Point Average

A student seeking a master's degree at UMCP must maintain an average grade of "B" (3.0) in all courses taken for graduate credit.

c. Time Limitation

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within a five year period. This time limit applies to any transfer work from other institutions to be included in the student's program.

d. Additional Requirements

In addition to the above requirements, special departmental or collegiate requirements may be imposed, especially for degrees which are offered only in one department, college, or division.

2. Graduate School Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts and Master of Science

a. Thesis Option

Course Requirements- A minimum of thirty semester hours including six hours of thesis research credit is required. A minimum of twelve of the twenty four hours earned in graduate courses must be in the major subject; and a minimum of twelve credits must be selected from courses numbered 600 or above.

Thesis Requirements- A thesis must be submitted for the Master of Arts and Master of Science degrees except for those programs in which a non-thesis option has been approved by the dean in conformity with the policy of the Graduate Council.

Oral Examination- A final oral examination on the thesis shall be held when the student has completed the thesis to the satisfaction of the student's advisor, provided all other requirements for the degree have been completed, and a 3.00 grade point average has been earned.

b. Non-Thesis Option

The quality of work is expected is identical to the thesis program. The general requirements for those in a non-thesis program are a minimum of thirty semester credit hours in courses approved for graduate credit, with a minimum of a grade of "B" in all course work. In addition, there must be a minimum of eighteen credit hours in courses numbered 600 or above, the submission of one or more scholarly papers, and the completion of a comprehensive final examination, a portion of which must be written.

3. Requirements for the Degree of Master of Education
 - a. A minimum of thirty semester hours in coursework with a grade average of "B". Grades for courses not a part of the program but taken in graduate status will be computed in the average;
 - b. A minimum of fifteen hours in courses numbered 600-800 with the remainder at least in the 400 series;
 - c. A comprehensive written examination taken at the end of coursework;
 - d. EDMS 645;
 - e. EDMS 646 or MUED 690 and one seminar paper, or two seminar papers.

4. Graduate School Requirements Applicable to all Doctoral Degrees

- a. Credit Requirements

The Graduate School requires that every student seeking the doctoral degree register for a minimum of twelve research credits, but the number of research and other credit hours required in the program varies with the degree and program in question.

- b. Admission to Candidacy

Preliminary examinations, or such other substantial tests as the department may elect, are frequently prerequisite for admission to candidacy.

A student must be admitted to candidacy for the

doctorate within five years after admission to the doctoral program and at least one academic year before the date on which the degree will be confirmed.

c. Time Limitation

The student must complete the entire program for the degree, including the dissertation and final examination, during a four year period after admission to candidacy. Extensions of time are granted only under the most unusual circumstances. If students fail to complete all requirements within the time allotted, they must submit another application for admission to the Graduate School and, if readmitted, another application for Advancement to Candidacy, after satisfying the usual program prerequisites prior to Advancement to Candidacy.

d. Dissertation

A dissertation or its equivalent is required of all candidates for a doctoral degree. The topic of the dissertation must be approved by the department or program committee.

During the preparation of the dissertation, all candidates for any doctoral degree must register for the prescribed number of semester hours of Doctoral Dissertation Research (899) at University of Maryland.

5. Graduate School Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The Doctor of Philosophy is granted only upon sufficient evidence of high attainment in scholarship and the ability to engage in independent research. It is not awarded for the completion of course and seminar requirements no matter how successfully completed. In addition, a number of departments have a foreign language requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree. There is no Graduate School requirement stipulating a specific number of course credits in either a major or minor subject. It is the policy of the Graduate School to encourage the development of individual programs for each student who seeks the Ph.D.

Dissertation

The ability to do independent research must be demonstrated by an original dissertation on a topic approved by the department or program.

6. Graduate School Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

The requirements for the Doctor of Education (Ed.D) degree are for the most part the same as those for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the College of Education. The Ed.D. requires a minimum of six semester hours of dissertation credit.

Appendix 2

Recommended Addition Noted in Blue & Bold Font

III-7.00(A) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT 1 AUGUST 1991;
AMENDED 19 NOVEMBER 2009

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*To earn a baccalaureate degree at UMCP a minimum of thirty credits must be taken in residence.

4. Grade Point Average

A minimum 2.00 grade point average is required for graduation in all curricula. A higher average may be required by the individual department, college, school, or program.

Beginning with students matriculating in Fall 2012, to be awarded a baccalaureate degree, students must have a minimum C (2.00) cumulative grade point average across all courses used to satisfy major degree requirements. Individual department, college, school, or program requirements may exceed this minimum.

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2. Second Degree Taken Simultaneously

A student who wishes to receive simultaneously two baccalaureate degrees from UMCP must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 150 credits (180 credits if one of the degrees is in Special Education). The regularly prescribed requirements of both degree programs must be completed. As early as possible, and in any case, no

later than one full semester before the expected date of graduation, the student must file with the departments or programs involved, as well as with the appropriate deans, formal programs showing the programs to be offered to meet the major, supporting area, college, and general education program requirements. If two colleges are involved in the double degree program, the student must designate which college is responsible for the maintenance of records. Approval of the second degree will not be granted when there is extensive overlap between two programs.

3. Second Major

A student who wishes to complete a second major concurrently with a primary major of record must obtain written permission in advance from the appropriate deans. As early as possible, but in no case later than one full semester before the expected date of graduation, the student must file with the department or programs involved and with the appropriate deans, formal programs showing the courses to be offered to meet requirements in each of the majors and supporting areas as well as the college and general education program requirements. Approval will not be granted if there is extensive overlap between the two programs. Courses taken for one major may be counted as part of the degree requirements of the other and toward general education requirements as appropriate. If two colleges are involved in the double major program, the student must designate which college is responsible for the maintenance of records.

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1. Requirements Applicable to All Master's Degrees

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The entire course of study undertaken for any master's degree must constitute a unified, coherent program which is approved by the student's advisor and graduate director, and which meets Graduate School requirements.

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least twelve hours of course work at the 600 level or higher. If the student is inadequately prepared for the required graduate courses, additional courses may be required, which may not be considered as part of the student's graduate program. With the exception of pre-approved Combined Bachelor's/Master's programs, credits to be applied to a student's graduate program for a master's degree cannot have been used to satisfy any other previously earned degree.

b. Grade Point Average

A student seeking a master's degree at UMCP must maintain an average grade of "B" (3.0) in all courses taken for graduate credit.

c. Time Limitation

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within a five year period. This time limit applies to any transfer work from other institutions to be included in the student's program.

d. Additional Requirements

In addition to the above requirements, special departmental or collegiate requirements may be imposed, especially for degrees which are offered only in one department, college, or division.

2. Graduate School Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts and Master of Science

a. Thesis Option

Course Requirements- A minimum of thirty semester hours including six hours of thesis research credit is required. A minimum of twelve of the twenty four hours earned in graduate courses must be in the major subject; and a minimum of twelve credits must be selected from courses numbered 600 or above.

Thesis Requirements- A thesis must be submitted for the Master of Arts and Master of Science degrees except for those programs in which a non-thesis option has been approved by the dean in conformity with the policy of the Graduate Council.

Oral Examination- A final oral examination on the thesis shall be held when the student has completed the thesis to the satisfaction of the student's advisor, provided all other requirements for the degree have been completed, and a 3.00 grade point average has been earned.

b. Non-Thesis Option

The quality of work is expected is identical to the thesis program. The general requirements for those in a non-thesis program are a minimum of thirty semester credit hours in courses approved for graduate credit, with a minimum of a grade of "B" in all course work. In addition, there must be a minimum of eighteen credit hours in courses numbered 600 or above, the submission of one or more scholarly papers, and the completion of a comprehensive final examination, a portion of which must be written.

3. Requirements for the Degree of Master of Education

- a. A minimum of thirty semester hours in coursework with a grade average of "B". Grades for courses not a part of the program but taken in graduate status will be computed in the average;
- b. A minimum of fifteen hours in courses numbered 600-800 with the remainder at least in the 400 series;
- c. A comprehensive written examination taken at the end of coursework;
- d. EDMS 645;
- e. EDMS 646 or MUED 690 and one seminar paper, or two seminar papers.

4. Graduate School Requirements Applicable to all Doctoral Degrees

a. Credit Requirements

The Graduate School requires that every student seeking the doctoral degree register for a minimum of twelve research credits, but the number of research and other credit hours required in the program varies with the degree and program in

question.

b. Admission to Candidacy

Preliminary examinations, or such other substantial tests as the department may elect, are frequently prerequisite for admission to candidacy.

A student must be admitted to candidacy for the doctorate within five years after admission to the doctoral program and at least one academic year before the date on which the degree will be confirmed.

c. Time Limitation

The student must complete the entire program for the degree, including the dissertation and final examination, during a four year period after admission to candidacy. Extensions of time are granted only under the most unusual circumstances. If students fail to complete all requirements within the time allotted, they must submit another application for admission to the Graduate School and, if readmitted, another application for Advancement to Candidacy, after satisfying the usual program prerequisites prior to Advancement to Candidacy.

d. Dissertation

A dissertation or its equivalent is required of all candidates for a doctoral degree. The topic of the dissertation must be approved by the department or program committee.

During the preparation of the dissertation, all candidates for any doctoral degree must register for the prescribed number of semester hours of Doctoral Dissertation Research (899) at University of Maryland.

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The Doctor of Philosophy is granted only upon sufficient evidence of high attainment in scholarship and the ability to engage in independent research. It is not awarded for the completion of course and seminar requirements no matter how successfully completed. In

addition, a number of departments have a foreign language requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree. There is no Graduate School requirement stipulating a specific number of course credits in either a major or minor subject. It is the policy of the Graduate School to encourage the development of individual programs for each student who seeks the Ph.D.

Dissertation

The ability to do independent research must be demonstrated by an original dissertation on a topic approved by the department or program.

6. Graduate School Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

The requirements for the Doctor of Education (Ed.D) degree are for the most part the same as those for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the College of Education. The Ed.D. requires a minimum of six semester hours of dissertation credit.

Implementation Plan for Plus/Minus Grading Office of the Provost

Summary and Recommendations

The Senate Executive Committee requested that the Provost provide an implementation plan for plus/minus grading (Report of the Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee). The plan analyzes effects on students and presents an implementation process.

Impact on Undergraduate Students

Plus/minus grading will result in a very small reduction in cumulative GPA, three one-hundredths of a GPA point (0.03), based on analysis of all freshmen admits and Fall transfer admits in the period 2006-2010 over their first four years of study. There are no substantive differences by race/ethnicity in GPA effects. GPA effects are almost constant across GPA levels. The principal source of a lower GPA arises because A- grades are awarded 3.7 grade points rather than 4.0. The negative effect on cumulative GPA for transfer students is also 0.03.

There is a small increase in the number of students with cumulative GPA below 2.0, approximately 0.5% of first-year students (approximately 20 students in each freshmen cohort). The number of students affected is lower for students who have progressed farther toward their degrees. Race/ethnicity differences in the increase in numbers of students with GPA below 2.0 are relatively small.

Virtually all leading universities now use plus/minus grading that includes C- grades and A+ grades. The APAS proposal awarding 4.0 grade points for an A+ is aligned with other leading public institutions. Awarding 4.3 grade points to A+ grades will reduce (but not eliminate) the small negative effect on cumulative GPAs.

A principal benefit of plus/minus grading is to provide a more accurate representation of student achievement. Associated student incentive effects are not captured in GPA comparisons in the report.

Recommendations for Implementation

1. The University should award 4.0 grade points to an A+ grade in accordance with the APAS report. This will require Senate action to amend the April 26, 2006, policy which included 4.3 grade points for an A+.
2. For currently enrolled students, cumulative GPA calculations will include grades granted under both the prior and present grading policy as of the effective date of implementation.
3. University-wide requirements currently in place for a specific letter grade will be converted to accept a minus grade. Following implementation, academic programs may

revise the letter grade requirements for specific courses, entry requirements to a program, or courses for graduation, by submitting requests through appropriate processes.

4. Senate approval of a new policy by the end of the Fall 2011 term should provide sufficient time to complete other steps for plus/minus grading to begin in Fall 2012. Delays in Senate action or academic program review and modification of course/degree requirements under the new system could delay implementation for another academic year.
5. Implementation of plus/minus grading should include all undergraduate courses. It should also include graduate courses upon the recommendation of the Graduate Council.

Plus/Minus Grading Effects for Undergraduates

I. Senate Proposals for Plus/Minus Grades in Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculations.

The University Senate has twice approved plus/minus grading and its use in GPA calculations. An extensive study of plus/minus grading was conducted in years 1999-2000 by a University task force, including campus-wide discussion and surveys of undergraduate and graduate students and faculty. The proposal was passed by the Senate on April 6, 2000, and approved by President Mote on August 28, 2000. Implementation was deferred. The Senate again approved plus/minus grading on December 25, 2005, with presidential approval on April 26, 2006. Implementation was again deferred.

The Senate Academic Procedures and Standards Committee (APAS) recommendation for plus/minus grading differs from the prior Senate approved policies only by assigning 4.0 grade points for an A+ rather than 4.3 grade points. The APAS proposal is as follows:

Grade	Grade points
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.7
F	0

In the previous Senate-approved policies and in the APAS proposal, the present marking system defining the standards for letter grades is retained: A+, A, A- denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship; B+, B, B- denotes good mastery of the subject and good

scholarship; C+, C, C- denotes acceptable mastery of the subject; D+, D, D- denotes borderline understanding of the subject (It denotes marginal performance, and it does not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree.); and F denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance. The marking system should remain unchanged.

II. Grading Policies at Peer Institutions. Virtually all leading (Top 25) major public universities, including our peer institutions, use plus/minus systems, typically adjusting grades 0.3 grade points up or down for plus/minus grades. (See Table 1.) Approximately one-half include the grade of A+, which is awarded 4.0 grade points. While not included in GPA calculations, the award of an A+ provides an additional indicator of excellent performance. Approximately 80% of leading public institutions include a C- grade, with a large fraction awarding 1.7 grade points. Plus/minus grading is also used in the majority of leading private universities, with many including A+ and C- grades. Adoption of the 2011 Senate APAS proposal would align the University's grading system with other major public research institutions.

III. Static and Dynamic Effects on Students. The effect of different policies for translating letter grades into numerical grades and cumulative GPAs can be readily compared by recalculating cumulative GPAs for any proposed policy. Three alternative policies are compared below: the present policy, Senate-approved policy, and the 2011 Senate APAS proposal. The analysis describes changes in GPAs, as well as changes in the number of students who would have a cumulative GPA below a 2.0 GPA.

The overall effect of any grading policy depends on a number of dynamic factors, most notably student reactions to the challenges and opportunities under alternative grading policies. Introduction of plus/minus grading provides additional incentives, since success (as reflected in course grades) is more precisely defined and measured. Plus/minus grading is likely to encourage students at all grade levels to strive for a higher grade. For example, a minus grade could be an insufficient grade to meet a course, department, college, or other university requirement. Simple recalculations of GPAs for a given set of grades under alternative policies do not capture these incentive effects.

IV. GPAs for Students Entering and Completing with a Single Grading Policy. The simplest illustration of GPA effects compares cumulative GPAs for students throughout their period of study under two alternative policies -- the University's existing policy without plus/minus grade points with the proposed policy of plus/minus grading with A and A+ grades given four grade points. Grades awarded for the period Fall 2006-Fall 2010 are used in the analysis. (A comparison of the 2000/2005 Senate policy with 4.3 awarded for A+ appears below.)

- A. **Grade Distributions at the University of Maryland.** Differences in outcomes associated with a plus/minus policy depend on the distribution of plus/minus grades at the University. If many more students receive plus rather than minus grades, calculated cumulative GPA will be increased; alternatively, a preponderance of minus grades will result in a lower cumulative GPA. Individual students will vary in the number of plus or minus grades received.

For the period Fall 2006-Fall 2010 there were more plus grades awarded to undergraduate students than minus grades at letter grades B, C, and D. Hence plus/minus grade points at these grade levels would contribute to a higher cumulative GPA. (See Table 2.) Conversely, at the A level, the proposed policy awards 3.7 points for an A-. The A- grade accounts for 14% of all undergraduate grades in this time period. Regardless whether an A+ is given 4.0 or 4.3 grade points, fewer total grade points would be awarded for grades at the A level, contributing to a lower cumulative GPA. The aggregate effect of plus/minus grading reflects the net effect of these grade patterns.

- B. GPAs for Freshmen Cohorts, Fall 2006-Fall 2010, Over Four Years of Study.** The comparison below calculates cumulative GPA effects for incoming freshmen in five entry cohorts (Fall 2006-Fall 2010) under these two policies. Analysis of cumulative GPA effects is shown by an analysis of cumulative GPAs for incoming freshmen (fall and spring admits) in five cohorts (Fall 2006-Fall 2010) as students conclude subsequent years at the University. GPA effects are shown for students at the end of each of their first four years at the University.

The average change in GPA across all students in these five cohorts at the end of their first year of study is a negative three one-hundredths of a point in GPA (-0.03). Average effects remain at this same level for the cohorts of students who have finished two years, three years, and four years. (See Table 3a.) More students in any given year will have reductions in their GPA than the number whose GPA is increased.

GPA effects of plus/minus grading are virtually identical for students across race/ethnicity categories, with an average GPA decline of -0.03 across cohorts and race/ethnicity categories. (Table 3b.)

Plus/minus grading effects on cumulative GPA for students at all GPA levels exhibit only slight differences by GPA level. Students at higher GPA levels, with GPA above 3.3, have reductions of -0.04 or -0.05. (See Table 4.) This difference likely is traceable to the larger number of A- grades received by students at higher GPA levels.

- C. Number of Students with Cumulative GPA Below 2.0.** The University requires that students must have a 2.0 overall GPA to avoid being placed on probation or being dismissed and to have an overall 2.0 GPA to graduate. Under the plus/minus grading policy, the number of students whose cumulative GPA fell below 2.0 would be slightly increased. The largest increase would occur at the conclusion of year one at the University. For the five freshmen cohorts Fall 2006-Fall 2010, an average of 20 additional students per cohort are estimated to have a cumulative GPA below 2.0, 0.5% of all students finishing their first year, under the plus/minus policy. (See Table 4.)

The additional number of students under plus/minus grading with a cumulative GPA below 2.0 would be lower for students completing their second, third, and fourth years at the University, only 0.3% (ten students per cohort) for students finishing their fourth

year. These calculated differences do not take into account incentive effects or other dynamic effects noted above that could result in fewer students falling below a 2.0 GPA.

There are small differences among students across race/ethnicity categories in the proportion of students whose GPA falls below 2.0 under plus/minus grading. For the period 2006-2009, the proportion of additional students falling below a cumulative GPA of 2.0 for the largest student groups is as follows: Asian, U.S., 0.5%; Black/African American, U.S., 1.0%; Hispanic, U.S., 0.5%; and White, U.S., 0.3%. A 1.0% proportion increase of Black/African American students with a GPA below 2.0 under plus/minus grading is an average of approximately four additional students each year. Sample sizes are insufficient to support meaningful analysis of changes by year of study and cohort year within each student group. These comparisons do not include the most recent entry cohort (Fall 2010) when a new system for coding race/ethnicity was introduced at the University.

- D. **Transfer Students.** Plus/minus grading has a similar estimated effect on transfer students. Cumulative GPA effects were examined for fall transfer enrollees for the period Fall 2006-Fall 2010. The average change in GPA across all students in these cohorts at the end of their first year of study is -0.03 and remains at this same level for the cohorts of students who have finished two years, three years, and four years. (See Table 6.)

Plus/minus grading results in approximately 20 additional transfer students having a GPA below 2.0 after their first year, 1.1% of all transfer students. The additional number of transfer students under plus/minus grading with a cumulative GPA below 2.0 would be slightly lower for transfer students who have advanced farther toward their degrees.

V. Comparison of Senate-Approved Policy and APAS 2011 Proposal. Senate-approved policy awarded 4.3 grade points to A+ grades, in comparison to the APAS proposal. Awarding 4.3 grade points to A+ grades increases cumulative GPA only very slightly, by one or two one-hundredths of a point (0.01 or 0.02), with the effect highest for students completing their fourth year. The resultant effect of plus/minus grading on cumulative GPA under the Senate approved policy falls to 0.01 or 0.02 depending on years of study. (See Table 7.)

VI. Effect on Currently Enrolled Students in the Transition. There are two important dimensions in assessing the effect of introducing plus/minus grading policy on currently enrolled students: (1) how cumulative GPA will be calculated, and (2) estimating the magnitude of the change in cumulative GPA.

A student's cumulative GPA will include grade points awarded under the prior and the new policy. The grades and grade points already received by current students under the previous official grade policy will remain unchanged. Current students will receive grade points under the new policy when it becomes effective. The University transcript will include an explanation of this system. A survey of registrars at other institutions showed that this methodology has been used by numerous universities that have introduced plus/minus grades over an extended period of time, and no alternative approach was identified. The most recent major research institutions

that changed grading policy using this methodology are the University of Georgia (2006), Purdue University (2008), and the University of Texas (2009).

The effect of the policy change on cumulative GPAs for current students will depend on how long a student has been at the University. For recently admitted students, cumulative GPA over time will largely reflect grades received under the new policy (a policy they may not have contemplated when they enrolled). For more advanced students, fewer grades will be awarded under the new policy, and effects on cumulative GPA will be smaller. For the average of all undergraduate students currently enrolled, the number of credits receiving plus/minus grades would be approximately one half of the total credits earned at graduation, which implies that the cumulative GPA effect for currently enrolled students would be approximately half the effect presented above for students who are under the new system for four years.

Implementation Process and Timetables

A. Review of Existing Requirements Not Met by a Minus Grade. The implementation plan presented here accepts minus grades in all university-wide policies that now define the requirement as a D, C, B, or A grade. A grade of D- is accepted as the lowest passing grade. Many academic departments and programs require minimum course grades that do not specify a plus or minus. This occurs most often at the course level where minimum course grades are part of a course prerequisite requirement, an entry requirement to a major or program, or a degree requirement. If an academic unit does not wish to accept plus or minus grades in satisfaction of any of these requirements, the unit must submit a formal request for an exception to this university-wide implementation plan.

B. Graduate Courses and Graduate Education. Previous policies approved by the Senate have included graduate courses and programs. The Graduate Council should analyze the impact of the recommended proposal for plus/minus grading on graduate students, courses, and programs, and the Dean of the Graduate School should report findings and recommendations to the Senate. Introducing plus/minus grading by course level at different points in time will significantly increase the administrative costs of making the changes.

C. Timetable.

Provost-Senate Task Force: Complete its review and make recommendations to the Senate. (September 1-September 30)

University Senate action on policy. (September 15-December 15)

Academic programs: Review and submit proposals for letter grade requirements for specific courses, entry requirements, or courses for graduation for Senate PCC review. (January 1-February 28)

PCC review or other review as necessary. (February 15-March 31)

Communicate policy changes to faculty, students, and staff, and modify the forthcoming 2012-2013 Undergraduate Catalog as needed. (March 31 – May 31)

Develop administrative procedures to record grades and compile transcripts, Office of Registrar and OIT. (January 1-May 1)

Schedule Contingencies: It will likely take the Spring 2012 term to review and complete adjustments at the course and program level; communicate to the campus; and develop administrative procedures to produce grades and transcripts. If Senate action is not completed during the Fall term, the risk increases that implementation would have to be deferred until Fall 2013.

Provost's Recommendations for Implementation of Plus/Minus Grading

1. The new scale will include the following grades and grade points:

Grade	Grade points
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.7
F	0

2. All references in future official University publications requiring minimum grades of (1) D be changed to D minus, (2) C be changed to C minus, (3) B be changed to B minus, and (4) A be changed to A minus. With the adoption of the new grading scale, D minus will be considered the lowest passing grade.
3. Exceptions to this change for individual course requirements, degree requirements, and academic policies must be made by the appropriate academic units through the normal processes. For example, a grade of C might be required, rather than a "C minus" grade in the new plus/minus system, to meet a course prerequisite requirement, one or more course requirements for entry to a major, or to meet degree requirements. This principle applies to required course grades at all levels (C minus, B minus, or A minus).
4. The adoption of this new grading scale will not change requirements that are based on any calculated GPA; examples of GPA requirements include scholastic probation, academic dismissal, graduation, continuation in certain programs, and access to specific courses (based on performance in more than one previous course).
5. The new grading scale will be implemented on a "day forward" basis, being effective on the start of a fall semester (to be specified). This scheduled start date will be adhered to unless the Office of the Registrar states that it cannot ensure that all of the necessary processes are in place to ensure an orderly transition; in that case, it will be begin at the start of the first academic year after such assurance can be made. The new grading system will not be effective until it is described in the Undergraduate Catalog.
6. The new scale will not be valid for grade changes made to a student's record for courses taken before the grading scale became effective.

7. Implementation of plus/minus grading will include all undergraduate courses. It will also include graduate courses upon the recommendation of the Graduate Council.
8. The present marking system defining the standards for letter grades will be retained under the new policy: (A+, A, A- denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship; B+, B, B- denotes good mastery of the subject and good scholarship; C+, C, C- denotes acceptable mastery of the subject; D+, D, D- denotes borderline understanding of the subject (It denotes marginal performance, and it does not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree.); and F denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance.
9. In accordance with this proposal, the Office of the Registrar will revise the Undergraduate Catalog, the course inventory, the official transcript, and University-level degree audit rules. The Graduate Catalog will be revised as appropriate.

Table 1: Grading Systems at Leading Universities

Public (Ranked 1-25)	University	Highest A Grade		Lowest C Grade	
		Grade	Grade Points	Grade	Grade Points
Peer	University of Illinois	A+	4	C-	1.67
Peer	UNC	A+	4	C-	1.7
Peer	Berkeley	A+	4	C-	1.7
Peer	UCLA	A+	4	C-	1.7
Peer	University of Michigan	A+	4	C-	1.7
	UC San Diego	A+	4	C-	1.7
	Purdue University	A+	4	C-	1.7
	UVA	A+	4	C-	1.7
	University of Pittsburgh	A+	4	C-	1.75
	UC Davis	A+	4	C-	1.7
	UC Santa Barbara	A+	4	C-	1.7
	UC Irvine	A+	4	C-	1.7
	Penn State	A	4	C	2
	Minnesota	A	4	C-	1.67
	University of Washington	A	4	C-	1.85-1.5
	University of Georgia	A	4	C-	1.7
	University of Wisconsin (no +/-)	A	4	C	2
	William and Mary	A	4	C-	1.7
	Georgia Tech	A	4	C	2
	University of Texas-Austin	A	4	C-	1.67
	University of Florida	A	4	C-	1.67
	Ohio State	A	4	C-	1.7
	Texas A&M	A	4	C	2
	Clemson University	A	4	C	2
	Rutgers	A	4	C	2
	University of Connecticut	A	4	C-	1.7
	Virginia Tech	A	4	C-	1.7
Private (Ranked 1-15)					
	Cornell	A+	4.3	C-	1.7
	Columbia	A+	4.3	C-	1.67
	Stanford	A+	4.3	C-	1.7
	University of Pennsylvania	A+	4	C-	1.7
	Duke	A+	4	C-	1.7
	Johns Hopkins	A+	4	C-	1.7
	Washington U at St. Louis	A+	4	C-	1.7
	Princeton	A+	4	C-	1.7
	MIT	A	5	C	3
	University of Chicago	A	4	C-	1.7
	Northwestern	A	4	C-	1.7
	Yale	A	4	C-	1.67
	California Institute of Technology	A+	4.33	C-	1.67
	Dartmouth	A	4	C-	1.67
	Brown (no +/-)	A		C	

***Many Ivy League institutions, including Princeton, Columbia, Brown, and Stanford, do not compute a GPA or maintain a system of class ranking. The above values are the universities' suggestions for converting their grades to grade points, as found on their individual websites. MIT uses plus/minus for internal purposes only and they do not factor into calculating GPA. Brown does not calculate GPA. University of Wisconsin uses A, AB, B, BC, C, and D rather than pluses and minuses.

Table 2: Full Distribution of Grades Awarded in Fall and Spring Term to Undergraduate Students between Fall 2006 and Fall 2010

Course Grades	N of Grades	% of Total Grades
A+	64,114	6%
A	272,343	25%
A-	148,799	14%
B+	95,409	9%
B	202,504	19%
B-	75,088	7%
C+	38,398	4%
C	95,282	9%
C-	27,309	3%
D+	5,813	1%
D	25,715	2%
D-	4,027	0%
F	29,557	3%
XF	255	0%
Total	1,084,613	100%

Table 3A: Effect on Cumulative GPA for Entering First-Year Students, by Years Completed at the University

Years Completed	Fall Cohorts	Cohort N	N Students with Courses	Avg Effect
Year 1	Fall 2006-2010	20,185	19,761	-0.03
Year 2	Fall 2006-2009	16,262	14,694	-0.03
Year 3	Fall 2006-2008	12,069	9,683	-0.03
Year 4	Fall 2006-2007	8,169	6,438	-0.03

Please Note (for this table and subsequent tables): Only first-time, full-time students were included in the initial fall cohorts. At the end of each year completed, students were included only if they had received a letter grade (e.g. A+ through F) in the given term (e.g. first, second, third, or fourth spring term). The "Avg Effect" displays the average net change in cumulative GPAs at the university level, where students with increasing and decreasing cumulative GPAs may cancel each other out in the overall average. The letter grade values as specified in the recent University Senate Proposal (Document Number 10-11-11) were used in calculating the proposed cumulative GPAs, where an A+ letter grade receives a 4.0.

Table 3B: Effect on Cumulative GPA for Entering First-Year Students, by Years Completed at the University

Years Completed	Race/Ethnicity	Cohort N	N Students with Courses	Avg Effect
Year 1 (Fall Cohorts 2006-2009)	American Indian:U.S.	48	46	-0.02
	Asian:U.S.	2,375	2,349	-0.03
	Black/African-American:U.S.	2,098	2,056	-0.03
	Foreign	261	248	-0.04
	Hispanic:U.S.	1,077	1,044	-0.03
	Unknown:U.S.	765	745	-0.03
	White:U.S.	9,638	9,423	-0.03
Year 2 (Fall Cohorts 2006-2009)	American Indian:U.S.	48	42	-0.02
	Asian:U.S.	2,375	2,223	-0.03
	Black/African-American:U.S.	2,098	1,867	-0.03
	Foreign	261	220	-0.04
	Hispanic:U.S.	1,077	940	-0.03
	Unknown:U.S.	765	690	-0.03
	White:U.S.	9,638	8,712	-0.03
Year 3 (Fall Cohorts 2006-2008)	American Indian:U.S.	41	26	-0.03
	Asian:U.S.	1,708	1,474	-0.03
	Black/African-American:U.S.	1,713	1,402	-0.03
	Foreign	172	132	-0.04
	Hispanic:U.S.	819	629	-0.03
	Unknown:U.S.	595	489	-0.03
	White:U.S.	7,021	5,531	-0.03
Year 4 (Fall Cohorts 2006-2007)	American Indian:U.S.	27	20	-0.03
	Asian:U.S.	1,134	922	-0.03
	Black/African-American:U.S.	1,176	893	-0.03
	Foreign	106	67	-0.04
	Hispanic:U.S.	569	431	-0.03
	Unknown:U.S.	408	317	-0.03
	White:U.S.	4,749	3,788	-0.03

Table 4: Effect of Cumulative GPA for Entering First-Year Students, by Level of Current Cumulative GPA

Current Cumulative GPA Bands	Years Completed							
	Year 1 (Fall Cohorts 2006-2010)		Year 2 (Fall Cohorts 2006-2009)		Year 3 (Fall Cohorts 2006-2008)		Year 4 (Fall Cohorts 2006-2007)	
	N of Students	Avg Effect	N of Students	Avg Effect	N of Students	Avg Effect	N of Students	Avg Effect
0.00-1.99	1,236	-0.02	532	-0.02	233	-0.03	114	-0.03
2.00-2.30	1,091	-0.02	701	-0.02	466	-0.03	271	-0.03
2.31-2.70	2,256	-0.02	1,712	-0.03	1,133	-0.03	649	-0.03
2.71-3.00	2,682	-0.02	2,099	-0.02	1,400	-0.02	909	-0.03
3.01-3.30	3,333	-0.02	2,596	-0.03	1,792	-0.03	1,242	-0.03
3.31-3.70	5,150	-0.03	4,065	-0.04	2,686	-0.04	1,905	-0.04
3.71-4.00	4,013	-0.05	2,989	-0.04	1,973	-0.04	1,348	-0.04
Total	19,761	-0.03	14,694	-0.03	9,683	-0.03	6,438	-0.03

Table 5: Changes in the Number of First-Year Students with a Cumulative GPA Below 2.0, by Years Completed at the University

Years Completed	Fall Entry Cohort	Cohort N	N Students with Courses	Add'l Students LT 2.0 w/ New GPA	
				N	% of Students with Courses
Year 1	Fall 2006	3,945	3,839	24	0.6%
	Fall 2007	4,224	4,132	23	0.6%
	Fall 2008	3,900	3,812	18	0.5%
	Fall 2009	4,193	4,128	17	0.4%
	Fall 2010	3,923	3,850	22	0.6%
	Total	20,185	19,761	104	0.5%
Year 2	Fall 2006	3,945	3,499	16	0.5%
	Fall 2007	4,224	3,795	12	0.3%
	Fall 2008	3,900	3,522	12	0.3%
	Fall 2009	4,193	3,878	12	0.3%
	Total	16,262	14,694	52	0.4%
Year 3	Fall 2006	3,945	3,090	20	0.6%
	Fall 2007	4,224	3,391	15	0.4%
	Fall 2008	3,900	3,202	11	0.3%
	Total	12,069	9,683	46	0.5%
Year 4	Fall 2006	3,945	3,108	10	0.3%
	Fall 2007	4,224	3,330	10	0.3%
	Total	8,169	6,438	20	0.3%

Please Note: Only first-time, full-time students were included in the initial fall cohorts. At the end of each year completed, students were included only if they had received a letter grade (e.g. A+ through F) in the given term (e.g. first, second, third, or fourth spring term). In the "Add'l Students less than 2.0 with New GPA" category, the net effect of the proposed GPA calculation was displayed, which means there were more students with less than a 2.0 cumulative GPA under the proposed calculation method than in the current method. The letter grade values as specified in the recent University Senate Proposal (Document Number 10-11-11) were used in calculating the Proposed cumulative GPAs, where an A+ letter grade receives a 4.0.

Table 6: Changes in the Number of Transfer Students with a Cumulative GPA Below 2.0 and Average Effect to Cumulative GPA, by Years Completed at the University

Years Completed	Fall Entry Cohort	Cohort N	N Students with Courses	Add'l Students LT 2.0 w/ New GPA		Avg Effect
				N	% of Students with Courses	
Year 1	Fall 2006	1,826	1,664	23	1.4%	-0.03
	Fall 2007	1,928	1,737	23	1.3%	-0.03
	Fall 2008	2,038	1,869	22	1.2%	-0.03
	Fall 2009	1,906	1,772	22	1.2%	-0.03
	Fall 2010	1,750	1,622	12	0.7%	-0.03
	Total	9,448	8,664	102	1.2%	-0.03
Year 2	Fall 2006	1,826	1,412	17	1.2%	-0.03
	Fall 2007	1,928	1,463	18	1.2%	-0.03
	Fall 2008	2,038	1,616	16	1.0%	-0.03
	Fall 2009	1,906	1,526	14	0.9%	-0.03
	Total	7,698	6,017	65	1.1%	-0.03
Year 3	Fall 2006	1,826	739	6	0.8%	-0.03
	Fall 2007	1,928	810	4	0.5%	-0.03
	Fall 2008	2,038	876	8	0.9%	-0.03
	Total	5,792	2,425	18	0.7%	-0.03
Year 4	Fall 2006	1,826	165	0	0.0%	-0.03
	Fall 2007	1,928	205	3	1.5%	-0.03
	Total	3,754	370	3	0.8%	-0.03

Please Note: Only full-time new transfer students were included in the initial fall cohorts for their first entry as a transfer student. At the end of each year completed, students were included only if they had received a letter grade (e.g. A+ through F) in the given term (e.g. first, second, third, or fourth spring term). In the "Add'l Students less than 2.0 with New GPA" category, the net effect of the proposed GPA calculation was displayed, which means there were more students with less than a 2.0 cumulative GPA under the proposed calculation method than in the current method. The letter grade values as specified in the recent University Senate Proposal (Document Number 10-11-11) were used in calculating the Proposed cumulative GPAs, where an A+ letter grade receives a 4.0.

Table 7: Effect on Cumulative GPA for Entering First-Year Students Using Different Methods of Accounting for "A+" Letter Grades, by Years Completed at the University

Years Completed	Fall Cohorts	Cohort N	N Students with Courses	Avg Effect	
				Proposed (A+= 4.0)	Approved (A+=4.3)
Year 1	Fall 2006-2010	20,185	19,761	-0.03	-0.01
Year 2	Fall 2006-2009	16,262	14,694	-0.03	-0.01
Year 3	Fall 2006-2008	12,069	9,683	-0.03	-0.01
Year 4	Fall 2006-2007	8,169	6,438	-0.03	-0.02

Please Note: Only first-time, full-time students were included in the initial fall cohorts. At the end of each year completed, students were included only if they had received a letter grade (e.g. A+ through F) in the given term (e.g. first, second, third, or fourth spring term). The "Avg Effect" displays the average net change in cumulative GPAs at the university level, where students with increasing and decreasing cumulative GPAs may cancel each other out in the average. The letter grade values as specified in the recent University Senate Proposal (Document Number 10-11-11) were used in calculating the proposed cumulative GPAs, where an A+ letter grade receives a 4.0. Cumulative GPAs were recalculated under Senate approved grading, where an A+ letter grade receives a 4.3 (Document Number 99-00-56).



University Senate CHARGE

Date:	February 24, 2012
To:	Robert Buchanan Chair, Academic Procedures & Standards
From:	Eric Kasischke Chair, University Senate 
Subject:	Proposal to Change the Minimum Average in all Courses Applied to Undergraduate Major Requirements
Senate Document #:	11-12-31
Deadline:	March 30, 2012

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) requests that the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee review the attached proposal entitled, Proposal to Change the Minimum Average in all Courses Applied to Undergraduate Major Requirements.

The University Senate and President Loh approved the “Proposal to Review the University of Maryland Policies Concerning Academic Transcripts and Calculation of Grade Point Average (Senate Doc. No. 10-11-11)” in November 2011. The Office of the Provost was charged with implementing the recommendations in the legislation. Provost Wylie’s implementation plan instructs units that, “All references in University publications defining minimum required grades must be changed to D-, C-, B-, or A- rather than D, C, B, or A.” Units that would like to make changes to their degree requirements must submit a proposal through the Senate’s PCC Committee, and those changes would not be implemented until the Fall 2013 semester. The attached proposal requests that the University consider an overall requirement of a C (2.0) cumulative grade point average in all courses used to satisfy major degree requirements. The SEC requests that the APAS Committee review the attached proposal and determine whether this requirement is appropriate.

Specifically, we ask that you:

1. Consult with the proposer to discuss her specific concerns about the current implementation plan.
2. Review similar implementation policies for weighted plus/minus grading at our peer institutions.

3. Consult with representatives of the Office of the Provost on the impact of this proposed change on our academic mission.
4. Consult with the University's Office of Legal Affairs.
5. If appropriate, recommend whether an overall change to the minimum grade point average for degree requirements is necessary.

Because the new policy and subsequent implementation will go into effect in the Fall 2012 semester, we ask that you submit your report and recommendations to the Senate Office no later than March 30, 2012. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.



University Senate PROPOSAL FORM

Name:	Katherine Pedro Beardsley
Date:	February 15, 2012
Title of Proposal:	Proposal to Change the Minimum Average in all Courses Applied to Undergraduate Major Requirements
Phone Number:	301-405-1692
Email Address:	kbeard@umd.edu
Campus Address:	2141 Tydings Hall
Unit/Department/College:	College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
Constituency (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate):	Staff
Description of issue/concern/policy in question:	<p>In Fall 2012 the campus will implement the Policy on Plus/Minus Grading. The thrust of the policy incorporates fractional computations of numerical values assigned to letter grades in the calculation of students' grade point averages. The implementation of this policy will not allow departments or programs to change their degree requirements until FY13.</p> <p>Currently, the degree requirements of most majors at the University of Maryland use a grade of C (2.0) for courses which fulfill major requirements, as well as supporting area (where applicable) and skills options (where applicable) courses.</p> <p>A letter sent by the Provost's office to Deans regarding implementation of the new policy on calculating grade point averages states:</p> <p>"All references in University publications defining minimum required grades must be changed to D-, C-, B-, or A- rather than D, C, B, or A."</p> <p>The result will be that for the Fall 2012 cohort, a C- will suffice in courses used to meet various types of major requirements. These students could possibly graduate with a 2.0 cumulative grade point average even though earning only a 1.70 (C-) in every course required for the major; higher grades in elective and general education courses could counter-balance low grades within the field where the student is supposed to have developed specialized understanding</p>

and competencies. Although this possible outcome may not occur often, the fact that it is possible indicates a weakening of rigor within majors.

During FY13 there will be a number of program proposals which will be generated to change the minimum degree requirements to a 2.0 average in courses required for the major and/or specific grades for courses required for the major will be proposed. Thus, the Fall 2013 cohort will be under a different set of degree requirements than the cohort of Fall 2012.

This can result in inequities for students, monumental difficulties for advisors, and a more-complicated-than necessary transition to the eventual goal of most academic programs: To have a clear set of standards that define educational expectations for our students.

By way of comparison, here is a listing of the degree requirements of our peer institutions:

At UCLA “students must have an overall GPA of 2.0 in all of their UC coursework, and a 2.0 GPA in the major coursework.” At UC Berkeley and the University of Michigan, grade requirements vary by department with most majors requiring a 2.0 cumulative GPA in their major coursework.

The University of North Carolina essentially requires a C (2.0) grade in general education, major course work and major field of study:

“To graduate with a baccalaureate degree, students must successfully complete at least 120 semester hours of course work and attain a final cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0. Students also must satisfy all General Education requirements and complete at least 18 semester hours in the major field with a grade of C or better (C- does not qualify). In all cases, at least half of the courses and credit hours in the major must be completed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.”

UNC-Chapel Hill students “must complete a major field of study as prescribed by the department or curriculum. Although a specific grade point average in the major is not required, a minimum of 18 hours of C or better (C- does not qualify) in the major is required. Selected majors require 21 hours of C or better grades in the major. Students transferring credits in their major field must earn a grade of C (not C-) or better in at least three-fourths of those courses and credit hours in the major that are taken at UNC–Chapel Hill. All

	<p>students, including students transferring from another institution, must take at least half of their major course requirements at UNC–Chapel Hill.”</p> <p>At the <u>University of Illinois</u>, grades of 2.0 for general education and curricular courses are required.</p> <p>“College and Combined GPA. Students must earn a cumulative grade-point average of 2.00 (C) or better in all coursework taken on this campus applying to their LAS degree. Students who take off-campus courses must also earn a minimum "combined" GPA of 2.00 (C) or better when transfer grades are averaged with LAS grades. All Secondary Education majors must achieve a minimum 2.50 in these cumulative GPAs.</p> <p>Curricular GPA. Students must meet minimum academic performance standards in their major. Students must earn a cumulative GPA of 2.00 (C) or better in all courses taken on this campus included in their major GPA. Students who take off-campus courses used in their major must also earn a minimum "combined" GPA of 2.00 (C) or better when transfer grades in their major are averaged with LAS grades included in their major GPA. Some departments require a higher cumulative GPA for graduation. All Secondary Education majors must earn a 2.50 GPA in all courses in the major taken on this campus.”</p> <p>To maintain the integrity of our programs, which are comparable to those at peer institutions, we must bring the implementation policy in line with current degree requirements.</p>
<p>Description of action/changes you would like to see implemented and why:</p>	<p>I am recommending that there be a minimum campus standard for completing degree requirements at the University of Maryland. By implementing such a minimum standard it will mean that many academic units across the campus will not have to submit degree requirement program proposal changes to their majors in FY13. This will significantly reduce the number of program proposals that departmental, college/school and campus PCC Committees would have to review.</p> <p>For those academic units who have a degree requirement of a C grade in every course which is a major degree requirement that will automatically change to a C- on July 1, 2012, the following policy is being proposed:</p>

	<p>All students must earn a C (2.0) cumulative grade point average in all courses used to satisfy major degree requirements. The minimum grade for any required course is a C-.</p> <p>Note: Major degree requirements may exceed this minimum requirement as is the case in some academic units across the campus.</p>
Suggestions for how your proposal could be put into practice:	<p>The Campus Senate would pass the grading policy suggested above and direct implementation for Fall 2012.</p>
Additional Information:	

Please send your completed form and any supporting documents to senate-admin@umd.edu or University of Maryland Senate Office, 1100 Marie Mount Hall, College Park, MD 20742-7541. Thank you!