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TO: Emerson Morrow, ASNMSU President

FROM: Dacia Sedillo, University Registrar

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dacia Sedillo', written over the 'FROM:' line.

DATE: January 25, 2019

SUBJECT: Fractionated Grading Policy

As University Registrar, I support ASNMSU's intent to revisit the fractionated grading policy that was adopted at the beginning of the 2013/14 academic year. Based on five years of anecdotal evidence and data, as analyzed by the Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA), it is apparent that the current grade scale is the least favorable option for students. Deflated GPAs can negatively impact students financially, through the loss of, or failure to qualify for, academic merit scholarships. Lower GPAs can also impede students' ability to qualify for selective academic programs both internal and external to NMSU.

The OIA data analysis indicates the most beneficial revision would be to increase the value of an A+ and decrease the value of a C-. Coincidentally, that would also be the easiest change for the University Student Records Office to implement. However, changing the grade scale back to the straight A, B, C, D, F scale that existed prior to Summer 2013, would not be difficult to implement either. Any change to the current grading scale would result in a modest one-time cost. The Banner student information software would need to be slightly modified and tested prior to full implementation, and new transcript paper designed and ordered.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance or if you have any specific questions not addressed herein.

Grading Analysis

JANUARY 2019

NMSU Institutional Analysis

The logo for New Mexico State University, featuring the letters 'NM' in a large, bold, serif font above the words 'STATE' and 'UNIVERSITY' in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. The logo is set against a white background within a dark red square.

NM
STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

The grading analysis study compares three grading methodologies:

- Whole Grade Method (traditional method)
- 4.0 Fractional Grade Method (currently in use)
- 4.3 Fractional Grade Method (theoretical method)

Each grading method's effect on grade point average (GPA) calculation for the NMSU Las Cruces campus is demonstrated, given the grades assigned over a five-year period.

New Mexico State University (NMSU) began using the 4.0 Fractional Grade Method in Summer 2013. Prior to that, the Whole Grade Method for GPA calculation was used.

Notes:

- In the Whole Grade Method, +'s and -'s may appear on a transcript but do not have a positive or negative effect on GPA.
- The 4.3 Fractional GPA method is shown for comparison purpose only.

Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculation

Grade points assigned to each grade are presented in the following table.

Table 1: Grade Points by Method

Letter Grade	Grade Points per Unit of Credit		
	Whole Calculation	4.0 Fractional Calculation	4.3 Fractional Calculation
A+	4.0	4.0	4.3
A	4.0	4.0	4.0
A-	4.0	3.7	3.7
B+	3.0	3.3	3.3
B	3.0	3.0	3.0
B-	3.0	2.7	2.7
C+	2.0	2.3	2.3
C	2.0	2.0	2.0
C-	2.0	2.0	1.7
D+	1.0	1.0	1.3
D	1.0	1.0	1.0
D-	1.0	1.0	0.7
F	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Source: Banner Grade Code Maintenance Table*

Irrespective of the methodology used, the GPA calculation is as follows, $GPA =$

$$\frac{(A+Val)(A+Cr) + (AVal)(ACr) + (A-Val)(A-Cr) + (B+Val)(B+Cr) + (BVal)(BCr) + (B-Val)(B-Cr) + (C+Val)(C+Cr) + (CVal)(CCr) + (D+Val)(D+Cr) + (DVal)(DCr) + (D-Val)(D-Cr) + (FVal)(FCr)}{A+Cr + ACr + A-Cr + B+Cr + BCr + B-Cr + C+Cr + CCr + C-Cr + D+Cr + DCr + D-Cr + FCr}$$

where xxVal=GPA Point Value and xxCr=Credit Hours.

Thus, the calculation depends on both the point value assigned to each grade a student earns and the credit value of the class the student completed.

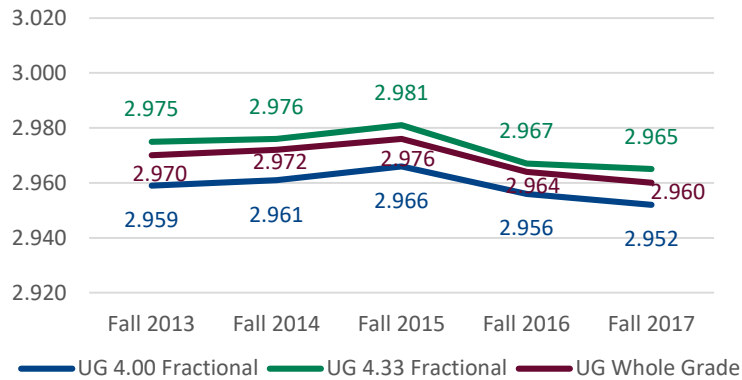
5 Year GPA Comparison



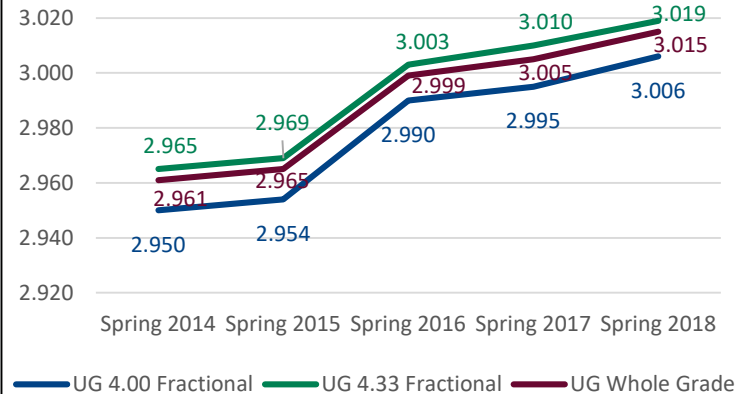
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Las Cruces Campus – Grading Methodology Comparison

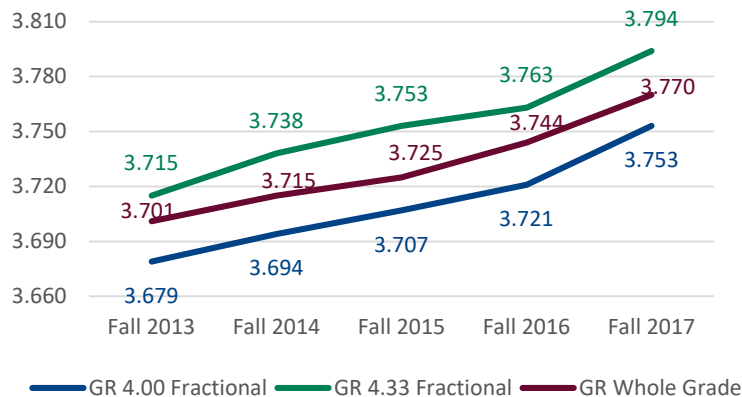
Undergraduate Fall Semester



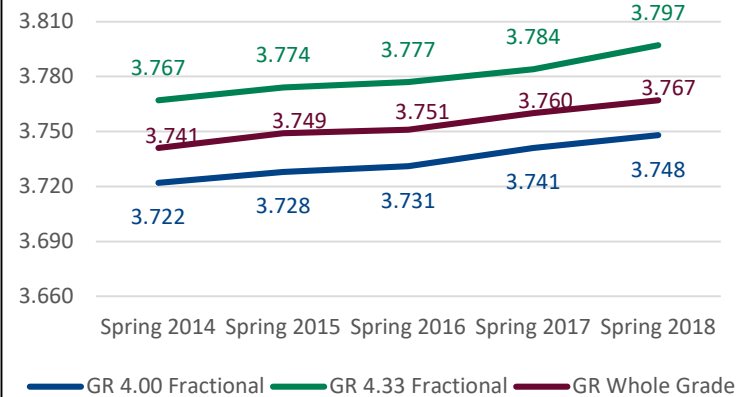
Undergraduate Spring Semester



Graduate Fall Semester



Graduate Spring Semester



Las Cruces Campus – Grading Methodology Comparison (Table Format)

		Whole Grade Calculation	4.0 Fractional Calculation	4.3 Fractional Calculation
Fall 2013	Undergraduate	2.970	2.959	2.975
	Graduate	3.701	3.679	3.715
Spring 2014	Undergraduate	2.961	2.950	2.965
	Graduate	3.741	3.722	3.767
Fall 2014	Undergraduate	2.972	2.961	2.976
	Graduate	3.715	3.694	3.738
Spring 2015	Undergraduate	2.965	2.954	2.969
	Graduate	3.749	3.728	3.774
Fall 2015	Undergraduate	2.976	2.966	2.981
	Graduate	3.725	3.707	3.753
Spring 2016	Undergraduate	2.999	2.990	3.003
	Graduate	3.751	3.731	3.777
Fall 2016	Undergraduate	2.964	2.956	2.967
	Graduate	3.744	3.721	3.763
Spring 2017	Undergraduate	3.005	2.995	3.010
	Graduate	3.760	3.741	3.784
Fall 2017	Undergraduate	2.960	2.952	2.965
	Graduate	3.770	3.753	3.794
Spring 2018	Undergraduate	3.015	3.006	3.019
	Graduate	3.767	3.748	3.797
Total / Average	Undergraduate	2.978	2.968	2.982
	Graduate	3.741	3.721	3.765

Supplementary Information



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Methodology Change

Effect on Individual Students

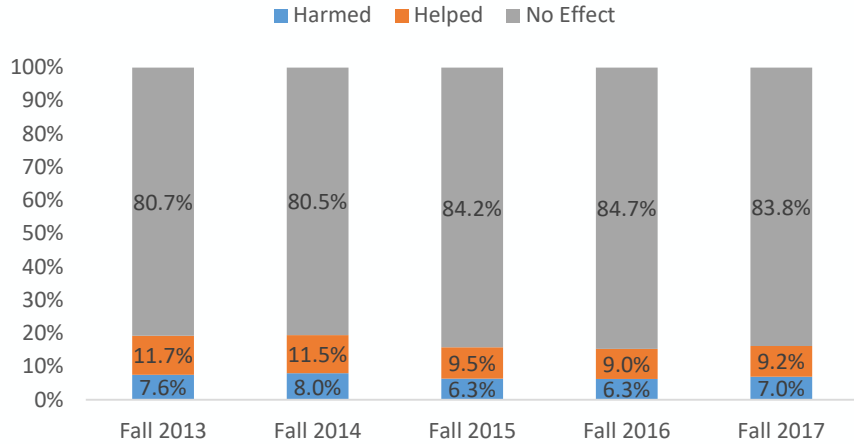


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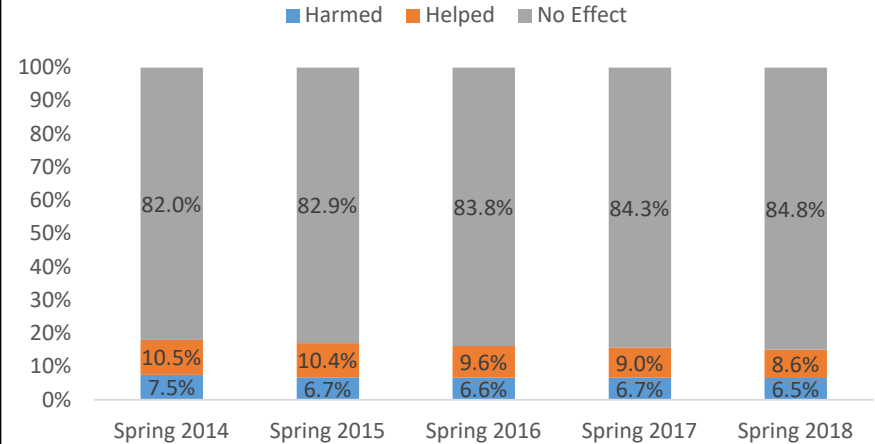
Student Semester GPA Calculation

(If Whole Grade Method had been used instead of Fractional Method)

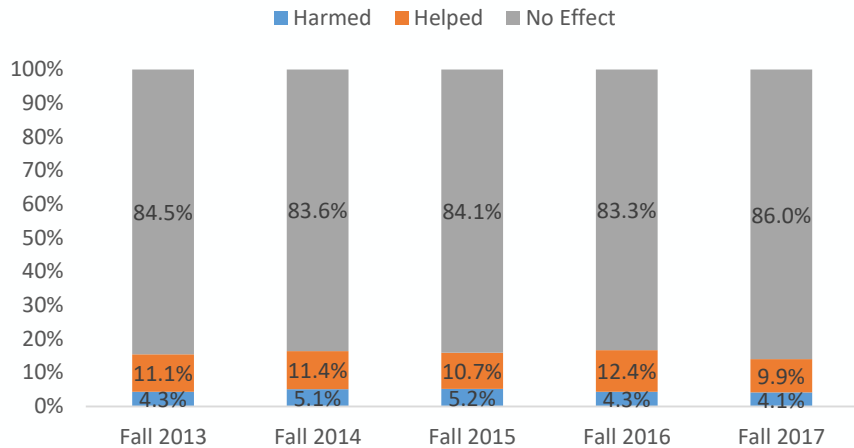
Undergraduate (Fall)



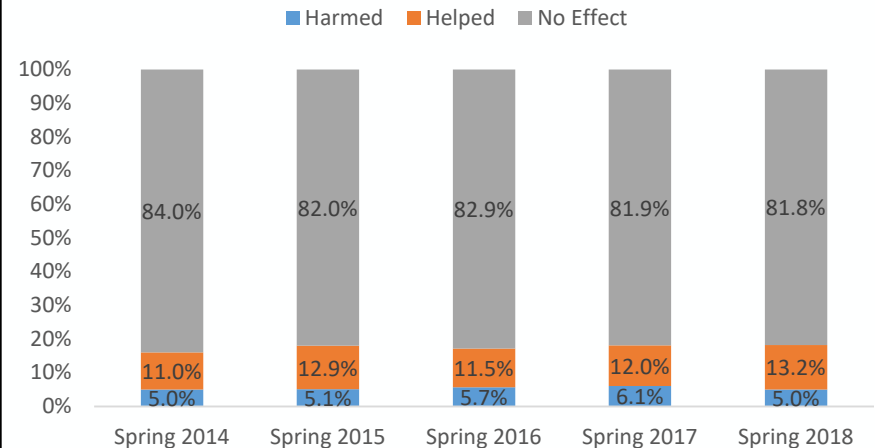
Undergraduate (Spring)



Graduate (Fall)



Graduate (Spring)



Proposition: 15-18/19

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

Date Submitted: January 31, 2019

Sponsor(s): Rosendorf (A&S), Corran (DACC), Prentice (Education), Lamonica (A&S), Campbell (NTT), 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:

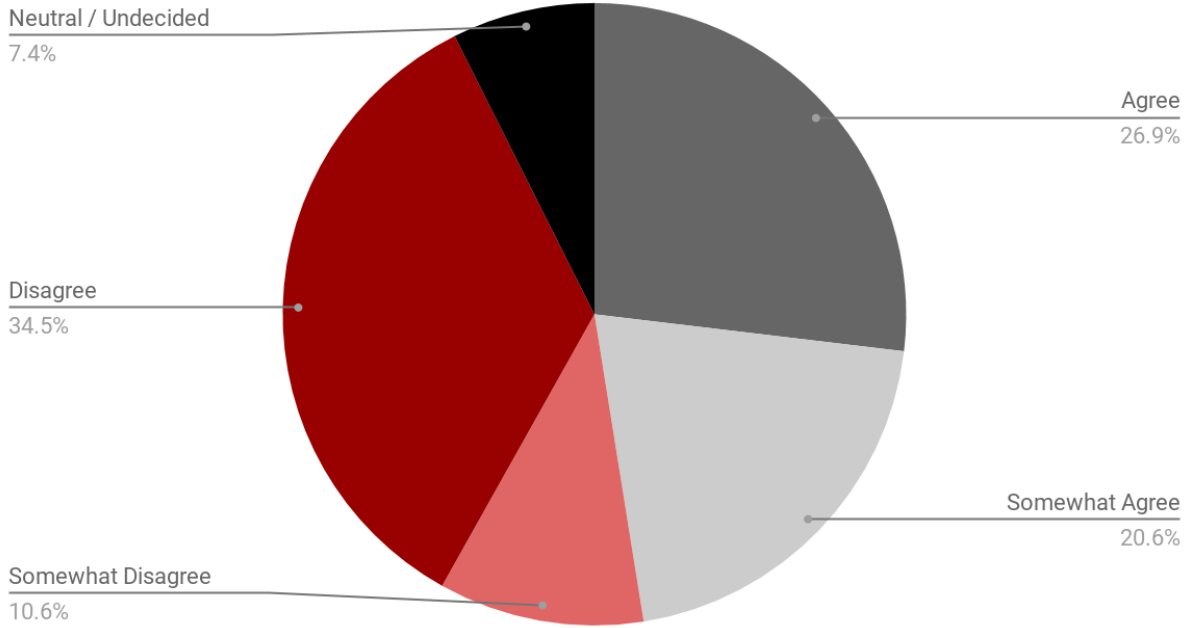
<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Grade points per Unit of Credit</u>
A+, A, A-	4.0
B+, B, B-	3.0
C+, B, B-	2.0
D+, D, D-	1.0
F	0

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.

ASNMSU Student Opinion Poll- Conducted Fall 2018

I support the NMSU fractional grading policy



The same grading system should be used by all instructors

