

Report of the Committee on Scholastic Standards and Petitions

January 31, 1979

The Scholastic Standards and Petitions Committee has considered six points raised by the Senate Steering Committee. The Scholastic Standards and Petitions Committee's views and recommendations on these points are presented below.

Points 1 and 3

1. Wording in connection with the grade of Incomplete (possible inclusion of the provision that "I" be given for reasons beyond the student's control).

After considering several changes in the wording of the description of a grade of incomplete the Committee concluded that the current wording was both adequate and appropriate. The Committee recommends the continuation of the current catalogue description:

I, incomplete, indicates satisfactory attendance and performance, but failure to complete some portion of the assigned work in a course. By arrangement with the instructor the student will have up to twelve months to complete the work before a permanent grade is recorded. After one year a grade of I may be changed to another symbol only if it was recorded erroneously.

Modification of the above description by inclusion of the requirement that I be given in the presence of reasons beyond the student's control may clarify somewhat the conditions under which this grade should be awarded. On the other hand, the Committee is of the opinion that in fact the current overall practice at the University already is to award the grade of I only in the presence of reasons beyond the student's control. The Committee further believes that inclusion in the I grade catalogue description of an explicit statement of this practice is likely to constrain unnecessarily the instructor's independent judgement and place undue emphasis on the process of evaluating evidence to determine in each case what constitutes "reasons beyond the student's control." Adoption of the suggested modification may well place the instructor in the position where he/she cannot refuse awarding a grade of I without having to prove that the alleged reasons were within the student's control. Furthermore, the Committee does not believe that adoption of the suggested modifications would actually help to discourage abuse (if any exists) of the I grade. The Committee also recommends that the description of grade of I in the catalogue clearly states, that until it is removed, the grade of I will affect the computation of a GPR as if it were a grade of F. This is a policy currently followed by the University in computing the GPR.

3. Why does an Incomplete stay on a student's transcript indefinitely and should it affect GPR as though it were an "F" during the time until it is made up?

The Committee is of the opinion that students' transcripts should reflect the factual history of academic progress including the record of when and for what courses a student received a grade of I. The Committee recommends the continuation of the practice of an I affecting a student's GPR as an F until the I is removed because such a policy will: 1) tend to control the indiscriminate use of the grade of I, and 2) act as an incentive for students to complete the course requirement in order to remove the I from the transcript.

Point 2

2. Wording for W-grade; clarify conditions necessary for receiving "W" after initial six-week period.

Since the Faculty Advisory Committee was originally requested to make recommendations on usage of the W grade the Scholastic Standards and Petitions Committee has provided that Committee with its own recommendations on the use of W. There is agreement between the two Committees on this matter, and our recommendations are reflected by those of the Faculty Advisory Committee.

Points 4 and 5

4. Should all transfer grades figure in computing the GPR whether or not they are accepted for credit towards a degree?
5. Should transfer plus-grades brought in prior to our implementing the plus-system this Fall be rechecked on request?

Inclusion in students' USC GPRs of grades earned elsewhere requires a very costly effort (see Appendix I) at translating fairly into USC grading practices those followed at other colleges and universities. With one clearly identified exception, there does not appear to be any evidence that major benefits are derived from continuation of this practice at USC. The exception arises in the case of graduation with honors, which is "based on a cumulative GPR calculated on the basis of all work in the student's college career, including grades transferred from other institutions" (p. U20 of the 1978-79 USC Bulletin). For these reasons, the Scholastic Standards and Petitions Committee recommends:

- (a) that, as a general policy, transfer grades not be included in the computation of a student's GPR;

- (b) that transfer grades of students who apply to graduate with honors be computed into their GPR; and
- (c) that transfer-plus grades obtained before Fall-1978 be left as they are and not be rechecked.

Point 6

- 6. Update if necessary the functions of your Committee in the light of the Faculty Manual, pp. 16 and 25 as amended December 1, 1976.

The Committee on Scholastic Standards and Petitions made recommendations on this matter to the Faculty Advisory Committee, which had been originally asked by the Chairman of the Senate to submit recommendations on the functions of our Committee. Our Committee endorses the recommendations made by the Faculty Advisory Committee.



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA, S. C. 29208

OFFICE ADMISSIONS

November 29, 1978

Dr. Oscar Holzmann  
College of Business Administration  
Campus

I was reading the minutes of the November 1 Faculty Senate meeting, Dr. Holzmann, when I noticed that as new business Professor Robert Rood expressed concern about the posting of an entering GPR for transfer students, and requested that it be reviewed by the appropriate committee. Apparently Professor Felix feels that is your committee...and I agree.

Briefly, the history of the entering GPR goes something like this: The University gave an entering GPR to all transfer students until shortly after the adoption of the NC grading system in 1970. Because of the confusing manner in which F's from other institutions were to be handled under that grading system, I requested the Scholastic Standards and Petitions Committee allow us to drop the entering GPR, and they agreed. Until adoption of our current grading system in September, 1975, transfer students did not have an entering GPR. With reversion to the F grading system, there was concern about the increasing number of honors students when no entering GPR was posted; therefore, we were instructed to resume calculation of an entering GPR for all students. That's where we are now.

Personally, because of the amount of work and agony involved, we in the Admissions Office favor the elimination of an entering GPR. We would post all grades on the record as earned at the previous institution and give the student a 0.00 grade point average on his USC record. As far as the problem of excessive honors graduates, I believe that could be dealt with in some satisfactory fashion. I would like to discuss this matter with you and your committee at your convenience. I'm sure any action you take will require senate action, therefore, the earlier we can get moving the sooner we can plan to implement any action which may be approved. I look forward to hearing from you about this.

Sincerely,

Arthur S. West  
Director of Admissions

cc: Professor Robert Felix  
Professor Robert Rood  
Mr. Sherwood Stark