

February 20, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mānoa Deans and Directors
Department Chairs and Program Directors

FROM: Karl E. Kim
Interim Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: ◆ Online Submission of Grades
◆ Plus and Minus Grading
◆ Withdrawal from Classes

I am happy to report to you that the first-time submission of grades online by faculty at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa through the Banner Student Information System was largely successful. More than 68,000 grades (96% of the total) were submitted by the December 22, 2003 deadline. By January 1 only 1% of the grades for Fall 2003 were still outstanding. While faculty have reported to us various glitches and difficulties with the new technology, I want to express our appreciation to all the administrative staff, secretaries, and others on the Mānoa campus who helped to ensure access to computers, Banner compliant web browsers, and training to implement this conversion to online grade submission. We are continuing our evaluation. Please do send to me (vcaa@hawaii.edu) other issues and concerns with regard to Banner and the online submission of grades.

The plus and minus grading system implemented in Fall 2003 was supported by faculty as a more precise and effective way to measure and give feedback on academic performance. As you may recall, the Mānoa Faculty Senate passed a resolution supporting this change, and it was discussed throughout the campus. We decided to coordinate the implementation of this change with the adoption of the Banner student information system.

We have received feedback from students and faculty on our grading policies. Some of the concerns relate to the differences in grading policies across campus. Comments from groups including the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i (ASUH), the Academic Procedures Committee, the Council of Academic Advisors, and members of the Faculty Senate indicate that faculty and students need additional information about the plus and minus grading policy. Some on our campus did not realize that a C- is not a passing grade for some courses. Some students also did not know whether or not faculty would be applying plus and minus grades in their courses.

Grading is a faculty matter. Faculty use different approaches to evaluating student academic performance. The grading policies and practices, moreover, vary across our colleges and schools. Faculty may set certain prerequisites for entry into their courses, and schools/colleges differ in terms of admission and degree requirements (see the attached Course Requirements chart). In reviewing these differences with both the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Policy and Planning (CAPP) and the Academic Procedures Committee, we have all agreed that at this time, each school or college must clarify and provide information about grading policies and grade requirements, especially for grade requirements that are different from other schools and colleges on campus. At some future date, we might decide to initiate an effort to standardize policies and practices across campus. Such an endeavor is likely to entail much more consultation, discussion, and deliberation with affected units.

We ask that you inform all faculty and students of the grading policies in your unit and share this information with others across campus.

Grading Policy

- The grading policy, including whether or not the plus and minus system is used, should be described in the course syllabus.
- The grading policy (i.e., the use of plus and minus) should be applied consistently within the course.

C- Grade

- A C- (1.7) is not a C (2.0). Please refer to the grade point chart below. Therefore, a C- is not a passing grade for a course that requires a “C or better” grade.
- After consultation with CAPP, the Course Repeat Policy has been amended. Students may repeat any course in which they receive a C- or below.

Plus and Minus Grade Points

A+ = 4.0	B+ = 3.3	C+ = 2.3	D+ = 1.3	F = 0.0
A = 4.0	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	D = 1.0	
A- = 3.7	B- = 2.7	C- = 1.7	D- = 0.7	

D- Grade

- Unless noted otherwise in your unit’s information in the UHM Catalog, a D- (0.7) is considered a minimally passing grade for all courses including courses fulfilling major requirements. Otherwise, a D- will be accepted as a passing grade. Graduate programs usually require C- grades or higher.
- A grade of D (1.0) or higher is required for any course that is used to fulfill any General Education requirement. A D- (0.7) grade for courses fulfilling the general education requirement will not count.

In addition to the course syllabus, grading policies should be described in the catalog, websites, and/or FAQ sheets. Students who received a D- in a general education course, or a C- in a course in their major or other required courses, should be encouraged to meet with their advisor to discuss their academic record.

Withdrawal from Classes

A related issue raised by ASUH involves withdrawal from classes. Students have indicated that some faculty do not give consent to withdraw after the late registration date. While such practices are consistent with our current withdrawal policy (see below), students and faculty should all be aware of these policies.

The withdrawal policy is described in the UHM catalog. Relevant aspects of the policy include:

- Students may drop a course through the sixth day of instruction (first week of classes) without notation on their records.
- Although colleges and schools differ in their policies, in general, a course may be dropped from the seventh day of instruction up to the Friday of the ninth week of instruction with the consent of the instructor and the approval of the student's college or school dean.
- After the sixth day of instruction, students withdrawing from courses will have grades of W noted in their records.
- After the ninth week, no withdrawals are permitted except for unusual or extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student.

Thank you for your cooperation in informing your faculty and students. If you have further questions, please contact Dr. Helene Sokugawa in our office at 956-9396 or helene@hawaii.edu.

Attachment

- c: Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor Denise Konan
Council of Academic Advisors
Academic Procedures Committee
SEC Chair Mary Tiles
Institutional Analyst Helene Sokugawa
Catalog Coordinator Diane Nakashima
ASUH President Vaimana Conner
ASUH Academic Affairs Chair Mea Aloha Shimizu