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12/20/2006

11/20/2006

On: 12/20/2006
Vice President & Provost

Memo

Date: 12/20/2006

To: Provost Wildenthal, Academic Deans, Associate Deans of Undergraduate Education

Cc: President Daniel, Academic Council

From: J. Michael Coleman, Undergraduate Dean

RE: Undergraduate Grades

In the fall of 2000 we changed from an 8-point grading system to a 13-point grading system that included minus grades and a new 'A+' that was assigned the same four quality points as the grade of 'A'. As part of the discussion with students about changing the grading system, we agreed to issue annual reports on grading within the undergraduate university so the academic community could follow possible effects of the new grading system on student grades.

We have now submitted the fall 2006 Dean's Honor Roll to the UTD Mercury and sent individual letters of congratulations to students. The Associate Deans in each school have been given mailing files so that they may also write to these students. There were 563 students who completed 12 semester credit hours with a GPA in the top 10% of their school. The minimum GPA for inclusion on the honor roll varied from a low of 3.882 in Arts & Humanities to a high of 4.0 in Behavioral & Brain Sciences and Natural Sciences & Mathematics. Table 1 summarizes the number of Dean's List students by school for this semester along with the required GPA.

The next two tables follow previous reports and contain average grades first partitioned by school and then by grade level that span fall semesters for the period 2000-2006. Table 2 includes all students who received a GPA. Compared to fall 2005, the total number of undergraduates increased by just over 1% led by strong increases in the number of students in A&H (16.5%) and NS&M (14%). EPPS witnessed the largest decrease in students (9%). The average undergraduate GPA decreased by .03 from fall 2005. Average grades declined in every school except MGT with the largest decrease occurring in A&H (.13). The average GPA for a UTD student remains in the 'B-' range. Grades dropped in all but the senior class.

Table 3 provides the same information for students who attempted at least 12 credit hours for the fall. The percentage of students considered 'full-time' has increased each year from a low of 58.5% in fall 1998. For fall 2006, 71.52% of undergraduates attempted at least 12 hours, up from 71% in fall 2005. In comparison to fall 2005, BBS, MGT, and NS&M grades increased while all other schools reported decreases led by A&H (-.14). Overall, grades for full-time students were identical to the fall 2005 semester. The range from highest to lowest average grade across school was .33 points. Only freshmen grades dropped substantially (-.08) from 2005.

Full-time students made better grades than part-time students. Table 4 contains the average fall 2006 GPA's for students who attempted at least 12 semester credit hours (full-time) versus those who attempted fewer than 12 hours (part-time) partitioned by school and by class. The average GPA for students attempting fewer than 12 hours was 2.66 compared to 2.90 for full-time students. The biggest differences favoring full-time students were in NS&M (.54), ECS (.37) and BBS (.36). Only in GS did part-time students have higher grades than full-time students. This is the school with the highest proportion of part-time students. When partitioned by class, sophomores (.59) and juniors (.39) who attended UTD part-time revealed the largest grade deficiencies compared to their full-time classmates.

Specific academic grades given to undergraduates are distributed by student's school and letter grade in Table 5. The total percentages at the bottom of each column show the distribution of over 41,000 posted for fall 2006. Row percentages for each school illustrate how grades are distributed to students within each school. For example, 256 of the total 4418 grades given to A&H students, or 5.8%, were an 'A+'. Disregarding pluses and minuses, the most frequently given grade for fall 2006 was 'A' (41%). About 6.5% of all grades were 'F'. GS students received the largest proportion of 'A's' (43.1%) while A&H students received the largest proportion of 'F's' (7.9%). About 44% of all grades issued were either a plus or minus, while about 45% were whole letter grades indicating that the full grading distribution is being utilized by the faculty.

One significant change in the grade distribution results from a new policy on dropping classes in the undergraduate university. Prior to fall 2004, students could drop classes without approval through the ninth week of class and, with administrative approval, through the 13th week of class. In all cases the student received a grade of 'W'. The four-year average for fall withdraws from 2000-2003 was just over 10% of all grades issued. Beginning in fall 2004 the policy was changed to allow students to withdraw from classes during the first four weeks with the signature of their advisor and receive a grade of 'W'. In weeks five through nine students submitting a completed drop form receive a grade of 'WP' (withdrawn passing) or 'WF' (withdrawn failing) depending on their performance in the class. After week nine, students can only drop for nonacademic reasons and their drop applications are reviewed by a panel of advisors who either approve or deny the request based on the nature of the request and the documentation provided.

This new policy resulted in the percentage of 'F's increasing while the percentage of 'W's decreased. Using averages from the four years prior to the policy change (2000-2003) to the three years the policy has been in effect (2004-2006) the percentage of 'W's' dropped from 10% down to 4.1% while grades of 'F' increased from 4% to 6.7% (See Table 6). At the same time, the percentage of hours completed, derived by dividing the hours earned by the hours attempted, increased from 86% to 89.4%. At a practical level, this increase in completion has yielded an additional 4,000 grades over the last three years which undoubtedly benefits our overall graduation rate.

The overall 'DFW' rate, which is the percentage of students in a class who receive grades of 'D' or 'F' or withdraw from a class, was 15.3%. The highest rate was for introductory physics while a number of classes had zero percentages. Table 7 contains the top 25 undergraduate classes with enrollments of at least 50 in order of descending DFW rate. Keep in mind that many of these rates are collapsed across a number of sections. About half these classes are upper-division while half are also typically used by students to complete core curriculum requirements.

The GPA's of undergraduate students in the fall of 2006 seem in keeping with those of several universities attracting students able or superior to ours. The University of Texas at Austin campus reports an average GPA of 3.06 while at Georgia Tech it is 3.06, Colorado reports a 2.95, and Perdue lists an average undergraduate GPA at 2.81. The 2.90 earned by our full-time undergraduates this fall is probably the best reference to these other benchmarks. As we complete our seventh fall semester under the new grading system, undergraduate grades seem stable. The revision to the grading system seems to be in wide use by the faculty, it appears to operate fairly, and continues to reflect the demands of our curriculum and the talents of our students.

Table 1

Required GPA for Dean's List Fall 2006

School	Number	Required GPA
Arts & Humanities	63	3.882
Behavioral & Brain Sciences	63	4.000
Engineering & Computer Science	94	3.912
Economic, Political, Policy Science	44	3.945
General Studies	39	3.918
Management	148	3.918
Natural Sciences & Mathematics	86	4.000
Undergraduate Studies	26	3.924

Table 2

Fall 2000-Fall 2006 Semester Average GPA Partitioned by School ¹

	Fall 2000		Fall 2001		Fall 2002		Fall 2003		Fall 2004		Fall 2005		Fall 2006	
	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA
A&H	386	2.93	422	2.93	465	3.10	561	3.01	742	3.01	872	3.02	1017	2.89
BBS	507	2.81	585	2.95	626	2.93	733	2.96	816	2.95	922	2.96	1002	2.94
ECS	1857	2.69	2185	2.73	2119	2.79	2038	2.73	1839	2.63	1671	2.70	1610	2.67
EPSP	451	2.79	457	2.83	541	2.9	705	2.87	835	2.85	850	2.92	773	2.89
GS	504	2.96	596	3.02	654	3.05	739	3.05	797	3.11	776	3.14	725	3.05
MGT	1762	2.69	2090	2.81	2239	2.88	2272	2.84	2269	2.72	2344	2.85	2337	2.89
NSM	694	2.66	686	2.68	825	2.82	1120	2.81	1262	2.76	1312	2.72	1496	2.72
UND	404	2.62	402	2.71	443	2.81	536	2.80	512	2.70	528	2.75	421	2.67
TOTAL	6565	2.73	7423	2.81	7912	2.88	8704	2.85	9072	2.80	9275	2.86	9381	2.83

Fall 2000-Fall 2006 Semester Average GPA Partitioned by Class ¹

	Fall 2000		Fall 2001		Fall 2002		Fall 2003		Fall 2004		Fall 2005		Fall 2006	
	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA
Freshman	1172	2.6	1423	2.71	1418	2.75	1559	2.80	1547	2.73	1479	2.72	1375	2.67
Sophomore	818	2.63	1060	2.66	1074	2.76	1270	2.71	1313	2.71	1284	2.74	1312	2.70
Junior	2262	2.68	2365	2.77	2733	2.88	2957	2.83	3031	2.71	3132	2.81	3092	2.75
Senior	2313	2.89	2575	2.96	2687	2.99	2918	2.95	3181	2.95	3380	3.00	3602	3.02
Total	6565	2.73	7423	2.81	7912	2.88	8704	2.85	9072	2.80	9275	2.86	9381	2.83

¹ Data represent majors within each school who earned a GPA within the semester.

Table 3

Fall 2000-Fall 2006 Semester Average GPA Partitioned by School¹

School	Fall 2000		2001		Fall 2002		Fall 2003		Fall 2004		Fall 2005		Fall 2006	
	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA
A&H	248	2.99	281	2.99	316	3.12	402	3.07	552	3.03	684	3.05	783	2.91
BBS	345	2.87	421	3.08	460	3.01	548	3.05	626	3.02	700	3.00	727	3.04
ECS	1211	2.79	1466	2.84	1478	2.88	1418	2.82	1329	2.72	1202	2.82	1205	2.76
EPSS	291	2.87	267	3.03	356	2.96	489	2.92	610	2.92	615	3.00	553	2.95
GS	224	3.02	312	3.11	361	3.05	434	3.06	453	3.13	437	3.11	371	3.05
MGT	1059	2.78	1287	2.87	1430	2.93	1463	2.92	1453	2.78	1548	2.87	1581	2.96
NSM	484	2.81	493	2.80	607	2.91	854	2.94	978	2.85	969	2.81	1137	2.85
UND	284	2.72	342	2.89	386	2.85	435	2.85	421	2.76	428	2.76	352	2.72
TOTAL	4146	2.82	4869	2.90	5394	2.94	6043	2.93	6422	2.86	6583	2.90	6709	2.90

Fall 2000-Fall 2006 Semester Average GPA Partitioned by Class¹

Class	Fall 2000		2001		Fall 2002		Fall 2003		Fall 2004		Fall 2005		Fall 2006	
	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA	Students	GPA
Freshman	1043	2.63	1280	2.76	1323	2.78	1423	2.85	1459	2.76	1377	2.77	1288	2.69
Sophomore	565	2.76	752	2.77	840	2.86	991	2.77	1029	2.82	1020	2.82	1049	2.81
Junior	1327	2.82	1446	2.88	1773	2.98	1945	2.94	2028	2.78	2155	2.87	2158	2.87
Senior	1211	3.02	1391	3.10	1458	3.07	1684	3.07	1906	3.04	2031	3.08	2214	3.10
Total	4146	2.82	4689	2.90	5394	2.94	6043	2.93	6422	2.86	6583	2.90	6709	2.90

¹ Data represent majors within each school who attempted at least 12 hours

Table 4
Average GPA by School Partitioned by Student Status:
Full-Time/Part Time

School		Student Status		Total	Percent Full-Time
		Full-Time	Part-Time		
A&H	Number	783	234	1017	76.99%
	Average GPA	2.91	2.84	2.89	
BBS	Number	727	275	1002	72.55%
	Average GPA	3.04	2.67	2.94	
ECS	Number	1205	405	1610	74.84%
	Average GPA	2.76	2.39	2.67	
EPPS	Number	553	220	773	71.54%
	Average GPA	2.95	2.72	2.89	
GS	Number	371	354	725	51.17%
	Average GPA	3.05	3.06	3.05	
MGT	Number	1581	756	2337	67.65%
	Average GPA	2.96	2.73	2.89	
NSM	Number	1137	359	1496	76.00%
	Average GPA	2.85	2.31	2.72	
UG	Number	352	69	421	83.61%
	Average GPA	2.72	2.40	2.67	
Total Number		6709	2672	9381	71.52%
Total Average GPA		2.90	2.66	2.83	

CLASS		Student Status		Total	Percent Full-Time
		Full-Time	Part-Time		
Freshman	Number	1288	87	1375	93.67%
	Average GPA	2.69	2.35	2.67	
Sophomore	Number	1049	263	1312	79.95%
	Average GPA	2.81	2.23	2.70	
Junior	Number	2158	934	3092	69.79%
	Average GPA	2.87	2.48	2.75	
Senior	Number	2214	1388	3602	61.47%
	Average GPA	3.10	2.89	3.02	
Total Number		6709	2672	9381	71.52%
Total Average GPA		2.90	2.66	2.83	

Table 5

Undergraduate Grade Distribution for Fall 2006 Partitioned by Student's School

School	Grade																			
	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	CR	D+	D	D-	F	W	WF	WP	X	Total	
A&H	Number	256	1034	519	437	612	321	177	234	96	3	61	108	31	349	46	40	77	17	4418
	Percent	5.8%	23.4%	11.7%	9.9%	13.9%	7.3%	4.0%	5.3%	2.2%	0.1%	1.4%	2.4%	0.7%	7.9%	1.0%	0.9%	1.7%	0.4%	100%
BBS	Number	384	1031	398	325	546	247	175	269	105	155	43	109	26	200	56	57	94	48	4268
	Percent	9.0%	24.2%	9.3%	7.6%	12.8%	5.8%	4.1%	6.3%	2.5%	3.6%	1.0%	2.6%	0.6%	4.7%	1.3%	1.3%	2.2%	1.1%	100%
ECS	Number	705	1768	672	536	1009	465	344	589	280	24	107	231	113	600	50	122	133	25	7773
	Percent	9.1%	22.7%	8.6%	6.9%	13.0%	6.0%	4.4%	7.6%	3.6%	0.3%	1.4%	3.0%	1.5%	7.7%	0.6%	1.6%	1.7%	0.3%	100%
EPPS	Number	214	771	348	321	430	235	143	183	84	17	29	55	18	223	16	54	59	26	3226
	Percent	6.6%	23.9%	10.8%	10.0%	13.3%	7.3%	4.4%	5.7%	2.6%	0.5%	0.9%	1.7%	0.6%	6.9%	0.5%	1.7%	1.8%	0.8%	100%
GS	Number	120	685	261	209	405	141	107	183	75	4	24	47	16	91	24	16	46	20	2474
	Percent	4.9%	27.7%	10.5%	8.4%	16.4%	5.7%	4.3%	7.4%	3.0%	0.2%	1.0%	1.9%	0.6%	3.7%	1.0%	0.6%	1.9%	0.8%	100%
MGT	Number	582	2106	1085	923	1392	689	456	700	277	9	102	215	63	471	79	130	122	44	9445
	Percent	6.2%	22.3%	11.5%	9.8%	14.7%	7.3%	4.8%	7.4%	2.9%	0.1%	1.1%	2.3%	0.7%	5.0%	0.8%	1.4%	1.3%	0.5%	100%
NSM	Number	919	1611	689	535	848	426	329	444	253	59	140	196	84	574	88	115	184	35	7529
	Percent	12.2%	21.4%	9.2%	7.1%	11.3%	5.7%	4.4%	5.9%	3.4%	0.8%	1.9%	2.6%	1.1%	7.6%	1.2%	1.5%	2.4%	0.5%	100%
UG	Number	144	449	206	146	236	139	97	138	71	5	25	63	25	152	35	38	37	13	2019
	Percent	7.1%	22.2%	10.2%	7.2%	11.7%	6.9%	4.8%	6.8%	3.5%	0.2%	1.2%	3.1%	1.2%	7.5%	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%	0.6%	100%
Total Number		3324	9455	4178	3432	5478	2663	1828	2740	1241	276	531	1024	376	2660	394	572	752	228	41152
Total Percent		8.1%	23.0%	10.2%	8.3%	13.3%	6.5%	4.4%	6.7%	3.0%	0.7%	1.3%	2.5%	0.9%	6.5%	1.0%	1.4%	1.8%	0.6%	100%

Table 6

Distribution of Grades 'F' and 'W' for Undergraduates: Fall Semesters 2000-2005

	Semester						
	2000 FALL	2001 FALL	2002 FALL	2003 FALL	2004 FALL	2005 Fall	2006 Fall
Number of Grades of 'W'	3275	3131	3260	3367	1520	1699	1718
Number of Grades of 'F'	1011	1194	1342	1592	2691	2752	2660
Total Number of Grades	26556	30942	33581	37244	38874	40823	41152
Percentage Grade 'F'	3.81%	3.86%	4.00%	4.27%	6.92%	6.74%	6.46%
Percentage Grade 'W'	12.33%	10.12%	9.71%	9.04%	3.91%	4.16%	4.17%
Percentage Grade 'W' + 'F'	16.14%	13.98%	13.70%	13.31%	10.83%	10.90%	10.64%

Table 7

Top 25 'DFW' Classes for Enrollments of at least 50

Course Name	Course ID	Grade																Total DFW	%DFW		
		A	A-	A+	B	B-	B+	C	C-	C+	D	D-	D+	F	W	WF	WP			X	
College Physics I	PHYS1301	6	3	2	9	1	2	7		4	3	3	1	14	6	13	3		77	43	55.84%
Human Anatomy and Physiology with Lab I	BIOL3455	6			9		2	8		3	4		1	14	1	7	5		60	32	53.33%
Classical and Molecular Genetics	BIOL3301	10	1		13	9	11	16	15	11	12	4	14	19	6		22	1	164	77	46.95%
Classical and Molecular Genetics workshop	BIOL3101	10	1		13	9	11	16	15	11	12	4	13	19	6		22	1	163	76	46.63%
Calculus II	MATH2419	16	12	8	14	19	19	10	19	21	8	10	15	55	4	11	2	1	244	105	43.03%
General Chemistry II	CHEM1312	4	2	3	8	12	3	10	10	10	7	5	5	18	1	4	6		108	46	42.59%
General Chemistry I	CHEM1311	40	24	10	38	57	24	42	58	33	30	18	21	99	8	35	8		545	219	40.18%
Humans: Our Place in Nature	ISGS4305	3	10		7	2	3	3	2	3	2	4	3	9	1		3		55	22	40.00%
Advance Engineering Mathematics	EE 3300	1	2	10	9	3	3	16	13	3	6	5	2	10	1		15		99	39	39.39%
Electromagnetic Engineering I	EE 4301	5	6	7	6	2		7	9	4	4	4	2	10	3	5	2	1	77	30	38.96%
History of Texas	HIST2301	8	2		11	1	1	14	2	6	11	3	2	8	1	2			72	27	37.50%
Calculus I	MATH2417	29	40	24	40	52	27	35	34	36	15	16	16	95	8	29	12	6	514	191	37.16%
Applied Calculus II	MATH1326	20	23	11	23	12	17	16	13	8	6	3	7	40	4	18	5	1	227	83	36.56%
Precalculus	MATH2312	27	29	13	41	27	23	30	28	21	20	10	8	65	6	18	7		373	134	35.92%
Human Genetics	BIOL1318	4	5	6	3	4	4	6	2	3	2	2	5	8	1	1	2	1	59	21	35.59%
Applied Calculus I	MATH1325	40	23	33	30	25	21	15	19	8	14	6	9	51	7	25	4		330	116	35.15%
Computer Architecture	CS 4340	7		7	5	6	8	2	5	7	7		1	11		3	3		72	25	34.72%
Computer Science I	CS 1337	19	12	2	36	20	23	26	6	4	8	8	3	27	6		21		221	73	33.03%
Electronic Circuits	EE 3311	5	9	4	6	8	3	13	8	11	7	4	1	13		4	3	1	100	32	32.00%
Behavioral Neuroscience	NSC 3361	40	10	17	41	8	18	33	10	17	28			35	4	13	8		282	88	31.21%
Storyboard and Pre-Production	ATEC2331	14	2		11		8			4	4			10	1	1	1		56	17	30.36%
Electrical Network Analysis	EE 3301	8			28	1		9	8		9			8		5	1		77	23	29.87%
Understanding Film	FILM2332	17	23	13	36	20	34	28	18	16	12	9	11	37	3	8	5		290	85	29.31%
Comparative Courts and Law	GOVT3351	10	10	6	10	7	6	4	4	1	2		1	9	6	4	1		81	23	28.40%
College Physics Lab I	PHYS1101	30		6	4		1	2		2	2	1		4	6	1	3		62	17	27.42%