

**Proposition: 15-18/19**

**Title:** A Proposal to Change the NMSU Grading System by Removing Point Value From Plus/Minus Grades

**Date Submitted:** February 25, 2019

**Sponsor(s):** Rosendorf (A&S), Corran (DACC), Prentice (Education), Lamonica (A&S), Campbell (NTT), Arroyos (Education), Morrow (Ex-Officio)

**Proposed Committee:** University Affairs

**Assigned Committee:**

**Prior Approvals:**

**Proposal:** Change the NMSU grading system by eliminating the Fractional Grading Policy that was implemented in Summer 2013, and amend the NMSU Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs “University Grading System” section where it currently reads:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Grade points per Unit of Credit</u>
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-	2.0
D+, D, D-	1.0
F	0

Replacing it with the following grading scale to be utilized by all instructors, departments, and colleges:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Grade points per Unit of Credit</u>
A+, A, A-	4.0

B+, B, B-	3.0
C+, C, C-	2.0
D+, D, D-	1.0
F	0

**Implementation:** The proposed changes will go into effect Fall 2019 and be reflected in the NMSU Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. It will affect all grades earned in all classes by students in all catalog years from that point onwards. This will give all units time to prepare for the changes. This proposal would affect GPA calculation for all grades assigned following its implementation date; courses taken before its implementation would be unaffected.

**Rationale:** The grading policy currently in the NMSU Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog has been subject of much debate and disagreement from the time it was first implemented over five years ago. This proposal is to remove the arbitrary varying point values for grades assigned the same letter. This proposal will still allow for the assignment of chromatic variants (+/- grades), which had been given to students for decades before they were assigned different point values.

**We provide the following reasons for this change:**

The January 2019 Grading Analysis conducted by the Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA) shows that more students are being harmed by the current fractional grading policy than are benefitting from it. The OIA Student Semester GPA Calculation analysis shows that a whole grading system would have benefitted more students than the current system. For example, 13.2% of Graduate students (over 200 students) would have had a higher GPA if NMSU used a traditional/whole grading system in Spring 2018.

Departments and individual professors are able to opt out of using the current fractional system, and many do. This means one professor could use a whole grading system and another could use a fractional grading system, even if they are both teaching the same course. This could result in students receiving different values factored into their GPA though they may receive the exact same scores on assignments or exert the same amount of effort.

The system currently in place has not been proven to “motivate the best students,” as it was supposed to. It provides no incentive for students to strive for top grades. For A and A+ students, this system serves only to lower their GPA,

**Questions and Concerns:**

- (1) Will students existing grades be recalculated?

No. This system will be implemented in the Fall 2019. Grades earned before then will remain the same.

(2) What will be the estimated financial impact of implementing the standard system?

A minimal one-time cost to the University Registrar's office for the design and order of new transcript paper.

(3) What peer institutions currently have the NMSU fractional grading system? What institution uses a whole grade system?

Colorado State University has a very similar policy, but with different exact values assigned to each grade on their GPA scale. No peer institution has the exact fractional grading system currently used by NMSU. Conversely, six of our 15 peer institutions (University of Arizona, Texas Tech University, Oklahoma State University, Kansas State University, University of Idaho, University of Texas at El Paso) use a traditional/whole grading system.

(4) When did the current policy go into effect at NMSU?

The policy was passed by the NMSU Faculty Senate in Spring 2011 and implemented in Fall 2013.