Review of the Interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (Senate Document #20-21-38)

TO	**Darryll J. Pines	President**
FROM	**Ellen D. Williams	Chair, University Senate**

I am pleased to forward the accompanying legislation for your consideration and approval. John Lea-Cox, Chair of the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee, presented the committee's proposal on Review of the Interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (Senate Document #20-21-38), which the University Senate approved at its meeting on September 8, 2021. Please inform the Senate of your decision and any administrative action related to your conclusion.

Approved: *[signature]*

Date: **09-10-2021**

Darryll J. Pines
President

Copies of this approval and the accompanying legislation will be forwarded to:

Jennifer King Rice, Senior Vice President and Provost
Reka Montfort, Executive Secretary and Director, University Senate
Michael Poterala, Vice President and General Counsel
Dylan Baker, Interim Associate Vice President for Finance and Personnel
John Bertot, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs
Elizabeth Beise, Associate Provost for Academic Planning & Programs
Rhonda Smith, Acting Director, Division of Academic Affairs
Adrian Cornelius, University Registrar
Bill Cohen, Associate Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies
Jeffrey Hollingsworth, Vice President and Chief Information Officer
John Lea-Cox, Chair, APAS Committee

Review of the Interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy

PRESENTED BY	John Lea-Cox, Chair
REVIEW DATES	SEC – August 26, 2021 │ SENATE – September 8, 2021
VOTING METHOD	In a single vote
RELEVANT POLICY/DOCUMENT	III-6.20(A) – University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts
NECESSARY APPROVALS	Senate, President

ISSUE

In January 2021, the Senate leadership and Provost Rankin asked the SEC to consider a proposal to revise University policy and practice in order to better serve the University community, both in times of emergency and in normal circumstances. They also emphasized the importance of putting these provisions in place prior to the start of the Spring 2021 semester.

The SEC reviewed the proposed revision to the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (III-6.20[A]) to change the Pass minimum grade equivalent from a "D-" to a "C-" and the proposed Emergency Pass/Fail Guidelines that could be invoked by the President and Provost during any type of emergency. Following consultations with key administrators, a review of peer institution research, and extensive deliberation, the SEC recommended that the policy be amended as proposed and the proposed guidelines be approved. The SEC acted on behalf of the Senate to approve the amendment to the policy and the guidelines on January 21, 2021, prior to the start of the Spring 2021 semester. The amendment to the policy and the guidelines were subsequently approved by the President on January 25, 2021 on an interim basis pending Senate review, and were provided to the Senate as an information item at its February 9, 2021 meeting (Senate Document #20-21-32; Senate Document #20-21-33).

The SEC also approved a motion to charge the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee with separate reviews of the interim policy and the emergency guidelines to include engagement of the campus community and the Senate before the policy and guidelines would be formally codified. After concerns were raised by the Office of the Registrar related to the application of the "W" grading symbol and following feedback from Interim Provost Wylie that the committee should consider the impact of the change of the Pass minimum to a "C-" and whether the change resulted in any unintended consequences, the Senate leadership amended the existing charge to the committee on March 12, 2021 and agreed to charge it with a separate review of the emergency guidelines following the APAS Committee's review of the interim policy.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Academic Procedures & Standards Committee recommends that the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy be revised as shown immediately following this report.

The Academic Procedures & Standards Committee recommends that the effective date of the approved revised policy be January 24, 2022.

COMMITTEE WORK

The APAS Committee began its review of the charge (Appendix 1) at its meeting on February 1, 2021, and subsequently reviewed an updated charge dated March 12, 2021. The committee reviewed the SEC's action to recommend the amendment to the Pass minimum grade in January 2021 (Senate Document #20-21-32), and reviewed Pass minimum grade equivalents at Big 10 and other peer institutions. APAS consulted with representatives of the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and the Office of the Registrar throughout its review. It also consulted with the Division of Information Technology and the Office of General Counsel.

The APAS Committee reviewed data from the Office of the Registrar on grade distributions over the past few semesters, so the committee could better understand how the emergency measures to institute a pass/fail grading method in Spring 2020 compared with use of the pass/fail method in other semesters. The committee also considered information on the impact of the pass/fail grading method on transfer students. The APAS Committee consulted with the Division of Information Technology on the technical difficulties and requirements of the change in the Pass minimum grade equivalent and the level of effort that would be required for any additional modifications.

APAS reviewed information on the Pass minimum grade equivalent at Big 10 and other peer institutions, as well as information on emergency measures taken by institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During its review, APAS received feedback from administrators and faculty on the impact of the change from a Pass minimum of "D-" to "C-" by engaging with the Undergraduate Academic Programs (UGAP) Committee and the Undergraduate Programs Advising Committee (UPAC). The APAS Committee also consulted with the Senate Student Affairs Committee to gather student perspectives on the change of the Pass minimum grade equivalent.

ALTERNATIVES

The Senate could choose not to accept the recommendations. However, the University would lose an opportunity to clarify the application of the "W" grading symbol.

RISKS

There are no risks to the University in adopting these recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no known financial implications to adopting these recommendations.

Review of the Interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy

2020-2021 Committee Members

John Lea-Cox (Chair)
Lindsey Barr (Graduate Student)
John Buchner (Faculty)
William Cohen (Ex-Officio Provost's Rep)
Linda Coleman (Faculty)
Nicole Coomber (Faculty)
Adrian Cornelius (Ex-Officio - University Registrar)
Alice Donlan (Staff)
Lee Friedman (Faculty)
Shannon Gundy (Ex-Officio - Director of Undergraduate Admissions)
Steve Halperin (Faculty)

Kayleigh Hasson (Undergraduate Student)
Lisa Kiely (Ex-Officio - Undergraduate Studies)
Marilee Lindemann (Faculty)
Kellie Rolstad (Faculty)
Anne Smithson (Faculty)
Monica VanKlompenberg (Faculty)

Date of Submission

August 2021

BACKGROUND

As a means to address student needs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Spring 2020, the University moved to an all pass/fail grading model as the default while allowing students to choose to receive letter grades in specific courses, and removed all pass/fail restrictions for major and General Education requirements. The measures that the University put in place that semester were intended to be a one-time emergency response to the immediate issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Fall 2020, the University returned to its standard grading method and pass/fail guidelines. However, the extended duration of the continuing pandemic was not something that could have been foreseen. Students provided extensive feedback about the continued impact of the pandemic, which they believed required further accommodations and a return to some of the pass/fail provisions provided in Spring 2020.

In response to this feedback from the University community, Provost Rankin met with the Senate leadership to discuss these concerns and potential options associated with the pass/fail grading method. The Senate leadership provided suggestions that could both resolve concerns associated with the validity of a Pass grade and establish standard emergency guidelines that could be invoked by the President and Provost regardless of the type of emergency.

In January 2021, the Senate leadership and Provost Rankin asked the SEC to consider a proposal to revise University policy and practice in order to better serve the University community, both in times of emergency and in normal circumstances. They also emphasized the importance of putting these provisions in place prior to the start of the Spring 2021 semester.

The SEC reviewed the proposed revision to the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (III-6.20[A]) to change the Pass minimum grade equivalent from a "D-" to a "C-" and the proposed Emergency Pass/Fail Guidelines that could be invoked by the President and Provost during any type of emergency. Following consultations with

key administrators, a review of peer institution research, and extensive deliberation, the SEC recommended that the policy be amended as proposed and the proposed guidelines be approved. The SEC acted on behalf of the Senate to approve the amendment to the policy and the guidelines on January 21, 2021, prior to the start of the Spring 2021 semester. The amendment to the policy and the guidelines were subsequently approved by the President on January 25, 2021 on an interim basis pending Senate review, and were provided to the Senate as an information item at its February 9, 2021 meeting (Senate Document #20-21-32; Senate Document #20-21-33). The SEC also approved a motion to charge the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee with separate reviews of the interim policy and the emergency guidelines to include engagement of the campus community and the Senate before the policy and guidelines would be formally codified. Following feedback from Interim Provost Wylie, the Senate leadership amended the existing charge to the committee and agreed to charge it with a separate review of the emergency guidelines following the APAS Committee's review of the interim policy.

CURRENT PRACTICE

Prior to the revisions that led to the interim policy, the Pass minimum grade equivalent in the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (III-6.20[A]) was set at a grade of "D-". A grade of D+,D, or D- denotes borderline understanding of the subject, marginal performance, and it does not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree. At the time, use of the pass/fail system was limited because of concerns that over-use of the pass/fail grading method would adversely affect students' progress towards mastery of their chosen major or could do real harm to a student's academic progress. Raising the Pass minimum grade equivalent from a "D-" to a "C-" was intended to mitigate those concerns and the fear that accreditation boards, graduate programs, or employers may not be willing to accept multiple semesters of P grades. The change to a "C-" was also intended to provide more opportunities for using the Pass/Fail grading system for Limited Enrollment Programs (LEPs) and hierarchical course series, and to align the University with the majority of Big 10 and other peer institutions.

COMMITTEE WORK

The APAS Committee began its review of the charge (Appendix 1) at its meeting on February 1, 2021, and subsequently reviewed an updated charge dated March 12, 2021 (Appendix 2) after concerns were raised by the Office of the Registrar related to the application of the "W" grading symbol and following feedback from Interim Provost Wylie that the committee should consider the impact of the change of the Pass minimum to a "C-" and whether the change resulted in any unintended consequences.

The committee reviewed the SEC's action to recommend the amendment to the Pass minimum grade in January 2021 (Senate Document #20-21-32), and reviewed Pass minimum grade equivalents at Big 10 and other peer institutions. APAS consulted with representatives of the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and the Office of the Registrar throughout its review. It also consulted with the Division of Information Technology and the Office of General Counsel.

Early in its review, the committee met with representatives from the Office of the Registrar to review data on grade distributions over the past few semesters, so the committee could better understand how the emergency measures to institute a pass/fail grading method in Spring 2020 compared with use of the pass/fail method in other semesters. The committee learned that in Spring 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, 30 percent of undergraduate student grades were recorded using the

Report for Senate Document #20-21-38Error! Reference source not found.

2 of 5

pass/fail grading method. That rate reflected a 29 percent increase in students who opted for pass/fail grading in the same semester in 2019, pre-pandemic. However, it is important to note that in Spring 2020 all students were automatically opted into pass/fail for all of their classes and were asked to opt out if they preferred to receive letter grades. In Fall 2020, when the emergency measures related to pass/fail grading were not in place, the percentage of undergraduate student grades that were recorded as pass/fail was very low. When the emergency measures were put in place in Spring 2020, graded courses showed a less than one percent instance of "D" grades, whereas in Fall 2020, 2 percent of grades were recorded as "D" grades. Spring 2020 also showed the same rate of "A" grades in 400-level courses as compared to the same semester pre-pandemic in Spring 2019. In Fall 2020, "A" grades were 9 percent more prevalent than the same semester in 2019, which could reflect an implementation of the direction to faculty to be more understanding with their students, or may show an impact of different expectations or assessment methods in courses held online.

The Registrar's Office also provided information to the committee on the impact of the pass/fail grading method on transfer students. Students who transfer into the University will not be negatively impacted by the change in the Pass minimum grade equivalent. Students transferring from a Maryland public institution may transfer credits for courses where they earn a "D-" or higher. For students who transfer from a private institution or from an institution outside of the state of Maryland, the University only accepts credits for courses graded as Pass where the equivalent grade is a "C-" or higher. With the change of the Pass to a "C-" grade equivalent, there is an advantage for students when they transfer out because other institutions will be more willing to accept their credits with the higher standard.

APAS consulted with the Division of Information Technology on the technical difficulties and requirements of the change in the Pass minimum grade equivalent. DIT explained that the effort to change the Pass minimum required modifications to the Student Information System and other University databases, but the modifications were able to be made in time for Spring 2020 grades to be assigned. DIT cautioned that additional modifications to the policy to change the Pass minimum grade equivalent would require additional modifications to SIS, and would need time to implement. However, DIT faces no issues in implementing the current interim policy with the Pass minimum grade equivalent of a "C-".

APAS reviewed information on the Pass minimum grade equivalent at Big 10 and other peer institutions (Appendix 3), as well as information on emergency measures taken by institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Institutions use different terminology for their pass/fail grading methods, but after review, the committee found that the majority of the Big 10 institutions have a Pass minimum grade equivalent of a "C" or "C-" or better. These institutions include Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Penn State, Purdue, Rutgers, and Wisconsin. A few institutions use a grade of "D" or "D-" as the Pass minimum, including Indiana, Iowa, and Ohio State. Many institutions implemented temporary or emergency policies for the academic year or semesters affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, these temporary or emergency measures focused primarily on the regulations related to how many courses could be taken pass/fail and the deadlines associated with deciding on the pass/fail option, rather than on changing the Pass minimum. Most institutions seemed to retain the Pass minimum that they had in place prior to the pandemic.

During its review, APAS received feedback from administrators and faculty on the impact of the change from a Pass minimum of "D-" to "C-." The Undergraduate Academic Programs (UGAP) Committee shared its perspective that a Pass minimum of "C-" retains the ability for students to explore courses widely without harming their GPA, and ensures that they earn a P only if they do

Report for Senate Document #20-21-38Error! Reference source not found.

3 of 5

satisfactory work. UGAP noted that the pass/fail grading method can be useful to students returning to the University after a long break who need to regain skills with low risk, or to students who need elective credits but do not need a high grade. UGAP also noted that a Pass may be used in the resolution of an arbitrary and capricious grading case. The Undergraduate Programs Advising Committee (UPAC) stressed the importance of retaining the restrictions around the pass/fail grading method; the restrictions are meant to ensure that coursework is aimed at degree attainment and to prevent students from taking courses that do not help them towards that goal.

The APAS Committee also consulted with the Senate Student Affairs Committee to gather student perspectives on the change of the Pass minimum grade equivalent. The Student Affairs Committee had positive feedback on the change of the Pass minimum, noting that the change could lead to increased preparedness for the next level of courses. The Student Affairs Committee also noted that those who opt for the pass/fail grading method as a means of avoiding the rigor and workload of the course will, with the change, need to put in the work to understand at least core aspects of the course. Student Affairs Committee members also reported that the change to the Pass minimum has not affected their choices in the types of classes they select, and they feel that faculty and advisors have been very supportive in explaining the different options and their impacts during the pandemic, though they suggested that more guidance on how the pass/fail grading method can affect future career and graduate school opportunities would be helpful.

Despite its support of the change, the Student Affairs Committee did note that the change may impact a student's ability to explore new topics and ideas. The pass/fail grading method has typically benefited students who are interested in exploring new topics or learning new methods that are outside of their specific course of study. It allows students to focus more on the content and on what in particular they are seeking to learn, rather than on specific assignments or grading events. The Student Affairs Committee noted that the change from a "D-" to a "C-" may limit this ability, in that it raises the expectations for such students and requires them to focus more on their grade in the course. The committee noted that clearer guidance that differentiates between the audit option for courses and the pass/fail grading method may be helpful in clarifying the options students have to explore new topics and ideas. There was also a general concern expressed by members of the Student Affairs Committee about the upcoming reversion of the deadline for choosing the Pass/Fail option in Fall 2021 to the standard period of ten-days after the start of the semester. Student Affairs Committee members noted that the ability to delay this decision until Reading Day had, in fact, decreased their anxiety about the choice, especially because instructors had appeared to increase the expectations and rigor of online classes during the Spring 2021 semester.

In March 2021, following discussion between the Senate Leadership and the administration, the APAS Committee received a revised charge, asking that it also consider an issue with the grading symbol "W" that had been brought to its attention. The Office of the Registrar identified a long-standing issue with the wording of the policy related to the "W," which indicates that the "W" is used when a student withdraws from a course "by the end of the schedule adjustment period." In practice, the "W" is not applied unless a student withdraws after the schedule adjustment period; the schedule adjustment period is meant to allow students the freedom to add and drop courses without penalty. A review of past Senate action on the policy indicates that the error had been in place in the policy language since the policy's inception. At its meeting on March 22, 2021, after discussion of the issues involved with the "W," the committee agreed that this was an oversight in the policy language that should be revised in the course of its work.

In its charge, the APAS Committee was asked to consider whether there are any unintended consequences related to the recent amendment to change the Pass minimum grade equivalent

from a D- to a C-. In its amended charge, the committee was also asked to consider the impact of the amendment to change the Pass minimum grade equivalent on the undergraduate student experience. The APAS Committee found there were minor unintended consequences related to the impacts on transfer students, as well as on advisors and others who need to communicate the new policy to students, but no major concerns were raised related to unintended consequences in the course of its review. In its discussions, the APAS Committee did acknowledge that the higher Pass minimum may in a small way impact the ability of students to explore and test their capabilities. With the Pass at a D-, students were free to explore widely without harming their GPA or having to commit much effort to the courses themselves. However, APAS agreed that there is a higher benefit to ensuring that students who pass a course truly understand the content in some way, and found that receiving a D- does not demonstrate adequate understanding in order to pass the course. The committee found that the higher bar for a Pass would push students to put in more effort, and would prevent students from moving on to the next level of coursework without a solid foundation to support that work.

After due consideration, the APAS Committee voted to affirm its approval of the change in the Pass minimum grade equivalent from a "D-" to a "C-" at its meeting on April 16, 2021. The committee also voted to recommend a revision to the policy to clarify that the "W" grading symbol would be used when a student withdraws after the schedule adjustment period, and to recommend that the policy revision go into effect at the beginning of a semester to provide consistency to current students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Academic Procedures & Standards Committee recommends that the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy be revised as shown immediately following this report.

The Academic Procedures & Standards Committee recommends that the effective date of the approved revised policy be January 24, 2022.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 — Original Charge from the Senate Executive Committee
Appendix 2 — Amended Charge Dated March 12, 2021
Appendix 3 — Peer Institution Data

III-6.20(A) **UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND GRADING SYMBOLS AND NOTATIONS USED ON ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPTS**
(Approved by the President August 1, 1991; Amended June 8, 2001; Amended effective fall 2012; Technical Amendments May 4, 2016; Amended and approved on an interim basis by the President effective January 25, 2021, pending University Senate Action)

The following symbols are used on students' permanent records:

A+, A, A-	Denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship. 4.0 quality points per semester hour for the grades of "A+" and "A" 3.7 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "A-"
B+, B, B-	Denotes good mastery of the subject and good scholarship. 3.3 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "B+" 3.0 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "B" 2.7 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "B-"
C+, C, C-	Denotes acceptable mastery of the subject. 2.3 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "C+" 2.0 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "C" 1.7 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "C-"
D+, D, D-	Denotes borderline understanding of the subject, marginal performance, and it does not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree. 1.3 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "D+" 1.0 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "D" 0.7 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "D-"
F	Denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance. 0.0 quality points per semester hour for the grade of "F"
S	This is a department option mark which may be used to denote satisfactory performance. This is not included in computation of cumulative average.
W	Used to indicate withdrawal from a course by **after** the end of the schedule adjustment period. This is not included in computation of cumulative average.
XF	Used to indicate failure due to academic dishonesty. Treated in the same way as "F" for the purposes of cumulative average.

Aud	A student may register to audit a course which has been designated as available under the audit option where space is available. This does not imply attendance or any other effort in the course.
Pass/Fail	The mark of "P" is a student option mark, equivalent to a grade of C- or better. The student must inform the registrar's office of the selection of this option by the end of the schedule adjustment period.
Incomplete	The mark of "I" is an exceptional mark that is an instructor option. It is only given to a student whose work has been qualitatively satisfactory, when, because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control, he or she has been unable to complete some small portion of the work of the course. In no case will the mark "I" be recorded for a student who has not completed the major portion of the work of the course.
Repeat	For information on the University's repeat guidelines for undergraduate students, consult the Undergraduate Catalog. For graduate students, departments may permit a student to repeat a course in an effort to earn a better grade. Whether higher or lower, the most recent grade will be used in computing the grade point average. All grades for graduate students remain as part of the student's permanent record.
Duplicate Course	This is used to indicate two courses with the same course content. The second course is counted in cumulative totals unless an exception is made by the dean.
Non-app	Used by the dean of the receiving college in cases of transfer from one college to another at UMCP to indicate courses in the previous academic program which are not applicable to the new program.
Excl Crd	Excluded credit is noted when academic clemency has been granted.

UNIVERSITY SENATE | **CHARGE**

Charged: January 29, 2021 | Deadline: November 5, 2021

Review of the Interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (Senate Document #20-21-34)
Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee | Chair: John Lea-Cox

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) and Senate Chair Dugan request that the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee review the interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (III-6.20[A]).

Specifically, it asks that you:

1. Review the Amendment to the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (Senate Document #20-21-32).

2. Review the interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (III-6.20[A])

3. Review Big10 and other peer institution information regarding Pass minimum grade equivalents.

4. Consult with a representative of the Office of the Senior Vice President & Provost.

5. Consult with a representative of the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

6. Consult with a representative of the Office of the Registrar.

7. Consider whether there are any unintended consequences related to the recent amendment to change the Pass minimum grade equivalent from a D- to a C-.

8. Consult with the Office of General Counsel on any proposed policy revisions.

9. If appropriate, recommend whether additional guidance or revisions to associated policies or guidelines are necessary as a result of the recent revision to the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy.

We ask that you submit a report to the Senate Office no later than **November 5, 2021**. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.

UNIVERSITY SENATE　　　　　　　**CHARGE**

Charged: March 12, 2021　|　Deadline: November 5, 2021

Review of the Interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (Senate Document #20-21-38)
Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee | Chair: John Lea-Cox

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) and Senate Chair Dugan request that the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee review the interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (III-6.20[A]).

Specifically, it asks that you:

1. Review the Amendment to the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (Senate Document #20-21-32).

2. Review the interim University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (III-6.20[A])

3. Review Big10 and other peer institution information regarding Pass minimum grade equivalents.

4. Review the attached memo from the Office of the Registrar requesting a correction to the "W" description.

5. Consult with a representative of the Office of the Senior Vice President & Provost.

6. Consult with a representative of the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

7. Consult with a representative of the Office of the Registrar.

8. Consult with a representative from the Division of Information Technology.

9. Consider the impact of the amendment to change the Pass minimum grade equivalent from a D- to a C- on the undergraduate student experience.

10. Consider whether the description of a "W" should be revised to reflect the long-standing practice of when a "W" is applicable.

11. Consider whether there are any unintended consequences related to the recent amendment to change the Pass minimum grade equivalent from a D- to a C-.

12. Consult with the Office of General Counsel on any proposed policy revisions.

13. If appropriate, recommend whether additional guidance or revisions to associated policies or guidelines are necessary as a result of the recent revision to the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy.

14. Recommend whether a C- as the Pass minimum grade equivalent is appropriate, and recommend whether any revisions to the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy are necessary.

We ask that you submit a report to the Senate Office no later than **November 5, 2021**. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.

Attachment

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

Mitchell Building
First Floor
College Park, Maryland 20742
301.314.8240 TEL 301.314.9568 FAX

MEMORANDUM

To: Laura Dugan
        Chair of the University Senate

From: Adrian Cornelius
        University Registrar

Date: February 25, 2021

Re.:   **Request for Additional Amendment to Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy**

Upon reviewing the university's Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts Policy (III-6.20(A) to ensure the appropriate operationalization the "Pass/Fail" portion that was approved on an interim basis starting this Spring 2021, the Office of the Registrar came across an error (most likely a typo) in another portion of the Grading Symbols Policy that needs to be corrected. This relates to the "W" grading symbol.

The current description for the "W" grading symbol says:
*W - Used to indicate withdrawal from a course **by** the end of the schedule adjustment period. This is not included in computation of cumulative average.*

The correct verbiage ought to be:
*W - Used to indicate withdrawal from a course **after** the end of the schedule adjustment period. This is not included in computation of cumulative average.*

As highlighted in red above, this request for correction relates to one word in the description of the "W" symbol, i.e. changing "by" to "after."

The university's student records and academic transcripts have been reflecting the "W" symbol for course drops after the schedule adjustment period for decades and this practice is correctly articulated in our AcademicCatalog and in other resources on the Office of the Registrar website.

Moreover, our students don't receive (and never have received) a "W" symbol on their record when they drop a course by the end of the schedule adjustment period.

Given that the APAS is currently in deliberations on the "Pass/Fail" portion of (III-6.20(A), I would like to recommend that an amendment to the description of the "W" symbol be added to the current charge to correct this decades-old "typo." There is no impact beyond the one-word change in the policy, as all of our practices, systems coding, and stakeholders' understanding that the "W" symbol happens after schedule adjustment are aligned with this requested correction, as is clearly articulated in all our other guiding documentations.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of this request.

Appendix 3 - Peer Institution Research

	Maryland	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Michigan State	Minnesota	Nebraska	Ohio State: AU20	Ohio State: SP21	Pensylvania State	Purdue	Rutgers	Wisconsin
PASS or SATISFACTORY GRADE EQUIVALENCE	D- or higher	C- or higher to earn Credit.	D- or higher	D- or higher	C- or higher	1.0 or higher	C- or higher = S; anything lower = N	C or higher = P	PA=D or higher	PE=D or D+ and is an Emergency Pass (At OSU, we use E for F/failing grades so they did not want to start the emergency grade with E.)	COVID-specific options include SAT = C or better, V = D, Z = F	P = Pass equivalent to C- or higher	Pass = C or higher No Credit = D or F	C or higher required for a grade of S
Is this part of the regular policy or an emergency/temprary policy	Regular policy	Temporary Academic Policy Modification due to COVID	Regular policy	Regular policy (no special grading policy for Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 due to COVID)	Temporary policy for AY 20-21	Temporary AY 20-21	Regular policy (see temp policy below)	Regular policy	PA/NP is a regular policy that we revised for AU20 (there was also a different variation for SP20, but nothing for SU20)	new emergency/temp policy. there has already been a request to allow in SU21 as well	Emergency/ Temporary policy for Spring 2021.	Regular policy	Emergency policy	Regular policy
Notes	Modified by Interim Policy prior to start of Spring 2021 semester	The temporary policy impacts deadlines and whether Credit/No-Credit options are available for certain course; the Credit minimum grade equivalent was C- or higher in the Student Code already.			Unclear, but no indication that the Credit minimum was lower than C- prior to the temporary policy.	Michigan State uses a numerical system for grading. It seems as if the S/NS option was provided for the first time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.					This is in addition to an existing pass/fail policy. Contacts say that the pass/fail policy too restricted to be useful to students, so the Senate is considering permanent changes.	There was a COVID-related policy change for Pass/NotPass, but the Pass minimum remained a C- or better.	The Pass minimim was in effect prior to the temporary policy changes as a C or higher.	