

April 2009

TO: Faculty of The College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering
FROM: Richard Feldman, Dean of the College

RE: Assignment of Grades and Related Matters

I want to summarize the current regulations about the assignment of grades in the College. If you have any questions about the propriety of assigning any particular grade, please check with my office before you send your completed grade rosters to the Registrar.

THE FACULTY'S RULE IS THAT NO EXAMS OF ANY KIND MAY BE GIVEN DURING THE READING PERIOD. ALTHOUGH WE DISCOURAGE THE PRACTICE, NON-COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS MAY BE GIVEN DURING YOUR REGULAR CLASS TIME IN THE LAST WEEK OF CLASSES.

NOTE: No "senior option" exists. Seniors avoid final examinations at their own discretion and risk. Instructors may waive final examinations for seniors, or for any other undergraduates, if such an action appears justified.

Academic honesty. I ask you to make every possible effort to assure that grades are earned honestly. Please prepare, monitor and grade final examinations in such a way as to discourage improper conduct. You may need to pay special attention to seating and proctoring and may want to have students sign in. You may ask students to write their examinations in ink, so that there is less likelihood that students would present modified examinations in evidence that their grades should be higher. Please review the attached statement describing the procedures of the Board on Academic Honesty. If you suspect a student of dishonest behavior, you must report the student to the Board on Academic Honesty. You may not punish the student by assigning a lower grade without proper communication with the Board. If you report a case of suspected dishonesty to the Board, enter an "N" on the roster for that student until the Board informs you of its findings in the case. If you have any questions, please call Professor Beth Jorgensen, x54265, Acting Chair of that Board. See the Academic Honesty website at www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/ for further information.

Electronic grading option. Please use electronic grading if possible. *This option is available to all instructors.* Specific instructions are being sent by the Registrar.

Deadline for submission of grades. I urge you to plan your grading so as to make it possible for you to submit grade rosters at the earliest possible moment. The Registrar has assigned a date by which your grades are due. *The deadline is printed on your grade roster. Any requests for an extension of time should be addressed to me in advance and in writing.*

- A. Grades for seniors must be reported within 24 hours of the final examination, since they affect decisions about graduation. **Your colleagues, and the students who deserve to graduate, rely upon your prompt submission of grades.**
- B. Please hand-deliver grade rosters to the Registrar's Office in Lattimore 312. If you cannot accomplish this, call my office for help. **DO NOT USE INTRAMURAL MAIL!**
- C. Grade rosters, supplemental grades, and grade changes turned in after 12 noon on May 18 will not be accepted by the Registrar. They must be turned in to me in Lattimore 317.
- D. Please do not leave town until you have submitted your grade rosters. *College rules require that grades be turned in before leaving campus after the semester ends.*

Grades authorized for use by faculty in evaluating performance of undergraduate students. The quality of performance of each individual student is to be reflected in the assignment of a letter grade to each student. The letter grades that are available for use by the faculty are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, and E. (NOTE: The letter grades D+ and D- are not authorized in Engineering courses.) The letter grades S and F are **NOT** to be assigned by the faculty. These letter grades are assigned by the Registrar when the student has elected the S/F option.

Instructors have an obligation to assign a range of grades to reflect accurately the quality and amount of work completed by the students. Students should know the basis on which grades are assigned. Grades are best assigned on an absolute basis in accord with the objectives of the course and expected standards of performance, rather than on a relative

basis, using some "curve" or predetermined distribution. Instructors have an obligation to make a careful evaluation of assignments and examinations.

Students with documented disabilities. Students with disabilities who would like an extension of the time limit for taking an examination should have contacted the Office of Learning Assistance Services in Lattimore 107 during the semester to verify their eligibility for accommodations. If the Office of Learning Assistance Services determines that the student is eligible for an extension of the time limit for taking an examination under the Americans with Disabilities Act, then instructors will be informed of this need for an accommodation and they are obligated to comply. Instructors may at their discretion extend the time limit for other students when circumstances warrant.

Grades assigned for administrative purposes with undergraduate students.

A. **The use of "W".** A student who has officially withdrawn from a course will be assigned a letter grade of "W" by the Registrar. Please do not enter a "W" on a grade roster. If you think the student has withdrawn, and therefore cannot assign a grade, enter an "N".

B. **When no grade can be reported (i.e., the use of "N").** If the grade roster contains the name of a student you have never seen for the entire semester, draw a line through the name and enter an "N" to signal the Registrar that the student *never appeared* in your class. We will then check to see if an error occurred in that registration. If the student *attended but did not complete the course and did not make acceptable arrangements* with you for its completion, enter an "N" to signify that no grade can be reported. (Do NOT award a final grade, either "E" or otherwise.) In those rare circumstances when you later decide to award a grade my office will assign an "I" to indicate, on the student's advising record, that the work was completed late (see C). Students who fail to make satisfactory arrangements for courses in which they have not received grades will, after appropriate warning, be given the failing grade of "E."

C. **The use of "I".** The letter grade "I" *should be given only when there are circumstances beyond the student's control*, such as illness or personal emergency, that prevented the student from finishing the course work on time. Faculty regulations require that an agreement, signed by the instructor and student, be submitted to the College Center for Academic Support in Lattimore Hall for each grade of "I." Forms for this purpose are available in the Center for Academic Support. If a form is not submitted, the student will be informed that the "I" grade will convert to an "E" unless a signed agreement is forthcoming. The advising record will show both an "I" and the earned grade whenever students fail to complete all requirements by the end of the semester in which the course is taken. Only the final earned grade (but not the "I") will appear on the official transcript.

D. **Writing Deficiency.** Please check, in the "WD" column on the final roster, the names of students whose writing you regard as deficient. Students will be notified of this assessment and encouraged to use the services of the College Writing Center.

Grades assignable to graduate students. The grades available for post-baccalaureate students are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, E, I, and W. The letter grade S may be used in a graduate course, providing that all students are assigned grades on the basis of S or E. The letter grade of F is not used at all with graduate students.

Posting grades. Posting of grades is strongly discouraged. Students are able to see their grades on-line at the close of the course evaluation period, 8 a.m., May 12th. However, if you decide to post your grades, make certain that code numbers are used (not Social Security numbers or University ID numbers). In order to assure confidentiality, do not use a grade roster. Instructors who post grades via computer printouts may want to produce the list in numeric rather than alphabetic order.

Changes in grades. No change in grade involving a change in your judgment about the quality of a student's work may be made after your grade roster is submitted to the Registrar without my explicit approval. *Proposed grade changes are sent in every instance to me; they are approved only if the instructor affirms in writing that an error in computation or some other form of error has occurred.* The purpose of this regulation is to eliminate the pressure of students on individual faculty members to change their judgments. I suggest that, when students ask you to change a grade or to reread an examination, you cite the College regulation. If you agree to reconsider a grade or reread an examination, you should get a written statement from the student explaining the exact nature of his or her request and the basis for the request.

ACADEMIC HONESTY REPORTING GUIDELINES

As members of an academic community, students and faculty assume certain responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is to engage in honest communication. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends. Students are informed of the meaning of academic honesty during Orientation, and each student signs a statement concerning this. Ignorance of these standards should not be considered a valid excuse or defense.

Cases of Suspected Academic Dishonesty

Any instructor who discovers, or who is informed of, a probable case of academic dishonesty should contact the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty, Professor John Givens, to learn how similar cases have been handled in the past. He can be reached at x5-4272. The instructor should then discuss the matter with the student in a confidential setting.

Except in cases of clear and simple misunderstanding (in which case the matter can simply be dropped), the instructor *must* choose either to attempt to resolve the matter directly with the student or to pass it, unresolved, to the Board. In the former case the instructor confronts the student with the evidence, suggests an appropriate penalty, and provides the student with a copy of the Academic Honesty Policy (see below). The student then has 48 hours to decide whether or not to admit guilt and to accept the suggested penalty. If the student so admits and accepts, then the instructor and student together complete an Academic Dishonesty Incident Report. Once the Report is complete, the instructor forwards it to the Chair of the Board. Copies of any readily-available evidence should be attached to the Report, but a detailed analysis is not required, unless and until the Board discovers that the student has a record of habitually dishonest behavior. If and when the Board receives a second report of academic dishonesty concerning a given student, it will convene a hearing to determine whether further action is required.

If the instructor chooses not to pursue the matter directly with the student, or if the student declines to admit guilt and/or to accept the penalty suggested by the instructor, then a written report of the incident, including all pertinent documents, must be forwarded to the Chair of the BAH. The written report should include any honesty guidelines noted on the course syllabus.

The BAH has the responsibility for reviewing all cases of suspected academic dishonesty by College students or in College courses. For cases not resolved between the instructor and the student, the Board determines if academic misconduct has occurred and recommends a penalty to the Dean of the College. If the Board determines that the alleged misconduct in any way involves sponsored research (including federal training grants), threatens the integrity of the scientific method, or compromises the creation of new knowledge (including original art, scholarship and research), the matter will be referred to and will follow the procedures outlined in the Policy on Misconduct in Scholarship and Research in the *Faculty Handbook*.

After receiving an unresolved case, the Chair will notify the student in writing. The notification will explain that a report of suspected dishonesty has been made and will ask the student for a written reply concerning the charges. Once notified of the charges, the student will not be allowed to drop the course and should receive an "N" until the case is concluded. The Chair will also indicate that at an appropriate time the student will be given a hearing. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are entitled to swift disposition of their cases and in the time between the reporting of a case to the Board and its resolution, the student should be allowed to continue in the course, completing all work as required. When the hearing is scheduled, the student is notified. The person who made the initial allegation will not be present at the hearing unless the Hearing Board determines that his or her presence is needed.

Disposition of the Case

After the hearing, the Board notifies the Dean of its findings. The Dean accepts, rejects, or modifies the Board's recommendation, and notifies the student and the person who reported the case. Students may appeal the Dean's decision to the Provost. If the Board decides that there has been no academic misconduct, the Chair of the Board notifies the student and the person who reported the case.

The complete Academic Honesty Policy and other relevant information is available at www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/