



University of South Carolina  
University Technology Services  
Columbia SC 29208

## Report: Survey Results

Dear Ms Quinn,

This email contains results for USC Grading System Survey:

The global indicators are listed first, followed by the individual average values, consisting of the following scales:

In the second part of the analysis the average values of all individual questions are listed.

# Susan Quinn

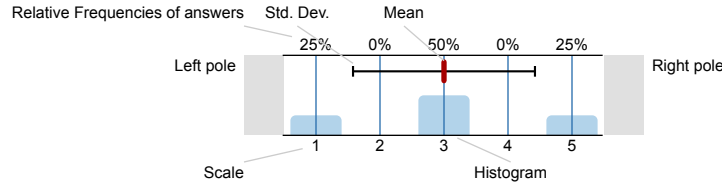
USC Grading System Survey ( SPRING 2014)  
No. of responses = 537



## Survey Results

### Legend

Question text



n=No. of responses  
av.=Mean  
dev.=Std. Dev.  
ab.=Abstention

## Grading System Survey

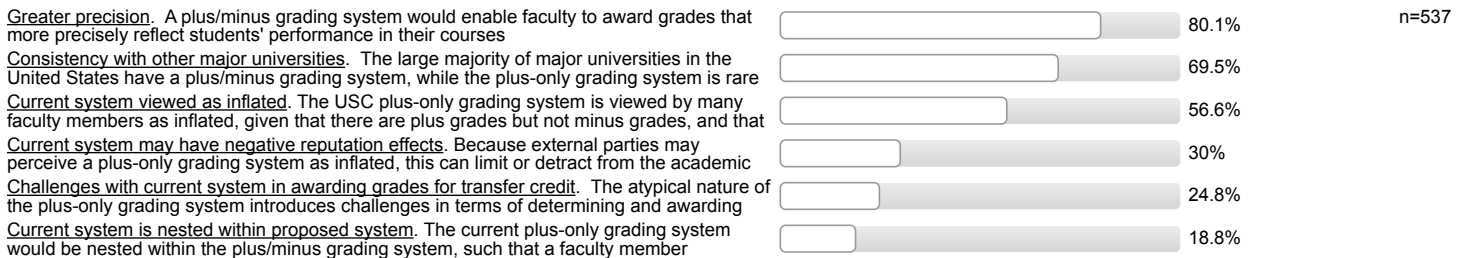
### Survey Question

Do you favor keeping the current plus-only grading system at the University of South Carolina, or would you prefer to change to a plus/minus grading system similar to the one highlighted above?



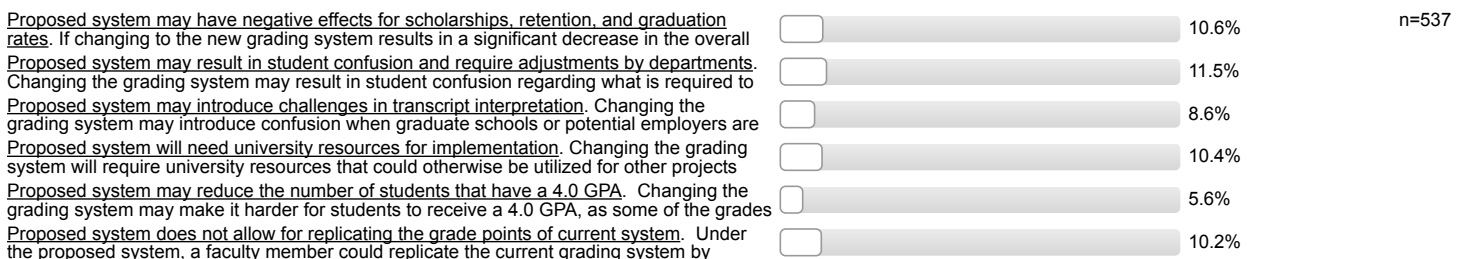
### Arguments offered in support of changing to a plus/minus grading system

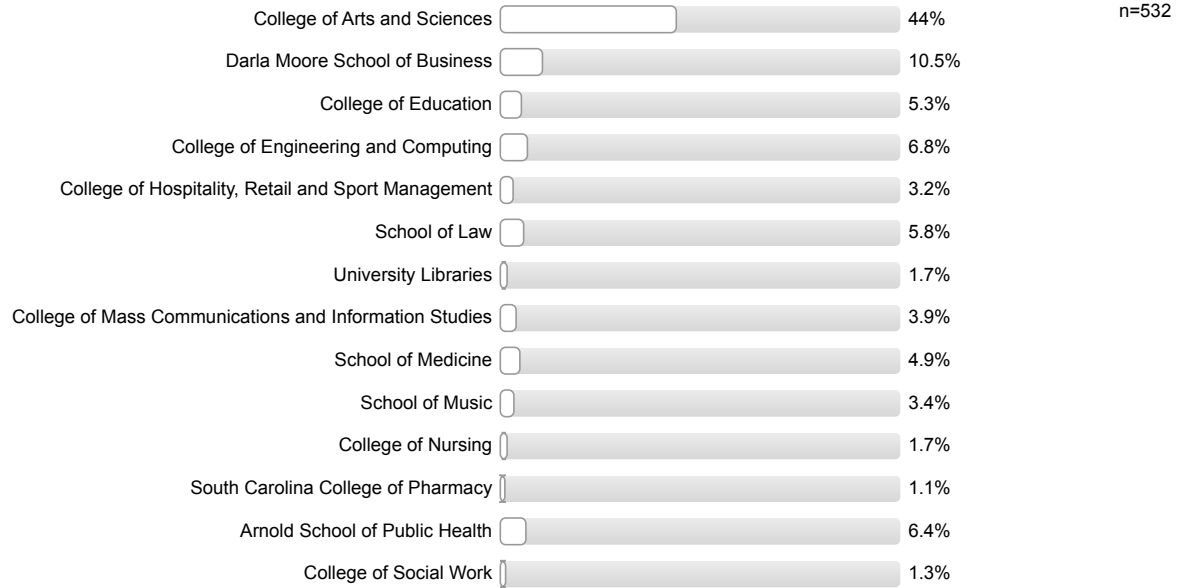
Of the following arguments, please indicate which align with your view. (Check all that apply.)



### Arguments in support of keeping the current grading system

Of the following arguments, please indicate which align with your view. (Check all that apply.)



**What is your present academic position?****Please indicate your college or school.**

# Profile

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Subunit:	Research Surveys
Name of the instructor:	Susan Quinn
Name of the course: (Name of the survey)	USC Grading System Survey

Values used in the profile line: Mean

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## Comments Report

## Grading System Survey

**If you would like to offer comments about the proposed change, please do so here:**

- More precision is good, but C- SHOULD NOT BE A PASSING GRADE for prerequisites stating now that C is required. I expect a lot of confusion (and student visits and e-mails) on this issue.  
PS Why are we talking about athletic conferences here???"Background research examining universities in the five major athletic conferences in the United States indicated the following."
- A lot of the debate is silly. The essential change is just going from a grading system which uses an ordinal scale with 8 categories to one using an ordinal scale with 12 categories. Increasing the number of categories increases the potential to be able to differentiate among students but almost certainly reduces the reliability of the grading. For me, 8 categories is sufficient to make distinctions among students.
- A plus/minus system also serves us well when having to make decisions about student awards and scholarships. I recently transitioned to USC following 15 years at the University of Georgia. I saw healthy changes when UGA shifted to a plus/minus system. Grade inflation was addressed and the level of rigor increased across campus.
- ABOUT TIME.
- All the arguments in support of the change are very thorough and I couldn't agree more. The current plus only system is very limiting and frustrating to use every semester.
- Although I like the idea of a more refined grading scale, I hope somebody considers the issue of more students losing their scholarships.
- Another argument for keeping the grade system is that there are fewer grade borderlines. Added 4 more grade values to the system will cause more issues with grades near the borders and possibly increase student issues around grading.
- As a skills teacher in professional school, part of my responsibility is to allow students to distinguish themselves on the basis of their work. That distinction helps not only students, but also potential employers as they evaluate students' performance. Thus, the more precision with which I can convey a student's relative performance, the better.
- As stated in the above, having Plus/Minus options gives a finer evaluation of students' performance. It also acts against 'grade-inflation' because for border-line cases, even with the most honest/strict intention, a professor is apt to assign a higher grade. With Plus/Minus system, there is a finer gradation.
- Assuming scores are spread evenly within the current plusses, the proposed system would cause few changes if faculty simply took their current grade distribution and split the plusses equally into plusses and minuses. (e.g. an 87-89.99 B+ might become an 87-88.49 A- and 88.50-89.99 B+). If I believed all faculty would do so then I would encourage the faculty senate to spread that suggestion and have no problem with the proposal.  
  
One of my own concerns with the proposal involves a point raised in the survey: "Current system viewed as inflated. The USC plus-only grading system is viewed by many faculty members as inflated, given that there are plus grades but not minus grades, and that the plus grades tend to count more at USC than they do elsewhere (i.e., +0.5 for a plus grade at USC, versus +0.3 or +0.33 for a plus grade at most other universities)."  
  
It is my suspicion is that those concerned about grade inflation will simply carve off the bottom end of the full letter grades and make them minuses. (e.g. 80-86.99 B becomes 80-82.99 B- and an 83-86.99 B). Assuming scores are spread evenly and the current plusses are given to the top 3% within each grade level, this would cause around 30% of students (dropping from full grade to a minus) to lose 0.3 out of 4 on their GPA for that class and another 20-30% (the current plusses, excluding As) to lose 0.2. This seems almost sure to have a cost in terms of state funded scholarships, retention, and external awards.  
  
Couldn't faculty who were primarily concerned about grade inflation in their classes simply mimic the harsher version of the +/- system by changing the plus range they use (e.g. 87.00 to 92.99 B+ at 3.5 the same on average as 87.00 to 89.99 B+ at 3.3 and 90.00 to 92.99 at 3.7)?  
  
I assume that it has been pointed out that research on the effect of changes from no +/- to both +/- is meaningless in the context of our proposed switch?  
  
Has any one asked athletics about what a drop in GPA would do?
- At the SCCP this would also require a change for the students at MUSC given that our grading system must be the same.
- Because I am not allowed to give minuses I also don't give plusses to avoid grade inflation. I would much prefer to be able to give both, as in any other university I am familiar with does. The current system is an embarrassment.

- Better reflection of student performance is my chief consideration in supporting the change. I'm not worried about retention because (a) we have more students than we can properly accommodate in my college and (b) students lost through this change will be below-par students anyway. Likely reduction in the number of students maintaining a 4.0 average is an absurd concern, in my view, because our aim should be to assess performance accurately and not to maximize the number of "perfect" records. My experience years ago with a plus/minus system was highly satisfactory.
- Choices under why not change did not relate to why I chose that option, they were mostly really bad choices. The + and \_ system has too many "cut off" points - most student will be within a point or two (out of 100) of the next or lower grade level. Note sure instructors can make the differentiation in a statistically valid way. Also, for sure we do not need a D- grade, what is that?
- Comment: This survey should have an option for people that do not mind one or the other.
- Consider having an A+ option. Student work that is at an A+ level differs significantly from A or A- work.
- Every major university I know uses this system. Actually, in terms of grade inflation, I have often given students a B+ who really would have actually deserved an "A-" but not an "A." I have been upset not to have the "A-" option ever since I came to USC over 15 years ago.
- Except for a possible reduction in the number of 4.0 averages, overall a change in the system would likely result in grade inflation, as instructors would come under pressure to raise, for example, a B+ to an A-, or a C+ to a B-. A grade of D- is pure silliness.
- For years I have wanted to change to a plus/minus system. It's more accurate of students' performance.
- From the perspective of someone who has taught at two other universities (with tenure; Arkansas and BYU), I highly recommend changing the USC grading to enable minuses. Simply put, there are instances when a student performs at a level that is A-, B- or C-. To give the student any other grade is to misrepresent the quality of performance. Moreover, the argument that our standards are simply different (i.e., USC does not have an A- to give, so the student could not have performed A- work) ignores practical reason. USC students compete in a market where USC does not set the standards for evaluating grades: employers and other educational institutions evaluate our students as though an A- were possible. That means that in the situation where a student performs A- work, a grade of B+ or A is a misrepresentation to marketplace employers, who are considering more than USC graduates for positions. So to the extent that we want our graduates to accurately represent their scholastic achievements to other market participants, we must grade according to the standards set by that market. We must recognize minuses.
- Given the current limited testing methods in order to give the student a grade in a course, there is no reasonable way one could justify even the current fine-structure of the grades. My preference would be to use straight grades: A, B, C, D and F.
- Grade inflation is an enormous problem, and I do not see how the new system will improve it. But, I probably won't hurt it either.
- Grade inflation within the COE is astounding. The new system would allow a greater reflection of students' actual performance.
- Grades are not that precise; the use of a +/- system is nitpicking. It will also involve more work to assign grades and greater complaints from students about missing the cut for the next higher grade (because there will now be more cuts). If you want that kind of "precision", just switch to raw numbers.
- HOLY HELL it's about damn time!!!!
- Having a minus will make my grades better reflect the students' progress. I give minuses on papers but miss the ability to do so on final grades, which I had at my 2 previous institutions.
- Having joined the law school after teaching as a full professor at three other universities and having taught as a visiting professor at three others, I was disappointed to discover that the South Carolina student who earns an "A" would, at best, have earned a "B+" at any of the other schools.
- Having taught at various R1 institutions for over 5 years, I strongly prefer the plus/minus system to the plus-only system, primarily for greater accuracy in determining grades.
- Having taught elsewhere, I've often wondered if our grading system was another inexplicable South Carolina anomaly. We should make this change and normalize our grading system to that practiced in most of America's college and universities, for all the reasons articulated above.
- How does awarding minus grades improve USC's academics? If there's not a clear answer to this, then don't make the change. We have undergone a lot of change in recent years. Some of these effects are still being worked out. Before you make this change, think about who is going to be most affected by this change: undergraduate directors and advisors. It's not a big deal to the course instructors, or to students. The ones who will have to deal with the issues are the ones who have to deal with program requirements, transfer analysis, etc.

The argument that having minus grades makes USC more prestigious is ridiculous. Most people won't know. Even looking at a transcript you can't tell - there are a surprising number of current students who have not earned a + grade; there will be some students who never earn a - grade and others who will not earn a + grade. You can't conclude anything from looking at a small number of transcripts.

I do believe overall GPAs will decrease. I expect current A's to be split between A and A-. This is going to result in slightly lower GPAs.

No academic benefit, more work, and decreased GPAs -- that's three strikes against this proposal.

- I actually agree with the first and fifth statements under the "Arguments in support of keeping the current grading system" but find those as additional reasons to adopt the proposed system rather than retaining the current one. We need to be more demanding and not less. Just

yesterday, I had a long discussion with students in my 400 level capstone course about grading; their consensus was that in the vast majority of courses at the University, all you had to do was meet the minimum requirement to get an "A." Making it more difficult to achieve a higher GPA would reward our best students who really resent grade inflation since their hard work lumps them in with those just getting by.

- I also believe that changing to a plus/minus system will aid the professor in appropriately delineating the grade percentages within each grade appropriately. This will help the student understand why each percentage represents the grade it does.
  - I am 100% in agreement that the system should be changed to a +/- system.
  - I am 100% in favor of the proposed change. I have always found our no-minus grading system to be utterly ridiculous.
  - I am THRILLED to see this proposal. I detest having to inflate student grades more than already necessary in this academic climate. Students need to know that their work is not really "A" or "B" or "C" level but, in fact, barely in the range of passing or excellence (whichever the case may be). It is misleading for STUDENTS as well as to future graduate schools/employers/etc. It acts as a disincentive to student learning.
  - I am glad that the faculty senate is considering this grading issue, and I am very much in favor of instituting a plus/minus system. but I think there are other major problems with undergraduate education that the faculty senate should be tackling--namely, the incredibly low expectations we have for our undergraduates and the utter lack of regard many faculty members have for undergrad education. Every year I ask the 175 students in my intro geography class how many of them have had to write an essay at some point during the year. the MAJORITY say that they haven't been asked to write a single essay. It is APPALLING, and the university will NEVER achieve the status of a UNC or a UVA as long as this is going on. PLEASE do something about this. it should have been done when the new core was being created. shame on all of us for letting the issue of teaching quality and rigor founder for so long.
  - I am so glad to see this possibly be changed. I was stunned to see how grades are inflated vs. other higher institutions that I have worked with. A minus (-) is just as important of an indicator as a plus (+)!
  - I am strongly in favor of moving to a plus/minus system.
  - I believe that a plus/minus system would not only be a more precise one but also, quite frankly, one that would be more fair to our students. If such a system were to be implemented, some of the possibly negative fallout could be somewhat mitigated by the fact that instructors and professors may be far less reluctant to round off a very high C+ to a B-, for example.
  - I believe that the data given above is so equivocal that, if we were currently a plus-minus system, it, as well as many of the arguments, could be used to justify a survey seeking opinions about switching to a plus only system.
- I think this is a case of motion toward no place significantly different and only ensure, if the change goes through, that lots of people end up doing lots of work and spends lots of money.
- I believe the change would provide more meaningful assessment of student performance.
  - I came to this survey with the intention of voting to change. But access to a college education is a priority for the University, so much so that we've implemented Palmetto College to reach those people who are place-bound. I can't in good conscience vote for a change that would endanger students' abilities to keep their scholarships. I might feel better about a change if we knew how the transition was going to be organized and what steps would be taken to minimize negative impact on students and scholarships. As much as I would love the flexibility to give a more precise range of grades, the cost to the student outweighs my longing.
  - I don't agree with pluses or minuses. Would rather do away with both. It complicates grading.
  - I don't see a compelling reason for us to be out of sync with other universities. However, I don't know whether it's worth the trouble to make a change at this point. I have no strong opinion either way.
  - I enthusiastically endorse this proposal, especially for graduate students (for whom the current system allows grading with essentially no meaningful intervals between "fine" and "troubled." I do think that policies regarding the GPA cutoff for scholarships will have to be adjusted to include B- average as acceptable.
  - I fully support moving to a plus/minus system, and I have wanted to see this change since I arrived at USC. Under the current system, a student in my class who receives a 90% gets the same grade as a student who receives a 100%, and this is a major problem in my opinion. These are very different levels of performance and deserve different grades. I would also support adding an "A+" to the system. Even though it would not be worth more points than an "A" on the grade scale, it would be nice to have a way to recognize exceptional students.
  - I fully support the proposed change. It is long overdue. The current system ties the hands of teachers here.
  - I have always hated the +/- system. In fact, my grading scale has been readjusted to be more strict in who can earn a solid A.
  - I have been hoping this change would come for a long time.... Will allow for far more accurate gradeing.
  - I have been praying for such change to happen since I joined USC 6 years ago! This is wonderful, BUT we must also include "A+" or the change will be incomplete and senseless. Please, do include also A+ grade!!! Thank you.
  - I have been wishing for a plus/minus system for years. I hate having to give the same grade to students who truly excel, for example, as to students who have just barely earned an A.

Please, let's do this!!

- I have favored this change for years. I believe students will receive a more accurate assessment of their performance in a class, and I also believe they will work harder to master the material. The problem is especially acute in the all important B-/C+ border, where most students fall. PLEASE IMPLEMENT THIS CHANGE!
- I have long wished for a plus/minus system.
- I have taught at law schools other than SC (Toledo, NIU, Iowa, and Alabama). All use the plus/minus system. One of the main reasons that they use this system is accuracy--not just to aid faculty but also to provide students with a truer sense of their knowledge and skill levels. The skewed results of our system allow students to ignore opportunities to improve, which, in turn, may impact the quality of professional services rendered post-graduation.
- I have wished for over 20 years that we could go to a plus/minus system (for all the reasons checked above, and more). The plus system is especially hard in grading grad students, since we are normally constrained not to give Cs (unless a student is not performing at graduate level). This leaves us only 3 grades to give out. If we had A+ as well, this would allow us 6 grades in a plus/minus system for grad students: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-.
- I have wondered the entire time I have been here why in the world SC has chosen to use such an antiquated system that has little relevance to other universities. Moreover, when grading, I would wholeheartedly welcome the use of a minus in all categories.
- I know this is an additional thing, but I think it would be good for the university to have set numeric ranges for each letter grade. For instance, an A would be 93-100, or whatever it was decided to be.
- I like the idea of more precise grading, but also see that changing the current system would have a number of drawbacks.
- I spent over 12 years at another university that used the +/- system before beginning work at USC.
- I strongly agree that we should change the system - the new system of plus/minus grades is much more accurate and also much more FAIR for the students, who would get a more accurate recognition of their success. Plus/Minus grades are also much more helpful to reflect on the student's development within one class.  
I previously taught at a major research university and was very pleased with their more versatile grading scheme.  
Just one caveat: grade inflation is abundant in the arts, unfortunately.
- I strongly disagree with the Arguments in support of keeping the current system that refer to number of students with a 4.00 GPA, scholarships, and graduation rate, given that all of these achievements are entirely based on academic merit and the letter grade is simply a measure of that merit.
- I strongly support a change in the grading system. There is a big difference between a B+ and a full A, and we'd have much more precision in giving a fair grade.
- I strongly support the change. The sooner, the better.
- I support the plus/minus grading system, but think that a standard grading system should be implemented so all faculty are using the same scale to assign the grades (e.g. USC puts out that 93-100 =A, 90-92 =A-, etc. ). I don't think that you can impose a standard grading system, but then allow any faculty to 'construct' the rules to achieve that in their own class. This doesn't make sense
- I taught as a graduate student at Rutgers, and I can say with some confidence that the standards for getting an "A" were higher, even though they use "the same" system as USC. I believe we have a grade inflation problem.
- I taught at USC for the first time in Fall of 2013 and was disappointed to find the + only system. I came from an institution that successfully transitioned from + only to +/- . It's a good thing to do for both faculty and students.
- I teach a course for USC and UGA students. UGA is on a +/- system. USC is not. This leads to challenges in assigning grades.
- I think a grade is a grade, degrees of a letter grade are confusing and irrelevant. (2 Counts)
- I think it's particularly important to have the grade of A-, which increases the worth of the grade of A, which would then be awarded more rarely.
- I think this change is absolutely necessary and I applaud the Faculty Senate subcommittee for taking this on. It will definitely allow for more precision in grading.
- I think this proposed change is just a formal one that does not reflect the value and the capacity of the student, but adds confusion on one hand, and also adds to the perception in students that the only important thing is the grade, and not the knowledge. There is already plenty of obsession with grades from both students and teachers, and this proposal would add to that "social sickness" but not to the quality of the teaching or the learning. I believe that the most important thing is to be exact, strict, and fair when giving grades to specific assignments. Then, teachers must be consequent with those results when putting grades and final grades, because the tendency to inflate the grades happens there, and it doesn't matter if you change the systems, it will be still inflation if the teacher wants to inflate it all along or at the end. The important thing is that THE UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS TEACHERS THAT WANT TO GIVE GOOD EDUCATION AND FAIR GRADES, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT FAVORABLE TO STUDENTS. The proposed system is a failure of the educational system in this



country that prefers to stay in the surface (grades) instead of doing what is supposed to do: teaching and learning. I don't want to be anonymous. My name is Maria Seila Benavente, from the DLLC department.

- I would also allow an A+!
- I would be thrilled with that change. In the Dept. of Lang, Lit and Cultures students have to earn a 92 to get an A and otherwise they get a B+. Adding in the A- gives professors the ability to distinguish between high As and low As. In my experience, the current system both inflates and deflates GPAs/transcripts in that a student who earns a 91.4 (an A- or even an A in other universities) gets a 3.5 instead of a 4.0.
 

In the DLLC, a B is 83-88. That means that a student with a final average as low as 82.## receives the same academic recognition/status as a student who earned 88.4 I believe that with out the plus/minus system, the grades aren't truly representative of student performance.

Adding in the minus system also eliminates some issues of high achieving "border students" - ones who don't truly deserve an A, but a B+ does not represent/indicate the demonstrated work ethic, performance and achievement in a class. There is still a lot of prestige in an A-.

I'm so happy to receive this survey. It will be interesting to see whether people vote for the change or not, and if it is implemented how things change.
- I'm not sure why reducing the number of students that have a 4.0 GPA should be seen as a bad thing. It should be hard to do -- only a top handful of students should attain that.
- I've been waiting 14 years for this discussion to happen. I would REALLY like the option of minus grades. For example, I have students who really aren't quite "A's." Under the current plus-only system, do I deflate their grade to a B+, or inflate it to an A? This situation happens every term.
- If students are relying on the grade-inflation inherent in our current system for retention, scholarships, and 4.0 GPAs, then there's something terribly wrong with the system.
- If we change to a +/- system, I would hope that professors would not be allowed to continue to award only pluses and straight grades (this was listed as a possible reason for favoring the plus and minus system). If we change, everyone should change.
- If we go further, to three decimal places, we could have even more precision!
- Initially, my instinct was to preserve the current system to preserve GPAs and student confidence, but after reading the arguments my views are more aligned in support of changing to grading system. I still have some negative reactions to the proposal, but overall do agree that the change is necessary.
- It is my recollection that this issue was discussed a few years ago, and it was the regional campuses that were not in favor of the change.
- It is, in the Honors College, very difficult to reward really good students and give some criticism to those who are still very good, but A-. In the SCHC the differentiation issue is even bigger.
- It's important to be able to evenly relate scores in courses (points) to letter grades, and thence to the points for GPA. Any system where the "A" category is divided differently from the other categories makes it hard to do this, but it is especially hard in the absence of the minus grades.
- Long overdue.
- Many students are penalized because they do very well to merit some type of A grade (e.g., A-). However, under the current system, they are forced to get a B+. I support changing to a +/- system. It will result in increased precision when evaluating student performance.
- Minus grades are particularly important at the graduate level. An A is graduate work, B is a slap on the wrist and C is failure. An A minus indicates graduate work that could be better. At the moment we have no way of awarding less than perfect scores without making them look more disastrous than they actually are. More increments in undergraduate grading will also be better.
- My experience is that much of the confusion indicated in the pro- current system is eliminated by clear explanations to students at the beginning of the semester. So that kind of argument doesn't seem to be compelling. As far as job competition is concerned, employers and school-based colleagues in my profession (education) are more interested in what our graduates can do for their children/students, not how smart they appear to be. Furthermore, students and faculty seem to know that grade inflation is abundant within the College of Education. So, the plus/minus system offers more exacting data, depending on how high the instructor's expectations are and how thoughtful work is evaluated.
- None
- None of the reasons I support the status quo appear above. I favor the current grading system because (i) I believe it induces students to work harder and to pay more attention to their performance; (ii) it reduces the amount of pressure faculty receive to bump a student to a higher grade (i.e., students are less willing to push for an A from a B+ than they would to push for an A- from a B+); and (iii) grading cutoffs appear less arbitrary and capricious. That is, a plus/minus grading system would introduce too many distinctions among students that are otherwise not all that different in their performance.
- Often I encounter the difficulty at the end of the semester of distinguishing the A student from the B+ student. Because there really is a difference between a A and A-. This means that as opposed to the typical 100 to 90 for the A in my upper level undergraduate courses a

student usually has to get a 93 in order to receive an A. Under a plus/minus system, the A- student could be properly recognized.

- PLEASE change it. I am uncomfortable with only being able to assign a + grade and not a minus one. It lends to the student idea that they must only meet some minimal standard to get an A. We need the minus!
- Perhaps we can go back to percentage.
- Personally I would prefer getting rid of pluses and minuses both.
- Please add an A plus option to the system. We have to reserve something for true excellence!
- Please please please change to plus/minus!
- So often a fell a minus grade was in order (eg., A- ) but had to go with the lower grade (eg. B+). An opoin would greatly help in these borderline cases.
- Still, I would like to see a A+ option in the current system (and have it count the same as a plain A, 4.0 quality points) just as a way to recognize outstanding students.

On the change, this would have made sense when banner was implemented. At this point, why bother?

- Strong support to change the system. I personally feel it is an embarrassment. Not sure how we got here, but a change can't come soon enough.
- Teachers would have to spend more time explaining and justifying their grades to students who want a better grade.
- The arguments against the change are mostly absurd. Students "may appear" less competitive? "May reduce number of students that have 4.0"--? is that a bad thing? are appearances more important than the real thing?  
Is the university a bulwark against the rising tide of mediocrity or will it happily just swim along with the tide in the interest of keeping us all comfortably employed? Stand for integrity!
- The current "plus" system is a lunatic idea, intended only to inflate grades, which is why I very rarely award plus grades. And I would intend under a plus minus system only rarely to award either.
- The current system does a disservice to students by not giving them the proper feedback on their work (i.e. they don't have a minus to tell them how close they are to the next lowest grade) and absolutely damages the university's reputation by appearing as if we are inflating grades.
- The current system is mathematically illogical.
- The first and fifth arguments against the change (listed above) are unethical. The fact that the current system promote grade inflation is among the reasons for changing it.
- The proposed change will counter a trend toward "grade inflation", afford a more accurate GPA, and bring our grading system more in line with peer and aspirant universities, as well as the majority of U.S. Schools of Medicine.
- There are many times over my 32 years at USC where a +/- system would have helped me with the assignment of grades... I have always felt that the + only system was one-sided, so I tended to give few PLUS grades as a result. With a +/- system, then it would be easy to assign both grades equally as needed and not feel that there is bias in the process.
- There is no question that the current system inflates student grades (I actually tested this a long time ago using grades from classes I've taught at three different institutions). Professors need more precision to separate out students, especially at the top of the scale.
- There is too much difference between a student with a high C and one with a low C. The same can be said of high v. Low B. It cheapens the grade of the higher performing students not to identify the low students with minus grades.
- There is usually a large difference in the quality of work and effort of the students who receive an 86 and an 81 in my classes. I hate that they receive the same grade. The potential for confusion among students, staff & recruiters can all be managed with simple, clear and consistent communication. It is ridiculous that we don't have a +/- system.
- There seems to be no other rationale for our + only since besides grade inflation. In particular, there are students that do not deserve an A but earn more than a B+. Please change! So glad to hear this is in the works.
- There should be no official nesting of the current system. Anyone preferring not to give minuses merely has to avoid giving them. We need official uniformity of standards.
- This change is LONG overdue. Students doing "A-" work suffer, and are not sufficiently recognized for their hard work, by getting "B+" grades. This system has NEVER made sense to me. We should change it ASAP. Any transitional hassles are well worth it.
- This change is long overdue. The arguments made in resisting the change are, in my view, disgraceful!
- This is a long-overdue reform and I am delighted to see some movement, finally, to change it. I have always assumed that it was implemented to artificially inflate the GPAs of marginal USC undergraduates (or students in South Carolina colleges seeking to transfer to

the Columbia campus). Even if this is not the origins of the practice, it certainly has that effect of grade inflation despite the intentions of faculty. How many of us wanted to give an A- but had to choose between an A and a B+, feeling forced to choose the higher unwarranted grade.

- This is a non-issue. I've never looked at another university's grading system and thought more or less of that university. I don't give pluses or minuses a thought when I review the student's transcript. You look for overall patterns, not minutia. There are no standards for how individual faculty members assign grades, so the idea that changing the grading system somehow improves our university is simply naive.

I would prefer that this committee put its energy into doing things like pressuring the administration to make Banner useful to faculty. We could not give out some awards this year because Banner was not capable of providing us very basic information. This damages the students and wastes faculty and staff time, which impacts the scholastic standards of this university. What the heck good are pluses and minuses if you cannot get a list of something as basic as who is getting a minor in your degree programs?

- This is a trivial issue.
- This is an obvious improvement.
- This is the worst proposal I have seen. It is hard enough to determine where to break grades into B or B+ for example. Adding a Minus grade makes it even more difficult. In times where grade inflation is rampant as we have at the University, this will only lead to more grade inflation as faculty will be more likely to give a C- instead of a D+ or B- instead of a C+, etc. I think this is a terrible idea.
- This is very well put together. The reasons, pro and con, are nicely stated. I think the effect on the student GPA is unclear, but I can imagine that in some cases an instructor will opt to give a B- rather than a C+, but would not go so far as a solid B. I think the other arguments for retaining the current system are less compelling than the reasons to change.
- This should have been done years ago. I would add the following issue: senior administrators have wanted to make their clientele happy by keeping grades high. We have serious grade inflation here.
- This was a well-designed survey. I hope it provides appropriate feedback from the faculty to make an informed decision about the potential change to the grading system.
- Time to man up and face some of the costs of doing this, and just do it. SC has a negative reputation on education--we do not have to continue to cheapen our degrees with the ridiculous plus only system.
- To me, there is a qualitative difference between those that earn in the plus range and it is nice to recognize them but I do not think it is necessary to penalize a student who has an 82 with a negative vs the student who had an 84. If the plus only system goes away, I would support the traditional system with no pluses or minuses.
- Until I moved to USC, I had NEVER heard of a grading system like ours. It causes all the problems mentioned above in the arguments for changing the system, and many of the arguments for keeping the current system essentially institutionalize grade inflation. The current system also provides a disincentive to students. As a faculty member teaching a large CORE class, I know that some students are quite aware of exactly how little they can do to earn a straight C or B and I hate to reward those students at the same level as those who work hard but only earn 6% more (out of 100%). Unfortunately the only way I can reward those who are substantially better is to inflate the grades, which I fight not to do. Please institute a real grading system!
- We definitely need the plus/minus system in place at USC!
- We need a plus/minus system. The plus-only version is embarrassing.
- We want minuses!!!!
- When I started at USC I thought this grading system was confusing. Now I'm used to it, but any time you have to explain your grading system to new faculty, you have a problem.
- While I know this is not the scope of the question, it would be nice for the committee to consider allowing an Honors/Pass/Fail system as well instead of the current alternative of just Pass/Fail (S/U) which is used in a number of professional schools.
- Why not split the difference, do away with letters altogether (and thus pluses and minuses), and simply use a numeric system. This is the system at Michigan State University (<http://www.reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Print.asp?Section=521>), where the scale is: 4.0 - 3.5 - 3.0 - 2.5 - 2.0 - 1.5 - 1.0 - 0.0. If faculty want to refer to letters (and convert numeric scores to letter scores in their syllabi, they are free to do so). But how much easier would it be to simply use numbers and eliminate letters altogether? I say a lot easier. Any faculty member can then say what numeric (percentage) score range in their class translates to the grading scale the university uses.
- Wisconsin and Stanford have the right idea. Pass/Fail.
- With the current system, I am besieged by students at the end of each semester arguing, begging, pleading and jockeying for a boost to the next grade level (I often teach a gateway course for a large number of pre-professional students). Adding the plus/minus option would only complicate this and require additional resources, not only from myself, but also from teaching assistants and other administrative staff. This is not a one-time-only commitment as described above, but a continuing drain on faculty and staff who are often already overcommitted.
- Yes, yes, a million times, yes. Please make this change!

- get ready for Banner "fix".
- in my prior institution, we had a plus and minus system, which can help me more accurately grade students in the range of 90-93 (A here, but A- in my prior school).

**Please enter your number of years of teaching experience at the University of South Carolina.**

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