

**Senate Committee on Academic Procedures**  
**Queen's Grading System**  
Submission to Senate – April 2010

Last May, Senate approved an official grading system comprising letter grades, with pluses and minuses, grade points, and grade descriptors, to be implemented in May 2011.

- The specific grading scale included in the Senate submission was selected essentially because it was the most common in use in North America
- SCAP wanted to examine the choice of specific grading scale more carefully once the letter grade/GPA framework had been approved.

Over the Summer and Fall terms of 2009, the Office of the University Registrar completed an extensive review of grading scales in place across schools in Canada and the United States, as well as modeling of various grade point scales. Five grading scale options were selected that were thought to be most appropriate to Queen's. Before making a decision to convey to Senate, SCAP requested feedback on the options from the University community.

At its November 2009 meeting, SCAP expressed a preference for the first of the five scale options (the option reflected in the May 2009 submission to Senate) and on November 26 sent out a memo entitled "Queen's New Grading System" to Faculties, Schools, and Faculty Boards at Queen's to generate feedback and debate. The memo set out the preferred grading scale and gave brief reasons for its choice, noting the system met the objectives of not promoting grade inflation, ensuring the academic achievement of Queen's students would be fairly and competitively presented for external review and progression, and was the most common scale in use across North America. In late January 2010, substantial concern was voiced within the Faculty of Arts and Science Faculty Board and a further, more detailed, memo was circulated that provided more details on both the alternative grading scale options analyzed and the reasons for the preferred option.

Since that time, the University Registrar and Chair of SCAP attended several meetings of various Faculties and Schools to better understand the concerns and to help focus attention on adjusting to, and changing, academic decision rules that will be required in the shift to a new grading scheme. The raw data relating to student grades were also provided so that Faculties and Schoolsiv

The motion passed by SCAP on March 30, 2010 was as follows:

*That Queen's adopt the grading scale and set of non-evaluative grades set out in the memo from the Senate Committee on Academic Procedures (SCAP) to Faculty Boards on November 26, 2009, with the following changes and provisions:*

- i. The grade for the top of the scale is an A+ at a 4.3 grade point, with a percentage conversion scale of 90 to 100.*
- ii. An additional failure grade of FR (Failure with Review) is added, indicating that the failing grade is being reviewed and/or the student has the opportunity to write a supplemental exam to improve the grade.*
- iii. Faculties and Schools may use only a subset of the full set of grades and non-evaluative grades available if they wish, but need to inform SCAP of any change in the set of grades that they use.*
- iv. Grade descriptors will be established at the Faculty/School level. Faculties and Schools should submit the rubrics that they are using as descriptors to SCAP for information and keep SCAP informed if the descriptors are changed.*

*It is recognized that there may be transition issues as the grading system changes at Queen's, particularly for students who are in-progress during the change. SCAP urges instructors, departments, and Faculties/Schools to be sensitive to any potential impact from the grading change and to strive to ensure that continuing students are not disadvantaged by the changes.*

#### Queen's Grading Scale

