

Senate Academic Quality Committee Plus/Minus Survey

Please offer your suggestions, comments, concerns about the plus/minus grading system proposal and how, if at all, to revise it.

1 A five-letter grade system is already unreliable (test-retest, inter-rater). Adding more finely-graded choices would only add to the unreliability. Also, I think we will hurt our students in the competition for slots in graduate and professional schools if we have plus/minus grading. Both of my children attended universities that used plus/minus grading, and I am sure that their GPA's would have been higher without it, as both tended to get a lot of A minuses.

1 A plus-minus grading system has no positive impact on this university, its faculty, nor its students. The notion of a plus/minus grading system should be dismissed entirely.

1 Add A+ for the 4.0 people. Also, consider whether to only have + and flat grades with no -. Indiana State Univ. does it that way and it would address those people who thing they would be "penalized" by getting the minus grades they earned by doing the minimal effort instead of the flat grade for that range. I personally am for the +\|- system for A to D, with + and - for ALL the grades except F of course.

1 After working on the plus/minus grading system for the previous three years before the Provost shot the proposal down; I really do not see the point of continuing the process.

1 All I have say is that I was very disappointed by the Provost's decision not to mention that it is demoralizing knowing we give that much power to students (Because customers are always right?) in a supposedly academic institution. Plus/Minus grading system provides far better representations of student performance. It is not about GPA issue. It is a bogus argument. With a huge grade inflation anyway, GPA doesn't hold as high an esteem as it used to be and students have been misinformed about their abilities and performance level. I have decided that I am giving students B or C when I could have given A- or B- and more mindful of grade distribution to reflect their academic abilities.

1 I am responding to your invitation for comments about the plus/minus grading system proposal; however, my comments focus primarily on implementation issues if plus/minus grading is adopted. –Issues with Using a Rolling Implementation Plan • Banner grading software does not distinguish the type of grading scale that can be used for a student cohort, other than by student career (UG or GR). Major modifications would need to be made to Banner and TopNet to accommodate the concept of a cohort group (i.e. entering class) • Cohort group is difficult to define (i.e. Should “entering class” of 2008 include high school dual credit students, Math and Science Academy students, non-degree students, ESLI students, etc.?) What about new graduate students? • Capturing the appropriate students in the cohort group for each grading period will be unwieldy. (i.e. New student starts in fall 2008, drops out and returns in spring 2010, stays a couple of semesters, drops out and returns in fall, 2013, etc.) Identification of the students who are subject to plus/minus grading is a moving target. • The potential exists for faculty to be confused about the students for whom they should calculate and assign a plus/minus grade. They would always need to be cognizant of the first term of attendance of each of their students, particularly after the initial year and every year thereafter. • Using the rolling cohort implementation plan, we will have students on both grading scales for many years, potentially for eternity unless the policy is altered at some point in the future

to require plus/minus for all students, regardless of when they first entered. • Grade changes/fulfillment of incompletes -- Faculty will need to be cognizant in the future if a student was in the cohort to receive plus/minus grades. • Allowing students to "opt into" the plus/minus grading system is quite problematic. Clarification is needed on what is meant by "filling out a new degree audit form and switching to the plus/minus system." Neither the manual degree audit nor the new iCAP automated degree audits have relevance to the grading scale, so I am unsure what this means. Suggested Implementation Plan (if Plus/Minus grading is adopted) • Use plus/minus grading scale for all students. If the plus/minus system is determined to be the appropriate grading scale for WKU students, it should be appropriate for all students. This is a clean approach and does not require re-programming of Banner and TopNet (other than altering the grading table) and does not require intricate monitoring of cohort groups. Implementation Issues to be Resolved • Major/minor and pre-requisite courses that require a C or higher (C- is not a C) ---Will academic departments propose changing their requirements to include C-? • The WKU repeat policy specifies that a maximum of six hours, or two courses, in which a grade of C or above has been earned may be repeated. Again, a C- is not a C. • Transfer coursework that comes from institutions with plus/minus grading --- The grading tables in Banner will need to be altered for each of these institutions so that coursework that comes from these institutions will be recorded using pluses and minuses and the appropriate quality points. • We need to acknowledge that plus/minus grading will have a potential impact upon (1) selective admissions for academic programs, (2) admission to student teaching, (3) meeting degree requirements [i.e. 2.0 in major/minor and overall], (4) all honors requirements [i.e. Dean's list, graduation honors] eligibility for continuous enrollment [i.e. academic probation], (5) qualification for Academic Renewal and verification of "good standing" for a variety of purposes [i.e. 3.0 to receive insurance discount].

1 Anything that allows me to further discriminate student performance is good (in my book). Let's keep it just the way it is.

1 As a faculty member, I strongly believe that we should change to a plus/minus system. Getting a B+ is not the same as a B-!

1 As a student, I experienced both whole-letter grading at a public university with minimal admission requirements and plus-minus at an elite private college/university. WKU's use of whole letters is appropriate for the broad range of student grades, given its open admission standards. Plus/minus seems better suited for elite programs in WKU, like Honors and Graduate school in which (I suspect) grades are mostly in the A-B range anyway.

1 As more and more universities are including an A+, I would suggest adding that grade as well. Doing so might also silence those "A" students who feel that the new grading system would only harm their GPA. I am for the +/- grading system.

1 At the debate in the senate last year, the students argued against plus/minus. Their point was that no one in the real world...outside academia...cared about increments. From 25 years of working in the real world, running a business and hiring, all I wanted to know was if they have a degree....grades meant nothing to me, or to few others outside academia. Plus/minus grading is meaningless for the QEP.

1 Committee: I feel that +/- grading may have undeclared or unknown merit/s. However, as a full time/part time I suggest that those students requiring/requesting +/-

grading be identified on the roll or on the final grade entry. Thank you for the consideration.

1 Develop a plus/minus system that does not penalize students with a minus. Make the minus the minimum value of quality points for the grade. In ascending order the letter grade and quality points would be as follows: D- 1.0 D 1.5 D+ 1.9 C- 2.0 C 2.5 C+ 2.9 B- 3.0 B 3.5 B+ 3.9 A- 4.0 A 4.5 A+ 4.9 I think that I saw a recent transcript from a college for an applicant that used this range of quality points for letter grades except that the grade of A equalled 4.0 quality points. The transcript did show more differentiation than the standard A-F range. The use of minuses less than the minimum equivalent for a grade of D, C, and B will be problematic for students and confusing when they apply for admission to graduate and professional schools, or study programs beyond WKU. In the plus/minus trial, I used the letter grade values listed above. I think that the problem I had with the original proposal was that it diminished the actual standing of a student with a minus grade. It put them in the lower grade range. A "B-" actually put a student in the C category. No compromise proposal was offered or considered. A lot of us faculty outside the orbit of the University Senate viewed the Senate's consideration, more a lack there of, as a mob whipped into a frenzy by a few "leaders" on the fringes of academic reality. Service in the University Senate is viewed by many faculty as simply an opportunity for new members of the faculty to get a check on their MIS forms. Or, it is something like an initiation or rite of passage for junior members of the faculty to serve in the senate. More pressing issues are salary compression (depression!) for faculty with at least 20 years of service, the stability of the KTRS for those who did not have a choice, faculty governance at the department level (appointed heads or rotating chairs), travel allocations in departments, minimum enrollment standards for graduate courses (especially online graduate classes where some departments require at least 20 with a max cap of 30-35), etc.

1 DO NOT CHANGE TO PLUS - MINUS. NOTHING BUT PROBLEMS WILL RESULT. DON'T BE ENTICED BY "THE MAJOR SCHOOLS DO IT" -- SOME DO, SOME DON'T.

1 During the discussion last year, I did not hear any convincing comments or documentation that would justify changing the current process. I heard comments like "the plus/minus system would provide a more accurate reflection of the students performance." Plus/minus systems provide a more restricted range of performance for each grade; therefore, we would have to assume that the assessments are valid and reliable. While we contend that faculty assessments are valid and reliable, do we have data to support this assertion? This appears to be an initiative that some faculty want because this is what they experienced. Is this justify a change in the current system? A change in the system has also been proposed as a way to reduce grade inflation. What is the cause and effect relationship? I would encourage the Senate to give the students a win on this one until solid data can be provided justifying the need for a change. What we have appears to be working.

1 Enact it as soon as possible. We ought to have plus and minus grade options.

1 Follow the senate resolution!

1 For many (most?) classes, the only grades that are commonly assigned are A-B-C. D-F usually are reserved for a small percentage of students who have done very poorly in the class. This is the first school that I've ever taught at that doesn't include the option to

assign + and - grades. I miss this degree of freedom and would much prefer having the choice. It was also very clear that a large percentage of students at WKU shoot for the 80.1 or 90.1% in their classes. This is not the case at institutions that use +/- The faculty that want to maintain the old system of whole-letters can certain maintain this option. There would be nothing that would mandate the assignment of a +/- grade in a particular class. However, for those of us that want to create a little extra incentive for students and try to assign grades that better reflect performance -- it would be nice to have the option.

1 Frankly, instituting a plus/minus grading system has the potential of creating more haggling over grades by students. In addition, it has not been made clear that instituting the system will increase academic standards nor how it will do so. What has been made clear is that students at the higher end of the grade scale will have an adverse effect upon their grades on average.

1 I agree with Barbara Burch's assessment. Further, while the plus/minus system will hurt many more students than it will help, it will require an even more nit-picking time-consuming task for teachers than is already the case.

1 I also support plus/minus systems

1 I am a non-teaching faculty member and a part-time graduate student. I am in total support with Dr. Burch's position on this subject. I do not think plus/minus grading is a good idea at WKU. I graduated from Miami U. of Ohio, which did not use plus/minus grading (I don't know if it does now). This school had zero problem with grade inflation (the average GPA was 2.7 in my dept.) The problem in Kentucky is that the state-supported universities do not consistently use plus/minus grading and the ones that do use it report that it is chronically unpopular with students and that some faculty members refuse to participate, resulting in a perception of unequal treatment. I have consistently noticed that the students that object the most are the "A" students from families with limited means who (rightly or wrongly) are afraid of losing merit scholarships. In the absence of substantial high-quality evidence that plus/minus grading would make WKU a higher-quality university, I see no reason to start plus/minus grading.

1 I am a strong advocate of the plus/minus grading system and am hoping that the administration will implement this system. I do not understand why those who do not want to use plus/minus can't just give straight letter grades and allow those of us who feel strongly about wanting to use the plus/minus system to have the right to grade this way. Having the option to do plus/minus seems that the most democratic way. I also feel that plus/minus is going to help our university achieve its mission statement, particularly that of being "a leading university". Thank you for giving the faculty a voice (again) in this process. My hope is that the plus/minus system will gather more support and that this grading process will be quickly implemented.

1 I am absolutely in favor of implementing a +/- grading system. The standard A-F grading system that institutions of all kinds hold as sacrosanct and immutable is a very blunt instrument as it is, forcing teachers to herd groups of individuals into 5 "one size fits all" categories that are virtually meaningless in the context of individual students potential, abilities and growth. But doing away with this dysfunctional sacred cow ain't gonna happen, so anything that puts at least a LITTLE nuance into it will give teachers more flexibility to try and squeeze at least a little meaning out of it.

1 I am against plus/minus grading.

1 I am all in favor of the system. I think it provides a much more precise grade for each student's performance. There are many times when I have been forced to give a student a C when I have felt that a C+ or B- would have been more appropriate. The difference between a C and a B is huge in terms of work and performance. Frankly, I almost never go up in these borderline situations (because then other students would claim unfair treatment). The B- student ends up with a C because she/he has not earned a B. This gap creates a sense of unfairness with the students, and since I have been teaching in this system, I have had to deal with considerably more grade begging and angry students. Their GPAs are negatively affected in my class (though I have heard of professors who inflate grades to keep students happy). In addition, I have had students tell me that they don't work as hard once they have scored the 80% because to get to 90% is too hard. If there was a more subtle instrument, some of these students might continue to push to get the B+, but why bother when a lot of work can make little difference in their grade. It has the further problem of disadvantaging student who go on to grad school at other universities because even the smallest lowering of GPA can lessen their chance of getting into competitive programs or getting the best aid packages. I have been a student or taught more often in the more flexible system. I liked the flexibility I see no advantage to the current system that we are using.

1 I am fully in support of a plus/minus grading plan. I would include A+ in the scheme, but without any extra quality-point bonus. Also, I note that faculty who reject plus/minus grading would be free to "round off" their grades to whatever they perceive as the nearest or most appropriate unmodified letter grade, just as they do now.

1 I am in favor of a standard plus/minus grading system. It is more accurate.

1 I am in favor of adding plus-minus to the grading options, as it gives a more fine-grained account of the student's performance in the class. One particularly irksome point with the solid grade scale is that students, for example, who barely miss making an A in the course are given the same grade as students who barely kept their grade above a C... it seems clear that there must be a way of marking B-plus work from B-minus work... We all seem to recognize that difference. This said, I believe that the plus-minus scale is not sufficiently fine-grained. Take grade-point averages... they come in two-to-three decimal points. Why do we have such a fine-grained means of *averaging* grades when we have such blunt means of *determining* them? It seems that if it is intelligible for us to have a system on that order of detail, then grading similarly should follow suit -- award grades based on a 4-5 point scale, or on a 100-point scale.

1 I am in favor of the plus/minus system of grading. The proposal looks good. I like the "rolling" idea.

1 I am in favor of the plus/minus system. I teach in the arts (very process oriented!) and in classes that are sequential (i.e., Acting 1, 2, 3, 4). It is a good way to speak to students about their progress (i.e., you are progressing from a B toward an A) or lack thereof.

1 I am in favor of this system. As a current doctoral student at a university that uses this, I find it makes me work harder to assure I achieve the grades I need to stay in the program. I think it would do the same for our students and strengthen the academic integrity of the university.

1 I am in full support of the plus/minus grading plan as passed by the University Senate and would love to see this method of evaluation made available as it is a much more accurate and fair method of assessing student progress and performance. Thanks.

1 I am not in favor of a plus/minus system. I also think that a "rolling" basis starting with incoming freshmen will create more work and difficulty for faculty who teach classes that are not exclusive to freshmen students. This would mean that we would have to do two sets of grades which would be unfair to all the students in the class.

1 I am not in favor of changing to a plus/minus system. I believe that the current system of grading is sufficient for the students graduating from our programs.

1 I am not in favor of it.

1 I am not in favor of the plus/minus grading proposal.

1 I am NOT in favor of the plus/minus grading system. My experience teaching at other universities that used the plus/minus system is that it has a few serious problems and few merits. In fact, while I was teaching at Penn State, the university decided to discontinue plus/minus grading. One of the biggest problems is that excellent students who get one A- have irrevocably reduced their GPA. Because there is no A+ to offset the A-, the student can never bring their GPA back to a 4.0. Thus, these students, rightly so, protest every few points that might diminish their grade. I adapted by learning to never give an A- except to students who were actually B+ students. This does not seem to be in the spirit of the system, but was really the only fair solution. A broader problem is that I don't believe most of us, as professors can adequately distinguish between a "plus" or "minus" grade and an unmarked grade. Although I believe there is a clear difference between, for example, a C+ and a C-, I find it harder to say I can really distinguish between a C+ and a C. I have yet to see a convincing argument as to what will be gained by adding this finer-grained distinction in the absence of compelling evidence that the distinction is valid or meaningful.

1 I am not interested in implementing a +/- system. I do not see the benefit. One concern I have is that instead of having student's squabble over the 10ths of a point by which they miss an A, B, or C, we will now have the opportunity for them to complain about an expanded level of grades. Sounds like more headaches, not less.

1 I am not interested in making the change to plus minus. I teach in a program that has a more stringent grading plan than that of other programs. I see this change as unnecessary and unwelcome.

1 I am now and have been in favor of this grading system. I think it motivates some students to work a bit harder to avoid the "-" distinction and achieve the "+" distinction.

1 I am strongly in favor of the +/- system and believe it should be implemented. I think that students should be rewarded for their hard work and to me there is a vast difference between a student who attains a 79.7 average vs. one with an 88. If implemented, there should be a universal standard on what constitutes a B- or C+ etc. and NOT be left up to the individual instructor. When the test of the system was conducted, there were no guidelines published so my sense is that we were not all using the same exact standards -- what was a B- for one might have been a B to another. Students are very grade conscious -- I find that if an assignment for the semester is only worth 10% of their grade, that assignment does get the attention it needs with some students not doing it at all and taking the ten point hit. I think the +/- system will add a new measure of

accountability for students. Good luck with this -- I hope that we, as a faculty, continue to pursue it.

1 I am strongly opposed to the plus/minus grading system and embarrassed that our faculty senate has spent so much time attempting to solve a problem that does not exist. I have yet to hear a convincing argument for this system. Is the problem that our students do not study hard enough? It has been suggested that +/- grading will encourage students to study harder, yet most of us would argue that students should be motivated by the desire to learn and not simply to get a grade. If that is our rationale, then we are not much different than our P-12 system that focuses on preparing students to succeed on standardized tests for the financial benefit of the school. Is the problem one of grade inflation? The data that has been collected thus far suggests that the new system will have a negligible affect on students' GPA. Is the problem that there is insufficient resolution in grades? Keep in mind that our grading scale is really Excellent, Good, Average, Unsatisfactory, and Failure. In this context, what is the interpretation of a D+? It must be something along the lines of "better than unsatisfactory, but not quite a bit below average." Is the problem that there is insufficient accuracy in grades? If that is true, then +/- grading is only a small part of the issue. Certainly, we can probably all identify cases in our departments where various professors and instructors teaching the same course have very different grading patterns. Inaccuracies due to varying expectations among professors and instructors are surely of a much greater magnitude than anything that can be resolved by a +/- grading system. Over the years, I have reviewed transcripts provided by numerous applicants for faculty and staff positions. While I have seen a number of transcripts from institutions that use +/- grading, I can assure you that I have never made a hiring decision based on a + or - being attached to a grade. Further, I have never selected one candidate over another based on a difference of a few hundredths of a grade point. Indeed, the nature of human decision making suggests that it would be quite rare for anyone to reduce a significant hiring decision, where applicants supply copious personal information about themselves, to a such factor. Again, I have yet to hear anyone truly identify a problem that is being solved by the +/- grading system, and I am frustrated that our faculty senate continues to chase after windmills.

1 I am strongly opposed to the plus/minus grading system because I taught at another university that used it, and we ran into numerous problems, including, but not limited to, a massive increase in the number of student complaints and grade challenges that consumed considerable additional time in resolving. Students who earned a B, argued that they should receive a B+, etc., etc.

1 I am totally against the plus/minus proposal. There is not a need for it, and it will also hurt the students. It also will make the grading process more difficult. As for the "rolling" proposal, it should be rolled right off the planet as quickly as possible; it would create a chaotic situation in the university community. Let grading stay with faculty "as is."

1 I am totally for plus/minus grading. I do not understand why we do not already have it. Academically, we are a weaker institution without it. There should be a set university standard for what percentage is a B+ or B- etc. Is 88-89% a B+ or will it be 87-89%? Students should know this upfront, otherwise they will scream how unfair it all is.

1 I am very supportive of the plus/minus system. It will provide a more accurate discrimination for each grade level. My undergraduate institution assigned grades on a

0.1 scale from 0.0 (0.7) to 4.0. That was probably too fine a scale. However, a scale such as 4.0 to 3.67 to a 3.33 to 3.00 and so forth, would be relatively easy to assign.

1 I appreciated and approved of the plus/minus grading system as it was presented last year. I think it is fair and the "rolling" implementation of it gives existing students the flexibility to be evaluated under the system they prefer. Therefore, I do not think the proposal needs to be revised.

1 I believe that a plus/minus system actually provides a more equitable grading system. Primarily, the ability to distinguish between a student who performs well enough to earn say 800 points (assumes a 1,000 point scale) receives a letter grade of B. A student who works harder and ends up with 890 points earns the same B letter grade. If the concern is truly fairness, doesn't this treat all students more fairly as opposed to the ones who have earned fewer points than that of their colleagues?

1 I believe that the current A,B,C, D, F does not give enough nuance in grading students. A student who earns 89% deserves a better grade than one who earns 80%. The current system causes grade inflation, as I am sure many bump high b's up to A, and high C's up to B, etc.

1 I believe that this system would make a difference in students' GPA's. It would reward those students who are on the upper end of a grade, but unable to attain the next highest letter grade. They could feel better about themselves and the work that they have done, because their B+ would reflect more about their abilities and struggles than a B would. There would also help them have a more positive self reflection when they know that their work that wasn't quite good enough to be an A was definitely better than a B or a B-. The same for our C students too.

1 I believe the plus/minus grading system offers a more representative distribution of grades. For example, a student with an 88 average is closer in ability to a student with a 90 than to a student with an 80. However, in the current system, the 80 and 88 would receive a "B" while the 90 would receive an "A". Also, the plus/minus system is motivating, since a student going into the final exam with an 85 average, for example, would study to earn a "B+" and avoid dropping to a "B-", whereas the same student would be unmotivated to study for the final if change to an "A" or "C" were unlikely. Students have a false sense that the GPA's would be substantially diminished somehow, mainly because someone mentioned this idea without giving any quantitative data to support it. What they don't realize is that "A+" grades, even without any point value bonus (they still count as 4.0, just like an "A"), are noticed on transcripts as superior work. Also, medical and other professional schools generally keep long-term grade trends on file, so any inflation/deflation of grades will be factored into an analysis of a student's GPA anyway. One concern is that with an increasing number of grade divisions, the number of student complaints/pleas for grade inflation will increase. Every "B" will want a "B+", every "B+" will want an "A-", etc. However, that is not a sufficient reason to avoid the plus/minus system. My biggest concern with the entire process, however, was how the topic was treated. The senate seemed to fight endlessly for it, the students rallied endlessly against it, and the provost talked as if she agonized endlessly over the implications. But, this issue has very little to do with the actual quality of teaching on this campus; I will give the same lectures, use the same books, give the same assignments, etc. regardless of whether we do or don't have plus/minus. If we're all going to get so

worked up about something, shouldn't it be something that actually affects learning instead of the highly overrated statistic that is the GPA?!?

1 I believe the survey is fair as it was. The proposal was passed by the Senate and held up by the administration. If there is something to change it is either: 1. The administration 2. Something in the proposal that the administration objects to.

1 I dislike the fine distinctions between a- and b+ etc. I would support the proposal for a plus minus system but I would prefer something like A, A/B, B, B/C, C, CD, D, F
Thanks you.

1 I do not favor the plus/minus system for my students. I do not support the change.

1 I do not like the +/- system. Rather than having four grade breakdowns to choose from (A/B/C/D/F) there are now nine with the +/- system. This makes it more likely for students to complain about points and ask to be raised to the next grade level. I think grade inflation is a more important issue for the Senate to deal with.

1 I do not like this system. I much prefer the old system of just "A", "B", etc. I think instructors take themselves too serious.

1 I do not see any justifiably academic reason to change the present system.

1 I do not see any reason for changing the current system. If you are worried about grade inflation, give the grades that are earned, and don't inflate a "88.5" to an "A" (as an example). Stand by your principles. This appears to merely be a tool to TRY and placate a student by saying "I'm helping you out by giving you a "B+"". And the rolling start idea could easily become a tracking nightmare. Heaven help you if you give a "prior student" a +/- grade if they didn't request it. Are you treating all students in an equivalent manner in doing this?

1 I do not support a plus/minus system of grading. It will lead to endless haggling over a point or two and place too much emphasis on arbitrary "shades" of achievement. It would be more effective to raise the standard of an "A" overall.

1 I do not support plus/minus grading in practice. It is fine as a theory but realistically, I have enough trouble dealing with five grades, I can't imagine twice that number. Secondly, we are recruiting so many academically marginal students, I fear that plus/minus grading will simply result in large numbers of D students getting "sympathy" degrees because they were given a C- instead of the grade they deserved. This will further degrade the value of a WKU degree which is already suffering!

1 I do not support the +/- system. If you can read a GPA, you can tell if the student is a plus, middle range, or a minus. I think the system only puts more work on the faculty that are already overloaded.

1 I don't know how we can complicate such a simple thing as grading. It seems to me that the disadvantages (to the students) outweigh moving to a plus/minus system; according to what I have read, this will hurt more students than it will help. So why complicate our lives with something that has little to no marginal value.

1 I don't remember all the details in the previous proposal, but here are a few thoughts. 1) I think a +/- system is necessary to fairly delineate the accomplishments of our students. A student earning a 90% is different than the student earning a 96%. 2) For the +/- system to be worth anyone's time, it must be tied to GPA. Some early discussion called for having a +/- system with no impact on GPA - this would be pointless (literally and figuratively). 3) At the end of the day, once +/- has been implemented and the initial

group of students have gone through, no one will know the difference. Students don't choose where to go to school based on the grading system. Hope this helps.

1 I don't think plus and minus grades are necessary. I don't use them. Please, let's drop them.

1 I favor a move to some agreed upon plus/minus system.

1 I feel that assigning grades is already quite difficult enough when it comes to those "in between" grades. I understand that the +/- system seeks to alleviate that problem, but to me it seems that it will actually aggravate even more. How do I choose if someone is a C or C+ or C+/B-? If a student has an 89.3, do I leave them as a B+ or go ahead and give an A-? Other thoughts: a student has worked very hard and by the skin of their teeth earns an "A" (or whatever whole letter). YEAH! Won't there be those out there that don't honor that student's work ethic and give them the lower letter minus grade? Don't we all remember barely squeaking by and getting the "grade" we desired? Would it be as nice to get that grade as a minus? In life, I think choices are nice but sometimes I think we can have too many choices, thus making decisions more difficult than they should be. I personally have struggled with these extra choices recently in life and choose to live my life more "choiceless". I think having a +/- grading system will be MORE DIFFICULT; therefore, I am against it.

1 I have concerns about the plus/minus grading system proposal and would like for the grading to be at the option of the instructor of record so that those who feel strongly about this can use the proposed system and those of us who like the existing structure can use that.

1 I have used a plus/minus grading system at a previous institution. I do not believe it made any positive contributions and may very well have contributed to student's complaints. There seemed to be an increase of the "Why didn't I get a ___ instead of the ___" type of complaint. Therefore, I do not support the +/- grading system.

1 I like + -. I have used it to the benefit of the students in the past. I hesitate moving up the border line grades to the next level. For example a C- for the score of 69 and a fraction of 1 is justified. But without this option a 79 being a C and 69+change also a C is not fair. Please allow this option. It is good for every one.

1 I like only the present A,B, C, D AND F system.

1 I like the prospect of a +/- grading system. In my experience, there is often a great deal of room between that low B student and the student that almost gets an A, for example. A +/- grading system allows one to assign grades with greater specificity and accuracy. I would like to see it implemented. Thank you.

1 I look forward to seeing the results of this "survey". Did you plan to get input from staff, who will have to deal with this change and may have valid input, or is the plan to ignore them. Again.

1 I loved being able to use the plus minus system. I sure do hope they bring it back

1 I object to use of the plus/minus grading system based on pilot use with graduate students.

1 I oppose a change to plus/minus grades. I oppose that change on scientific/logical grounds and on selfish grounds: Science: 1. Our computations of learning or achievement are actually not that fine-tuned. This has nothing to do with the fact that we assign "numbers" or scores to assignments/tests/etc. In statistics, we look for numbers but also "p" values -- that is, probability that our numbers indicate anything reliable. I would

suggest that our numbers are not all that wonderful -- and would not passed the $p=.05$ test. Logically, having numbers doesn't mean you have good numbers -- and there is a LOT of confusion over this point. Implication -- I have confidence that an "A" paper is not a "B" paper. However, I have NO legitimate confidence that there is a REAL difference between a 75 and a 77 paper (or whatever is the closest next grade). Sure, I could pretend I know the difference. SELFISH: 2. With plus/minus grading EVERY student will be one or two points from the next grade. While we can reasonably MEET the " $p= .05$ " test when making 5 stacks of grades - the hardest part is always those few students on the edge. Under your proposal, instead of one or two students, perhaps 2/3 of my class will now be asking for "one more point please." They will be calling me an ass for not yielding on one dinky point. I don't want that many of those unproductive conversations. So, in the name of science and the name of preserving a cordial relationship with my students, DON'T do this thing.

1 I oppose the plus/minus system. No revision necessary!!

1 I prefer the plus/minus designation as lumping all students under one grade with a nine point spread diminishes a real distinction.

1 I really like the idea of a plus/minus grading system. At first I was concerned with having more borderline grades to deal with, but have now realized that it should solve the problems with the borderline grades. For example, if a student is a borderline b/c student, I have to agonize over whether they deserve the next letter grade. I look at attendance, participation, whether they did all the homework, and so on. With the plus minus system, I know the borderline b/c student will be receiving a C+, which is better than a C or a C-. The plus/minus system reflects the students ability/performance in the classroom more precisely.

1 I see no purpose in the system.

1 I see no reason or justifiable proposal for adding the plus/minus system at WKU. It only stands to create more harm than good.

1 I strongly support the plus, minus system and believe it should be implemented at WKU. Grades are a instrument to accurately reflect a student's performance, how can this be accomplished by allowing students to receive the same grade with such a wide range of grades. There were rumors that there would be a grade of A+, which has no GPA points and if this is the case it should be removed. Otherwise I support the initiative.

1 I suggest you go to a broader system, similar to what's given in the University of Wisconsin system... an A.. A-B, B, B-C, D, F system. A= 4 GPA points... A/B = 3.5 gpa pts, etc...

1 I support a plus/minus grading system, and I know one of the objections is that the previous proposal had no "A+" grade. While I don't see a need for an "A+," I would be willing to issue "A+' grades for those students who have achieved perfect or near perfect grades for a semester.

1 I support implementing PMG as described.

1 I support in the strongest possible way a move to +/- grading. We do our students, and indeed the image of our school, a disservice if we maintain the crude "5 grade system."

1 I support the plus/minus grading system with one change. Currently there is no bonus for an A+, only a deduction for an A-. A bonus comensurate with the bonus of a B+ over a B should be added. A system in which you have the risk of losing something

without the opportunity of gaining something is not fair. The honors students are extremely grade conscious and we need to be fair to them.

1 I support the plus/minus system. I don't recall if they collected data on if other comparable institutions use plus/minus. I have worked at a small, regional, and been at research institutions and this is the first one for me that has not had a plus/minus system.

1 I support the proposal to adopt the plus/minus grading system. I find it stands, at present, in no need of revision. Certainly, it should be revised in the future, if, during its implementation, flaws appear in the course of careful faculty monitoring.

1 I teach English 300, so we discuss issues that come up on campus rather often. The students overwhelmingly are against the plus/ minus grading system. The main reason is that some students who find certain classes easy will be able to get a high A easily while others who have to work really hard to maintain an A average feel that their hard work in getting an A should not be overshadowed by a lower GPA with an A-. They feel that the grading system will hurt GPA's for no reason when they feel that they have worked hard to get good grades. Although some feel that the plus/minus grading system will make students work harder, I feel that the minus part of it could work to do just the opposite when a lower grade rating hurts students who otherwise would have been proud of a solid letter grade.

1 I think implementation of plus minus grading will increase the academic quality of a WKU degree as it would provide a mechanism for faculty to make the grade distinctions necessary to properly evaluate academic performance. I support plus minus grading and hope the administration will acknowledge the faculty voice on this issue by implementing this grading scheme.

1 I think it penalizes the students at the top of the grading scale and it has no bearing in graduate work.

1 I think that a plus/minus system would harm good students by demoting their "A" in an A, B, C... system to a "A" in an A+, A, A- system. I oppose the use of the plus/minus system.

1 I think that plus minus is an important tool that I could use in my classroom. I know that I could use it to help students work harder and produce better work. For example, in our current system, it is very difficult to motivate a student with an 83 average work hard to improve at the end of the semester, since it is very likely that it would be statistically impossible for the last assignment or two to bump the average up to an A (above 90 percent). I see many students "give up" and stop trying to improve once they are firmly fixed in a certain grade range. And without plus-minus, the grade ranges are really too wide. On the other hand, if we had plus minus, I know that I could motivate that 83 student to work hard to get his/her grade up to a B (above 84 percent) or even a B+, which would carry higher GPA values than a B-. Regardless of all the "big picture," university-wide issues concerning plus-minus, and whether it would be good or bad for the university as a whole, I know that in my classroom I could use plus-minus to improve student learning.

1 I think that we OWE our students a grading system that more accurately reflects their performance. An 88 and 81 are qualitatively different and that difference should be reflected quantitatively as well.

1 I think the plus-minus system as proposed is a valuable tool for instructors in the classroom. I think it should be implemented as proposed.

1 I think the plus/minus grading proposal should be dropped. The policy penalizes students who apply to graduate programs as their GPAs are lower than students who did comparable work at other institutions. Also, any faculty member who thinks their assessment of student learning is precise enough to fairly distinguish between A- and B+ work is delusional.

1 I think the plus/minus system is a more specific way of reflecting how a student performed in the class.

1 I think the plus/minus system is a useful tool for more accurate grading. The only students it seems to "hurt" are those who barely make an "A". In any case, like it or not, each faculty member would be able to choose whether to implement it or not if passed.

1 I think there should be an "A+" grade, as well. I would use such a system if there were clear number guidelines for each grade's plus and minus and middle ranges, for example, 3.0 to 3.49 would be a "B," 3.5 to 3.99 would be a "B+," and so on. I am not sure about the numbers, but you get the idea. I am not crazy about the idea.

1 I think we should implement plus/minus grading. It would be a more accurate assessment of a student's work. It would also encourage students to work harder to make those few extra points. I would suggest adding an A+ grade for truly exemplary work.

1 I would add plus/minus to the D range as well.

1 I would be happy with an A, B+, B, C+, C, D+, D, F system. There is no need to have both minuses and pluses between each grade; all that's needed is a way of being a bit more accurate.

2 I would be interested in the plus-minus option being available to graduate students. This option should have value to this population since they are for all practical purposes an entirely different population of students.

1 I would favor a plus/minus system. There's a lot of difference between B+ and B-work, and the same can be said for C+ and C-. It really isn't fair for someone who has a B- (or C-) average to make the same grade as someone who has a B+ (or C+) average.

1 I would implement a traditional plus/minus system to both make grades more accurately reflect what students have earned and to be on par with other universities.

1 I would like to see Plus but not minus grades available. I think adding minus grades confuses the issue as many schools do not use these grades.

1 I would LOVE to have a plus/minus grading option. Without it, you can't really tell the difference between someone who gets an 80% in a class or one that had an 89%. They both get a B.

1 I would prefer to not have the plus/minus grading system.

1 I would welcome the opportunity to be able to give +/- grades. I often have students who barely get an A and I wish I could indicate the type of A they received. I also think it is important to note when students had higher grades such as a B+. The system should be flexible enough so that individuals who don't wish to give +/- grades can just ignore those options. But it would be nice for those of us who wish to utilize it to have the option.

1 I'm a faculty member and am in favor of the plus/minus system because I feel it is a more accurate reflection of a student's performance.

1 I'm against the idea. Most faculty didn't participate anyway, it just seems to penalize the students. Grade inflation will exist until faculty decide to stop it.

1 I'm in favor of +/- but find the generally hostile tone around the issue off-putting. Faculty on this committee should not join those who have nothing but negativity to offer regarding the provost's decision not to have +/- . They should have more to offer than snide comments or rolling eyes. They may not agree with the Provost's decision, but her concerns should be addressed fairly and with open minds. This should not be "us" against "her." If we can't get to something more like consensus, then maybe it's not the right time. Among some senators, the most negative light is put on her actions, and the censure, for instance, seemed like an alarmist's response of the surliest among us, and not what most of us would endorse--Senate vote or no.

1 I'm in favor of the plus/minus system. I think there is a difference between B+ and B- students, for example, and that difference should be reflected in their grades.

1 I'm not a big fan of plus/minus grading. I realize there is some value in being able to more carefully distinguish levels of student work. But more importantly, I worry that it is indicative of a somewhat unhealthy emphasis on the acquisition of grades rather than knowledge.

1 If assessments in a course are appropriate/accurate, then plusses and minuses are necessary to differentiate between grades. There can be a big difference in work and proficiency between an 80 and an 89 - they shouldn't have the same grade.

1 If quality evaluation is the goal, I don't see how you can argue with the plus/minus. Keeping whiny, grade oriented students happy is about the only reason to keep the present system. (or maybe whiny faculty, as it is a bit more work) The plus/minus also rewards the very best students and we need more of that.

1 If you can obtain a B+ why not an A+? Is the system utilized just to distinguish those who 'may be a little more distinguished' than another, rather than granting a qualified student an honorable grade of A, B...? In the end to an employer..., is it not the GPA that is reviewed, rather than individual class grades?

1 Implement it without any impact on student GPA

1 Include + and - with grades of D. Why stop at C? I strongly support a +/- system because: 1. It is typical of quality institutions 2. Students should get what they earn 3. I want to distinguish someone earning a + from a - person. I never raise a B+ to an A, for example, so the student getting a + grade is being penalized in the current system.

1 It is of my opinion that the policy should be implemented as originally conceived. If the administration does not support this assertion, it would be worth exploring alternatives yet at the end of the day, the goal should be on grade differentiation.

1 It seems to me that reasonable options for grading range from no grade at all, to pass-fail, to something approximating an A-C-F, to the standard A-F, to an unmodified A+ thru F- (like FN), to straight percent. *Any* other option runs the risk of not only not transferring well, but of distorting a true representation of students' performance. The proposal as currently being discussed is ludicrous. One student may risk a B-, yet another need not fear a D-? What possible justification is there for this? The system is designed to discern among average and above-average performers only, ignores true excellence, and abandons below-average performers altogether. It is so skewed as to create confusion and consternation among the bulk of the student body, despair in those who need the greatest encouragement, and fail to provide that final bit of incentive for the 93 percenters. In other words, the system under consideration fails at every turn, and doesn't seem to help anyone. Finally, If I understand the proposal on the table correctly, some students may

elect to participate in the plus-minus system, while others do not? And who is going to keep track of this? If this system is implemented, I, for one, will switch to percent grades only, and report them to students as such. I'll let TopNet sort out who gets what grade -- if it will.

1 It should be revised with a plus/minus system. The current protocol favors slackers and hurts better performing students...Example b-plus students and b-minus students look the same today when the new system would help the b plus student stand out competitively. duh.

1 It should have A+ to make it fair for the students.

1 It's a good plan and would provide a more realistic assessment of student performance. Good students will not be affected statistically, while marginal students may not do as well statistically. I vote in favor of the plus/minus option.

1 Keep as is!

1 Keep the present system. Don't start using pluses and minuses.

1 Leave it along. It works just fine as it is.

1 Leave the current system alone. We don't really need a plus/minus system.

1 Let this DEAD HORSE go. Do not continue with a bad idea.

1 Let's give this a rest! Enough already!!!!

1 Most of the discussion regarding plus/minus grading has focused on the impact on GPAs and distributions of assigned grades. While these are important considerations, plus/minus grading really is a measurement issue. The real question is whether or not the methods used by faculty to measure student performance and assign grades are precise enough to make the finer distinctions made with plus/minus grading. Grades reflect what my discipline refers to as "banding," that is, creating clusters of scores that are in essence considered to be equivalent. So, for grades, we have 5 bands: A, B, C, D, and F. Within a band we say performance is essentially equivalent so we assign the same score/grade. Banding is used because it is well recognized that measurement is not exact; there is error in measurement. Thus, the question of plus/minus grading is asking if we can accurately make more precise distinctions in the measurement of student performance. This is dependent on the psychometric characteristics (i.e., the reliability and validity) of the tests and other graded performance indicators faculty use. For example: take a class where the grade is determined primarily by a mid-term exam and a final exam. These exams are used to measure the student's performance in learning the required course material. The quality of each exam is dependent on: 1. the representativeness of the items selected to be on the exam (i.e., do they accurately and proportionately reflect the content of the course?) 2. the ability of the items chosen to differentiate between levels of performance (i.e., difficulty level of the exam items - do they represent a range of difficulty level such that only the top performers can answer the most difficult items?) 3. the amount of error in the exam itself (i.e., are there "bad" items where the item is ambiguous, the correct answer is a matter of opinion, there are poor response options on multiple choice items, etc.) Shortcomings in any of these three areas detract from the accuracy with which the exam measures performance. There is also error in exam performance that stems from the student including factors such as marking the wrong answer choice; being stressed, fatigued, or distracted; allocating proportionately inappropriate study time to some topics rather than others. There is also error in exam performance that can come from the grading mechanism. For example, grading keys that

are in error or are incomplete, subjectivity in grading open-ended test items or writing assignments, error in calculating or recording grades, etc. All of these factors combine to render our measures of student performance less than perfect. Depending on the effort taken by faculty (e.g., revising item pools to fix or eliminate problem items and continually refining scoring keys/protocols for open-ended items, writing assignments, or other assignments that are more susceptible to subjectivity in grading, etc.), our measures of student performance range from some that are actually quite good to some that are very imprecise and subjective. Again, the question before us is: across the board, are faculty measuring student performance with sufficient precision to make the finer distinctions required for plus/minus grading? That is, when I assign a student a “B-“ versus “B” can I be confident that the different grades reflect true differences in student performance versus error in measurement. Did the “B-“ student miss 10 more test items (out of, say, 400 items across the semester) than the student at the “B” cutoff because he failed to master 2.5% less of the material or could it be that some of the items on the test contained error or some of the other factors that introduced error were operating so that my measurement of this performance is off by a percentage point or two? To the extent that we have precise, accurate measures of student performance it is reasonable to reflect this in more precise bands (i.e., A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F+, F, F-) rather than the broader bands we now use (i.e., A, B, C, D, F). To the extent that the precision with which we measure student performance does not support the more precise plus/minus grading, we actually are introducing more error into the grading system. I am not advocating one way or the other on this issue. I am advocating that we do not move to a system with the appearance of great precision in assigning grades if it is not supported by underlying measurement processes and practices that truly provides us with accurate, equally precise indicators of student performance.

1 Motivation comes from within.

1 Much ado about nothing. if we want to make changes in the computation of GPA, let's look way beyond plus-minus.

1 My biggest concern is that some are completely disregarding the impact to those responsible for creating, maintaining, and updating this "dual" system. Managing databases, reporting two different systems, calculating GPAs with two different scales, etc. affects many of the staff. For faculty that often grumble about not getting a voice, those pushing for plus/minus grading have been quick to exclude those who will have to work hardest to implement this policy. This is not just a simple policy issue. There are many practical application concerns that must be addressed. For those that read this and argue that we have to think of the students first before the workload of the staff, ask yourself this--what is sacrificed because the staff is pulled from what they need to do in order to work on plus/minus grading? Every added initiative comes at a cost--that of giving up another valuable project or paying less attention to a current project/job duty. Furthermore, I don't think that those pushing for plus minus grading fully understand the difficulty in implementing such a system from the support side. I assure you, it's not as easy as "pushing a button" as some seem to think. To downplay and disregard the effect this will have on Academic Computing as well as numerous other departments is downright demeaning. Finally, do you appreciate someone trying to force an increase in workload to you without care or concern for compensation/additional help? Serious consideration must be placed on the impact to staff time and the additional salaries that

will need to be added to keep up with creation, tracking, and maintenance. Otherwise, you're saying that it's OK to force additional workload. Hey, if that's the case, maybe we ought to increase faculty workload, too.....

1 My concern is the impact this policy will have on first-generation college attendees who may not have the skills to advance or maintain their GPA. If the focus is to "motivate" students to work harder, perhaps it would be better to find a way to describe and teach the skills necessary to do so. I think using a punishment/reward based system such as grades will ultimately lead more students to do worse or fail. It will have the exact opposite effect of its intention.

1 My fear is that this system opens up student protest and begging at 15 levels of grading instead of at 5.

1 no need to have +/- If we have it, we need to have A+ and D- as well.

1 No. Do not revise it - do not push it - i think it is a horrible idea and will not move to it unless i am COMMANDED to do so and then i "feel" that very few students will EVER fall into a plus or minus category. Aren't things complicated enough? who are you that have all this extra time to diddle with 2 points this way and 2 points that way? You asked. No. No. NO.

1 One of the key reasons for instituting plus/minus is that it combats grade inflation. The provost argued against implementing it because in the pilot study, it reduced average grades by an extremely small amount. Shouldn't that reduction be interpreted as evidence that plus/minus works to combat grade inflation? That's what we the faculty wanted, right? Implement it any way you want, just get it done!

1 One ought base decisions on meaningful data and careful interpretation of these data. Conversely, a power struggle between a small group of vocal faculty (with perhaps an axe to grind) and certain administrators, is a poor way to make policies as important as grading ones. Institutional research, in their analysis of the data, recommended against the +/- system. The analysis by the faculty in favor was embarrassingly shallow, poorly thought out, statistically unsound, and badly presented. On the other hand, the SGA president was articulate, careful in her analysis, balanced in her statements and presented a logical case against. That the senate then proceeded to vote in favor after these presentations certainly undermined their collective analytical credibility - in my mind and in the view of many of my colleagues. The system proposed was goofy - not all grades had +/- just some. We do not need to be nationally unique because we have our own flavor of +/- . The notion that 19 of the top 20 schools have +/- does not tell one much - especially when perhaps ALL the bottom 20 have it as well. Having lived under both systems (and several others as well) I do not believe it ultimately makes a whit of difference. But as a member of the faculty who more than dabbles in statistics, I was startled by the unsupported statements by faculty, by the small samples and etc. The way to improve institutional standards is to hold to them in the classroom - and begin to hold our colleagues to standards of intellectual rigor as well. My two cents is that we stay with the current system, put our energies into improving quality in teaching and scholarship --- and above all, stop the petulance.

1 Personally we just implement it!

1 Phasing in is crazy. A+ should give more value than 4.0 if B+ or C+ is more than 3 or 2. Why not include D-? Many problems, littel gain. Should not use in proposed form.

1 Please clarify if this grading system will apply to graduate studies. What about A plus for exemplary work?

1 Please do not implement plus/minus grading. It has no value to students, makes grading a nightmare for certain disciplines, and creates unnecessary student complaints about how their grades were calculated. I see no value whatsoever in plus/minus grading.

1 Please just let the plus/minus suggestion die! It was shown to be a disadvantage to the sciences and other parties and seems to be no advantage. It requires more work and university support. Please, Just let it die!

1 Please reconsider using subdivisions of the D grade range. Please request strongly that Dr. Burch provide the committee with clear, specific, detailed reasons for her rejection of the previous proposal. Conversely, ask her to detail what would constitute "sufficient and sound bases" for implementing a change in the grading system. I strongly support the proposal for implementing a plus-minus grading system!

1 Plus-minus grading is more precise and therefore fairer for the students. It also happens to be more in line with almost all the leading universities in the country, as well as with most of our peer institutions.

1 Plus/Minus grading will not work in the nursing department. Grading should be left as is b/c grade inflation will insue. If it aint broke, don't fix it.

1 Plus/Minus more nearly reflects the true efforts of students. There IS a difference between an 89 B and an 80 B. The flat grade approach (A, B, C, D) is easier for transcripts, calculations, etc., but it is not as fair in my opinion.

1 Probably has been dealt with-but for what its worth- If you are going to distinguish between an A and A-, why not also distinguishy between an A and A+. etc. Why not split the hair three ways instead of two. I would like to see the student who gets a 98 rewarded with something. And not just give the student who gets the 89.9 an A-. Perhaps this would be akin to Summa, Magna, and Cum Laude, heh?

1 Recommend maintaining current system. I do not see enough advantages to change.

1 Since I assume that this system will impact a student's overall GPA, I think a plus/minus system is needed. Furthermore, there is a big difference between a B+ and a B-. This gives students better feedback about their preformance.

1 Still do not understand how having more categories translates into better academic quality. I do know from experience it translates into quite a bit more work for the faculty members, and angst for students. With plus/minus every student is 2 points away from a higher grade - that makes for lots of complaining.

1 Still not planning to share the comments with the faculty or staff? I have no confidence whatsoever that the results provided will be anything other than those that support the committee's pre-selected position.

1 Strongly in favor of implementing our senate's resolution; strongly in favor of overriding the Provost's veto; strongly in favor of plus-minus grading. I don't think we need to revise it, but rather to implement it. Post haste.

1 Suggestion: If faculty are having difficulty with assigning grades and are concerned with subsequent grade inflation there is another option. Rather than implement another system of assessment, use the services of the Teaching and Learning Center to master the art of writing well-constructed scoring rubrics for each piece of student work. It has been my experience over the past 17 years that a well-written rubric provided the

first day of class, reviewed in class when the assignment is defined, and then used to evaluate the product takes care of grade inflation. Each student is judged by his/her own merits. Comment: Plus-minus grading is a construct that strains at a gnat and gnaws at a camel. Concern: Plus-minus grading will result in adversarial relations between faculty and students whose grades and in some cases, eligibility for scholarships, will be negatively impacted.

1 The grading system should be changed to allow plus grades as follows: A: 4.0 B+: 3.5 B: 3.0 C+: 2.5 C: 2.0 D+: 1.5 D: 1.0 F: 0.0

1 The plus-minus grading system should be approved and implemented as earlier devised by the Senate.

1 The plus/minus system could be an excellent means of improving academic quality and beginning to seriously address the insidious problems caused by grade inflation. The obvious difficulty lies in the distinct probability that grade point averages would be reduced to a level closer to reality. Most A's are minuses; a majority of B's and C's also fall into the lower range. Indeed, faculty generally (I've been involved in this process for nearly half a century) raise a high B (plus?) to an A minus or a high C to a B minus, particularly when the others in the same range tend to be significantly lower. I would like to see some kind of numerical system (on a 100 point basis?) that would allow for a lot of differentiation and discrimination. Is there much hope for change? I doubt it. And I think our poor assessment of student performance leads directly to poor performance in the workplace on the part of our graduates. Why excel when mediocrity will suffice? What are we REALLY teaching when we call pretty good work excellent, and average performance good? D and F are basically seen as absence/incomplete grades. Would that it were not so, we often lament, as we continue rewarding those who have earned little, simultaneously patting ourselves on the back for being progressive and sympathetic.

1 The problem with the plus/minus grading proposal is that this is a measurement issue. Our methods for assessing student knowledge or performance are simply not sophisticated enough to consistently accurately discriminate B- performance from C+ performance. This is a silly endeavor.

1 The real issue with plus/minus has not been addressed by any of the research or information made available last year. The issue is accuracy. If the plus/minus is more accurate then we should adopt it; if it is not we should abandon it. If plus/minus is more accurate then other issues such as effect on GPA take on a different meaning. If plus/minus is more accurate and GPA goes down then grades in the past were too high. But is plus/minus more accurate? By definition plus/minus is more PRECISE. It creates more categories of measurement. But accuracy is a measure of consistency. Example- In a 10 pt. grading system two students whose averages differ by more than 10 pt. are considered to have different levels of success (95 % gets an A while an 85% gets a B). It is possible for students on the "border" to have averages that differ by only a point to get different grades (90% gets the A while the 89% gets a B). On average students whose scores differ by 5% or more will be graded as being different (92% gets an A while an 87% gets a B). The system implies that differences of under 5% are usually not significant enough to assign different grades. In plus/minus a 5% difference will always result in a different grade and 1 % differences that change the grade will be more than twice as common. This extra level of PRECISION will only give the grades more

accuracy if faculty can reasonable assure students that grading is consistant to within 1 or 2 pt. So the real research need is to establish if most faculty are consistant with grading to within 1 or 2 pt. at most. Without some real research to back the claim I do not think most faculty can claim that they grade consistently within 1 point or even 2. If the fact that I grade a essay today or tomorrow, first in the batch or last, version "A" or the test or version "B", black ink-blue ink or pencil, can result in a grade more than a point different then plus/minus is not more accurate and the grade difference it produces can say more about the grading than the student.

1 The students I spoke with were reacting only to a fear that they would get lower grades. At the end of the semester, those students with a B+ or C+ unanimously wanted to revisit the question of plus/minus grading. The Honors students I taught were more vehemently opposed to the change than the general sections of classes I taught. Interestingly, the Honors students were also acting purely from instinct and also had no logical arguments or critical analysis to support their fears.

1 The time is long past for WKU to implement plus/minus grading. As a faculty member, I want the precision to evaluate my students in the most accurate manner. I also want to fight grade inflation, and there is no doubt in my mind that our current system does precisely that. Finally, academic quality depends on providing incentives for students to excel, not to slide. Dr. Burch needs to follow the will of the faculty and embrace this measure that promotes academic quality.

1 There are no revisions that the senate needs to make. In reality, students don't like it, so that is why Burch is against it.

1 To quote "Description of a grade: An inadequate report of an inaccurate judgment by a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has attained an undefined level of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite material." -- P. Dressel, p. 12 "Grades: One more tilt at the windmill." in A.W. Chickering (Ed.), Bulletin. Memphis: Memphis State U. Center for the Study of Higher Education, Dec. 1983 And now my opinion-- additional grading "levels" would only be fooling ourselves. It does not add any greater accuracy to the system, only the illusion of accuracy. All we do is hold a thumb up to measure student performance. It isn't even close to a yardstick. I see no psychometric justification for plus/minuses.

1 I'm sorry I don't have time to devote to this fully right now or to take the survey. We should, without doubt, have \pm , and we should be beyond this question by now. I vote yes: it's good for teachers and for students. I hope WKU will just get on with implementing what is, to me, a no-brainer. Do we really want to be a regional university with an international reach? Here's step one....let's get on to the next stage!

1 University of Louisville has the plus/minus system. I recently received my masters from U of L. I personally liked the system because the students that worked to get top grades were rewarded with the A+. We give students that are on the A/B bubble a 4.0 for their efforts which is not fair to the students that receive the 100 to 98 grades.

1 Us the plus/minus. There will be transition period, but there always is in change.

1 We desperately need plus minus grading, both to reward students that try their best(some might have to work hard for that B+), and to keep students from slacking and doing the bare minimum to get a straight grade 90% work to get an A, 80% for a B etc. We also need the plus minus system to get our students grades taken seriously by the rest of the world. Right now the perception is that anyone can get A's.

1 What % of our benchmark schools use +/-? What schools have used +/- and then changed to the 4.0. Why the change? What grad schools do the majority of our graduated apply to and or attend? Do these schools use a +/- system?

1 What about starting with graduate students first????? The quality of work produced at the graduate level can vary quite a bit, and it would be helpful to have a +/- system to designate that difference.

1 Why is there no D+ and D- in the scale? One of the purposes of a plus minus system is to distinguish among the performance of students. I would like to distinguish between students close to earning an average grade (D+) and those close to a failing grade (D-). I often have as many student earn a D as earn a B in my 200 level classes.