1. How well does the current 5-point (A-B-C-D-F) grading scale used for UI undergraduate classes accurately reflect your evaluation of individual student performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistic

- **Min Value**: 1
- **Max Value**: 5
- **Mean**: 3.03
- **Variance**: 1.66
- **Standard Deviation**: 1.29
- **Total Responses**: 269

2. Have you ever taught at an institution that used a plus/minus grading system (A-, B+, B, B-, etc.)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes, community college</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes, 4-year college or university</td>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistic

- **Min Value**: 1
- **Max Value**: 3
- **Mean**: 2.34
- **Variance**: 0.27
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.52
- **Total Responses**: 269
3. Do you believe a plus-minus grading system would (choose all that apply):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Allow faculty members greater precision in assessing student work.</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Promote student learning by providing an incentive to work harder for a plus grade or to avoid a minus grade.</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Increase the time that faculty members spend grading.</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lead to more student appeals of grades.</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>None of the above.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistic | Value
---|---
Min Value | 1
Max Value | 5
Total Responses | 269
4. Please list two potential benefits of giving plus/minus grades?

Text Response

In classes where most students perform at the B/C level, allow greater differentiation between high and low performances. If students know a B+ is worth more grade points than a B, there's more incentive to work hard until the end of the semester and not slack off.

Increased differentiation between students potential increase in motivation for students to push for the next grade

Gets student's the grades they deserve.

I can't think of any.

More accuracy better encouraging good students

Provides more precise evaluation of student performance. Distinguishes student in the plus or minus category

Better distribution of grade scale; More accurate representation of students' efforts.

The only potential benefit i see write now, is if the student is on the boarder of A and B, we cannot bump them to A, cause it is unfair for students who really worked hard to get a A and unfair for the student that they will loose motivation for later classes as they land on the same grade as some one who did not work enough hard as them.

Better ability to distinguish different levels of work. Makes smaller assignments more meaningful.

Greater accuracy in grading - clearer differentiation in assessment!!! I do like the idea that students might work even a little harder to get the +

-less rounding up of grades by faculty -more impact on students being able to increase GPA without having to earn an A

It is more fair, currently someone earning a 71% and 79% end up with the same grade. The current system isn't dynamic enough.

More accurate assessment. No longer would a 79.5% and an 89.4% receive the same grade. Would provide motivation for students to do more than "just get by."

Precision

1. Would provide a more accurate assessment of student performance. 2. Better communicate to potential employers and graduate schools the academic performance of students.

More precision, really the only benefit, but it is important.

1. I believe that a 71% and a 79% are two very different scores and reflect very different levels of learning. 2. Students will strive harder for A's or A- over B+.

I find it highly unfair that a student earning an 88% is lumped in with a student barely squeaking an 80%. I actually think this will reduce grade inflation and student appeals, since at least their grade will look different from their slacker buddy who currently gets the same grade for less effort.

Better precision for evaluating student performance

This is too discrete, with tiny differences leading to massive GPA consequences, thus less agony deciding between borderline cases. This would put a real premium on As to be close to a 4.0.

Better reflection of grades earned

None.

Better correlation between the percent grade and the letter grade. That is the only advantage I can think of.

Rewards students who have done higher levels of B or C work. Deters grade inflation in which a student who has done B+ work is given an A because of the contrast with a student who has done B- work.
More accurate reflection of student work. Encourages students to work harder.
More accurate feedback will be necessary, leading to increased student learning Greater
student buy-in, in some/many cases, to their grades
Faculty will be able to feel better about their grades Students will feel better about getting a
minus grade rather than being dropped down a level
More detail on the student grades Better understanding of borderline grades
Closer assessment of the students ability in the class. Allow for incentives and deceptives
1) Better reflects actual student performance, particularly in courses where majority of the
student work is in teams/groups. Reflects distinction between levels of effort that students can
clearly understand. 2) Provides closer tracking of performance for students who are struggling
to maintain passing grades, thereby allowing students to better understand when they need to
be proactive about improving their performance.
1. Especially at midterms, it would more effectively communicate to advisers and to the student
how the term was going. There's a big difference between a C+ and a C- in a class. 2. It could
potentially lower the grade-grubbing phenomenon if students understood that as far as their
GPA went there was little difference between a B+ and an A-, unlike the giant leap that an A to
B is.

None - just more confusion and inequity.
The difference between a B- and a B+ is considerable. I have long felt that plus and minus
grades would be fairer to students. The other benefit would be that I'm sure we would deal with
less student appeals of grades. Although I have not taught at an institution that used a
plus-minus grading system. I have attended a university that used plus/minus grades, and as a
student, I felt it was much fairer than the college I attended that did not use plus/minus grades.
Avoids inflation of GPAs at the top end; Enables me as instructor to differentiate between levels
of achievement.

Delineate more accurately the rank of students Reward the highest achieving students
My biggest problem with the lack of a plus/minus system is the difference between a B+ and a
B- student. With general grade inflation, C students at Idaho get B's. It would be nice to be able
to distinguish them with B- grades while still allowing for B students to earn B and B + grades.
Enables faculty to more accurately assess student performance. Rewards students much
more accurately. (An A- or B+ is much better than a B)

More accurately describes student performance. It never really feels right to give a student who
earns 89% the same grade as a student who earns 80%. Students may have greater
motivation to work towards the next highest grade.
1. Giving a plus/minus can prevent gross exaggerations of grades - both inflated and deflated.
2. The plus/minus grades can lessen the work time for professors seeking to be accurate and
fair.

Greater differentiation among levels of student performance is the only benefit that occurs to me
More nuanced and flexible
The grades will be more fair and precise. For example, if a student earned 90%, in the current
system, he/she gets an A just the same as a person who earned 100% and worked very hard all
semester.

Essentially covered in question 3.
1. Allows the instructor to make finer distinctions and to recognize extra effort. (Or less effort.)
   For instance, with many assignments involving group work, and often with one or two people
carrying the load, this would allow for those two people to get B+ while the rest of the group
gets a B, without having to give, say, 2 A's and 3 B's, which seems much more controversial
and confrontational. 2. Potentially smoother curves in classes that are curved.
   - allows for more accurate assessment] -greater differentiation between students (there is a
difference between a B- and B+ student)

Plus/minus grading does allow for more precision in assigning grades and helps to identify more
closely the excellent student from the more average student. For graduate students, I think it will show important differences between top students. Will help decrease grade inflation.

Better discrimination between performance levels Greater accuracy

1) The difference between student performance at the high end of a grade (e.g. B+, just below achieving A-) and the low end of the same letter grade (e.g. B-) is significant. Currently, both sets of students receive exactly the same grade (B) which fails to reflect the difference in achievement. 2) ~40% of my students slack off during the last 3 weeks of the semester because once they have secured a 'B', no matter how low of a 'B-' it might be, they no longer have incentive to continue working in the class.

When a student is a few points from a higher grade, there will be some indication of that achievement

Precisely/accurately reflects student progress in course. The range of accomplishment within the B range for a course is very very wide, such that assigning a B requires quite arbitrary cutoffs at either end of its grading scale. It will motivate students to discuss grades--not JUST appeal, but talk & consider! Right now, a student content w/a B or C has no incentive to strive for a B+ say, or a B-.

I see no benefits at all, to be honest. I already inform my students of their final percentage, which leads to their final grade. They already know where they stand. Adding a plus/minus system is absolutely pointless. Perhaps cracking down on professors who negligibly leave students in the dark re: their grade would be a better solution. I update the grades on BbLearn WEEKLY, yet I have students who claim that some of their other professors don't even let them know their midterm grades. Crack down on THAT, please, rather than pursuing this misguided idea.

More accurately reflect student performance. I hate giving students that are only 1% away from each other a full grade difference while including students 9% apart from each other in the same grade category. This by itself makes it worth moving to a plus/minus system in my opinion. Overall GPA will be more reflective of performance.

Too often I have a student at the borderline between two letter grades. Plus and minus will solve this and give a far more accurate picture of a student's accomplishments. Acknowledge top 2% of student excellence with A+ grades. Provide more degrees of freedom in awarding grades.

1) Will likely represent more accurately the grades of students -- the vast majority who fall between grading levels -- not just in individual classes but across total GPA; 2) Will allow UI to adopt similar standards exercised at more prestigious and rigorous public universities; 3) Incentive students to do better.

Could help alleviate some of the challenge of dealing with borderline grades. Would provide more grade information to students.

I do not believe there are benefits to grading with the plus/minus system "A" students, whether they are low "A" or high "A", clearly rise above the group. I don't think an A- or A+ would provide additional ancillary support to distinguishing the preeminent students. However, in my experience, there is a clear quality difference between a "B+" student and a "B-" student and it would be helpful to designate between those two student groups.

1.) Allow for a greater discrepancy between grades. I feel there is a huge difference between, for instance, an 80 and an 89. That's 9 points, but they receive the same grade. 2.) Students who go to law school may be judged against other students who are on a plus/minus system, putting UI students at a potential disadvantage

5 points scales are too crude and mask variation in student performance. Adopting a more precise scale is a meaningful way to address perceptions of grade inflation by stakeholders outside the university.

More accurately reflect student performance. Provide better feedback to students.
Greater precision in assessment. Does incentivize students to perform better. Greater fairness to students since allows for finer delineations in performance.

1. There is a big difference between a B- and a B+. This system will more accurately assess the grade the student earned. 2. This may also stop grade inflation.

I don't see any benefits with giving plus/minus grades. We have to stop complicating things around here, students have an entire semester to keep/improve their grades. If they get a C in the first exam, they already know that need to work harder for a B and even an A. If we embrace plus/minus grades, then a student earning a C- in the first exam, that gets a C+ in the second exam and a B- in the third exam, it is not going to earn an A for the class. It is a sense of false improving performance in my opinion.

It allows us to better reflect student performance in a course. There are times a high borderline student did not earn a full A, but was close. A grade of B+ or A- more accurately reflects their performance and differentiates them from the B- student.

As a scientist I always prefer more resolution in my measurements but only if the added precision is meaningful. For example measuring the distance between Moscow and Pullman in nanometers provides no useful information. I think a +/- grade system could be within the range of appropriate resolution giving meaningful precision. A +/- system might reduce student anxiety in classes or programs in which the is quite a bit of grade-inflation since the instructors and professors could give a B+ to those students who were close but not close enough to get an A-

Students who do well, (A +'s) would be happy with the distinctions. Students who get that "Minus" on a letter grade, may work a little letter.

1) It is easier to distinguish how a student did throughout their college career when GPA is calculated using a more fine scale... but really, who cares about GPA after graduation. This seems like a moot point. 2) I simply cannot come up with a second reason that a +/- system is beneficial. Even the first reason I gave is a poor benefit.

1) more precision 2) lowers the stakes of individual assignments (fall from A to A- is not as bad as from A to B)

Grades in general have been inflated. As a result, a lot of students may receive a grade of B in a course, thereby grouping a fairly wide range of quality under one grade. A plus/minus system would allow greater separation of these groupings. My feeling is that a plus/minus system would also encourage students to not simply meet minimum requirements for a particular letter grade.

Can't think of any

**ACCURACY**: the ability to be more specific about what grade a students has earned.  
**LESSENED GRADE INFLATION**: faculty will be less likely to grade students upward, because they'll have the ability to be more specific. 

Students at the bottom of a letter grade have more incentive to try harder, and students towards the plus end have more incentive to least keep attending/working at the end of the semester so they don't drop lower.

Provide better precision for work that is just above the given grade.

Administration can tell students they made a change. No other benefit.

1) Greater precision and reflection of grade that was earned - my grading system currently is set up to easily accommodate this. 2) Justifies detailed feedback I currently provide to students on assignments throughout semester.

It will increase the precision with which students are evaluated for specific course, but not for the overall program of study.

Many times the students score 85+, but still get B. Having B+ or A- will help to grade them with better resolution. The efforts of the students are recognized in a better way by the +/-/ system.

It helps motivate the students further.

None and none

Better evaluation. More incentive for student to study.
Only advantage is that it allows better distinction of student performance e.g., show the difference between a 79% and a 70%.

**THESE ARE NONE**

1. More precise evaluation of student work. 2. GPA would more accurately reflect student work. Students at upper end of grade range feel rewarded as all B's no longer represent the same grade.

Allowed you to more precisely indicate student achievement. Better reflective of how a student does in course.

Clearer determination of students' level of knowledge and skill. More refined assessment of overall course in meeting students' knowledge and learning outcomes.

There is a wide range of learning and performance that can result in a given letter grade with the current system, which results in the student with a 71% looking exactly the same (in terms of transcript and GPA) as the student with a 79%). The plus/minus system would allow for greater differentiation within each of those broad categories. Unless the end-of-semester activities have a substantial impact on the overall course grade, it is often the case that it is not mathematically possible for a student to move up (or down) by a letter grade based on performance on the final exam (or the last few course requirements), so some students simply stop participating or completing course activities at that point. I prefer to distribute the course points throughout the semester, so the plus/minus system would allow the end-of-term activities to have an impact on the grade without requiring that I make them disproportionately important. I am listing this as a benefit, but I think there may be better ways to achieve the desired outcome of "incentivizing hard work."

I am not sure there are benefits of plus/minus grades other than it would more finely separate students who were excellent from those that were exceptional (a distinction I am not certain is worth making). As an undergraduate I attended a school with +/- system and had to have a 3.8 GPA to retain my full ride academic scholarship. It made every point on a multiple choice exam matter, where if simply achieving an "A" would have assured my 4.0, that would have been far less stressful than needing to make sure I did not have more than one A- per term.

Having worked with the plus minus system before, I don't see clear benefits to either students or faculty.

It allows for greater differentiation and accuracy in the grading process. I grade on a points/percentage system and giving a student who ended up with a 99% in the class the same grade as someone with a 90% doesn't seem accurate or fair. That's it.

Students that are on borderline grades would receive the benefit of a plus. Additionally, there is a distinction between students working for an 80 percent versus an 88 percent, this would show that distinction.

The two I marked above

Overall it's just more fair. For example, there needs to be a means to distinguish a student that barely meets the requirement for an A (i.e., a high B) from a student that barely earned a B (i.e., a low B).

Number 1 above: more precision in grading. Hopefully, increase student incentive to work harder.

It helps the students on the "fringe" of whole letter grades (89%, 91%, etc.). It might be an incentive for students to try harder at the end of the semester to get the + or get rid of a -. Reduction of grade inflation Easier to grade effectively

1. better evaluation 2. work harder

The difference between an 89 and an 80 is immense, and giving both students the same grade seems unfair, which I think leads to a lot of grade inflation. It's always easier to round up than down. And I do strongly believe that students would feel the incentive (which our students desperately need more of) to try to push for the next higher grade.

1. More accurate reflection of a student's quality of work and effort. 2. Better feedback for
students about their progress at a subject. It might more accurately represent the quality of a student's work. I'm just not coming up with a second benefit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Please list two potential drawbacks of giving plus/minus grades?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, more time to grade to be sure the percentage matches the +/- scale. And students with entitlement complexes might quibble more over minor assignments if they think they need the points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increased faculty time in determining grades lower gpa for A- students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more time for little value. I don't believe employers care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time in grading; developing rubrics. Student appeals to inflate grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cannot think of ant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not think there are drawbacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't have any!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't see any.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time grading. More time dealing with grade complaints/requests for changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more work to faculty hard to find a standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More complex grading formulas. Definitely will take more time, particularly in large classes. I teach a 100-level course with more than 100 students, so time is an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe there are NO drawbacks to this system and I have advocated for students to make this a reality over the past 2 years that I have been here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning will be a drag for students caught in the middle of the change, perhaps. Maybe(?) some faculty would have to change the way they calculate grades? I have always used points/percentages, so can't imagine this changing my work at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased student quibbling and stress over grades (anything less than an A will ruin a 4.0 GPA, especially if A+ is also considered a 4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't think of any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students already beg for points they didn't earn and this can make that even worse. Students will then be more concerned about points in the class rather than learning the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More students appeals. Biggest issue I see is grade inflation. Most teachers tend to do a little bumping (e.g., up to 0.5%) for students that tried hard. The plus/minus system gives more places to consider bumping and thus leads to grade inflation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As teachers or as an institution, we would need to have more clear distinctions of what constitutes the boundaries. Also, more grade grubbing!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students so concerned with the A+ vs. the A that they struggle to find balance &quot;Lead to more student appeals of grades&quot; hits the nail on the head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes more time to determine the cut-offs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More work for the faculty to establish grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current system is established. Effects on grade point average of student for future academics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Having worked in an R1 university that uses this system, I can honestly say I see no drawbacks whatsoever, only potential benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Having used this system before, I really can't see any drawbacks of moving over. It might take slightly longer to input grades into Vandalweb. Though, I've never understood why you can't download your Bblearn grades and then upload your grades onto Vandalweb--that's what we did at my previous institution and it was so much easier for very large classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to be too specific on assessment. Not practical, won't be consistent across the board, and is not needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I honestly cannot think of any potential drawbacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students at the top end of the GPA spectrum will be impacted; Adjustment period will be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
needed.

Appeals  More accurate grading and assessment

None.

Having used as +/- system at the university level for 19 years prior to coming to UI, I do not believe there are any drawbacks. The system allows faculty to be more accurate and ultimately rewards students much more effectively than the ABCD system. It also greatly reduces the possibility of grade inflation!

Can't think of any.

1. It is not universally applied throughout the US  2. ?

As noted above, I am confident it will lead to a greater number of students whining and cajoling to be bumped into the next higher grade category (because there will be more grade categories), and then then unhappy when the professor refuses. Research actually shows that the unhappiest individual on the olympic medal podiums is the silver medalist, because the silver medalist is looking at and wanting that next level up. More grade levels may create more silver medalists.

Potentially more time grading

Can't think of any

Essentially covered in question 3.

Grade inflation/watering down of grades Increased whinning and arguing about the grades from students.

1. My experience is that there will be a lot more kibitzing and grade creep. It is a lot harder to argue from a B to an A than from a B to a B+ or even a B+ to an A-. You are really opening the grading system up to arguments about splitting hairs. 2. My experience is that plus/minus grades are often handed out subjectively and that they enable subjective grading. Again, one presumably has to have a hard rationale for assigning an A vs a B. Plus/minus opens the door to soft rationales (I feel like this student put in the extra effort, was most improved, etc.) and soft rationals are more subject to unintentional bias and even arbitrariness.

- students might see their gpa's fall slightly - there may be slew of complaints if the system is enacted

From my experience, there is MUCH more student appeals of grades, and the "oh, but I am SO close" confrontation that takes an enormous amount of instructor time. And, I taught at a community college in Washington where ALL post secondary schools used the same grading scheme. If UI was to adopt a plus/minus system, and yet other Idaho institutions did not, transfer credit concerns and comparisons would be huge. Entrance into some graduate programs require at C+, but do not allow a C or C- grade (nursing for example). So if UI had a plus/minus system and a 76.0% student (a C) had to retake the course to apply (vs. a 76.5% student as a C+ did not need to retake) vs. another institution student that did not use plus/minus earned anywhere from a 70.0 to a 79.4% and did not need to retake. This could cause some major issues.

More 'errors' with such detailed grading. More time - consuming.

None

1) Students might whine about the grade they receive. News flash: these will be the same students that whine under the current grading system. In addition, some UI employees (nonstudents) who do not teach nor evaluate student understanding nor assign grades will complain about the grading. 2) This will likely add a little more time to the assignment of the final grades in each course. For me this would be a fair trade (a modest amount of time at the end of the semester for the ability to assign plus/minus grades).

Students did not want this when we asked them in the past I teach five courses and developing new grading rubrics will add considerable time to evaluation throughout the semester not just for final grades

Students won't like it. Some instructors won't like it.
There is no good reason to make this change. Two potential drawbacks? Where do I possibly begin? 1. A low-A will suddenly not be good enough for some students, so grade grubbing will increase. 2. This will only lead to more grade inflation, not less. This is an incredibly stupid idea. If it's not broke, why fix it?

More grading effort. Benefit makes it worth it.

NONE...I have tried to get UI to do this for YEARS!!!

Administrative computer overhaul to accommodate + and - grades. May lead to grade inflation. None, except students in the Honors Program will likely oppose the measure. The current unfair system really advantages this group and allows them to inflate and/or maintain artificially their GPAs.

Possible difficulty in parsing out the difference between adjacent minus and plus grade levels. I'm not sure the benefits will outweigh the effort involved in changing to a plus-minus grading system.

In my opinion after using the plus/system for large university gen ed classroom grading, that most students receive a lower grade than they would for the same work on the current 5 point grading scale.

Added squabbling and wrangling for grades. "A" students are disadvantaged because there is little or no difference between A-, A and A+ students.

1.) Increases the amount of "complaining" at the end of the semester for grades. Misunderstanding regarding grade. Misinterpretation of grade.

Do not know of any.

1. Students appealing for a higher grade (B vs B-).
1) What an F+ would mean? An F is an F, period! Same thing with an A- versus an A+... An A is an A, period 2) It would complicate grading, you'll have to retrain yourself to judge what is the difference between a B+ or an A-

The low-borderline students -- the A- and B- students would see their GPAs drop. Push back form faculty. -- However, faculty could choose to maintain their current grades and not use +/- and let the rest of us use it.

A definite drawback is that a +/- system will further promote grade inflation. In my classes at the introductory level, the median grade is typically at about the equivalent of a C+. As such the A, B, C, D, F system has sufficient resolution. If we had more subdivisions in our grades, professors and instructors would be more comfortable with a higher median grade since they would feel they have more "steps" to the grading. Also, students will come to expect a higher median grade for all of their classes. If we were to have a +/- system there would be more grade subdivisions at which professors and instructors would look to "round-up" student scores resulting in more grade inflation. This would be ok if there was an equal chance of scores being "rounded-down" but this never happens. Also, there would be an increase in the number of student requests to round-up their grades.

GPA Point Value Changes. Ex) An A+ would be a 4.0, an A and 3.5, and A- 3.9 . If students transfer to other institutions, these institutions may not use these system and ultimately hurt the students GPA because those institutions do not recognize an A- and may potentially cause problems. More stress and complaints for and from students. I also had this grading system as a college students, and though I was a good student it was infuriating that it was almost impossible for anyone to get an "A+".

1) Every student is on the verge of getting a slightly better grade and therefore is much more likely to argue for additional points, especially at the end of the semester. 2) Realistically assigning letter grades are a very poor way to show that a student has mastered material. When I was a student I regularly saw people get good grades (3.7 or higher) who really didn't understand the material, while students who truly mastered the material received poor grades (below a 3.0). Changing to a +/- system pushes students to assign value to themselves and the
others around them based on a deeply flawed grading criteria rather than on the fact that they are people and therefore are inherently infinitely valuable. I have seen +/- systems further divide students and create a judgmental learning environment. 3) See point number one again. I can't stress enough how much more students tend to argue their grade on a +/- system.

1) higher frequencies of student complaints. 2) more grade comparisons among students
•slightly more work for instructors
more arguments from students over grades more grade inflation
Faculty will complain, because they don't like to change. Students will complain because they'll benefit less from grade inflation.
As above, I believe it would lead to more appeals of grades by students and increased time for grading
The appeal process becomes more tedious if a students receives a C- average, below 2.0. Increase grading time.
1) Needs detailed grading rubric for students that may not be easy to devise to accurately justify this detail on individual assignments. 2) Could increase grading time. 3) Students in the minus bracket may be inclined to appeal?
It may generate extra work for faculty without a proportional benefit. At the end of each semester and of the program of study GPA's are computed, and they are a good reflection of the overall performance of a student. I believe that a "+/-" grading system in the end will generate approximately the same overall GPA. GPA is usually one of the main criterion used by employers to select students for internships of graduates for employment, so I believe that the "+/-" system will not affect that.
It may take more time for grading. It is not a drawback.
More work to make small distinctions between student performance and does not help or hurt students
None
Faculty time spent to develop and fairly implement a system to distinguish between grades e.g., B-, B, B+. The implementation could differ by course and section. The additional grade margins give many more students incentives to "point grub" to try and move up from a - or to a +.

APPEALS ARE COMMON. THE CUT OFFS BETWEEN GRADES USUALLY CANNOT BE VALIDATED IT HURTS STUDENTS
1- Students appealing to get the minus removed 2- Students feeling more stress when taking an exam or turning in papers.

Students at the lower end of the lower end of grade range don't feel penalized: all B's are treated as equal. It may increase student focus on the details of the grades they earn while decreasing their focus on what they are learning.
I think that overall student GPAs will drop a little Not all faculty would use the system

May be more challenging for practicum, internships, and directed studies that are not "point" driven courses. Potential for more disagreement with students regarding grades - potential for more grade appeals.
With the current grade system there are only a handful of students who make appeals because they are "just 1% away" from the next cut-off. Although I do not make such adjustments and am clear from the beginning of the semester that I will stick to the grading criteria established in the syllabus, I get these appeals every semester. With a plus/minus grading system the number of students who are "so close" to the next grade level will increase. I typically feel comfortable differentiating "A" work from "B" work, "B" work from "C" work, and so forth. However, it is much harder to discriminate a "B+" from a "B" or "A".

Students will now have more anxiety about very small point differences which could move them out of a minus or into a plus situation. Students already struggle to accurately calculate their GPA, this would not simplify or help and would lead to significantly more stress for students and
faculty alike. Students will haggle over points for the entire semester. Faculty will be swamped with requests for extra credit at the end of every semester.

I see no drawbacks to implementing this system in my opinion. I have used a plus/minus system when I taught at the University of Utah, and the University of Alaska. It is a better option.

Grades would become ambiguous and subjective. Students already feel that grades can and should be "bumped up" because they ask. Pluses and minuses create a grey area and students may mistake this as an opportunity for negotiation rather than viewing their grade as a reflection of their effort/progress in the course.

People might have bias in looking more favorably upon (+) grades than they actually should. Other than the logistics of switching (which should be minimal), I see no drawbacks.

Calculating grades becomes more complex. Grade disputes will definitely increase.

1. discouraging students moral because of minus grade
2. complicate grading system

I really don't see drawbacks; I've taught in both 2-year and 4-year schools that used a plus-minus system (which the checkboxes above didn't allow me to say), and I've seen it work extremely well and reduce grade inflation.

1. Student disappointment at losing half a letter grade.
2. Student GPAs going down so that they miss out on the opportunity for scholarships/grad school offers/etc.

For high achievers, a minus will likely lower gpa. (I was one.) I don't know that grades are ever that accurate. It adds a whole new level of cutoffs and stress. For better accuracy, a number system is probably advisable, where percentages are converted to grade points.

It gives the illusion that we can evaluate student performance with that precision. It becomes harder to decide where to draw the line between various plus and minus grades.

I assume students would not like this at all. Some faculty may need help with clarifying their assessment strategies.

1. Students arguing about grades
2. Introducing an artificial-decision component to grading.

I see no drawbacks.

It is meaningless to distinguish between that many grading levels. Students will be asking for extra credit to make up the difference between a grade levels.

First: How will plus and minus grades be assigned over courses and different majors. For instance, will a B minus in a biology course be given for a student earning from 80 to 83%, but in a landscape architecture course a B minus will be given for a student earning from 81 to 80%? In other words, will the UI Registrar (or some entity) issue EXACT score percentages that earn plus or minus scores? Second: How will students be rewarded for A plus work?? Will A plus be an option? If not, then the entire system is flawed and unworthy of being implemented.

Does not reveal actual solid numbers

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<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>209</td>
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6. Do you believe the University of Idaho should switch to a plus-minus grading system effective in the 2017-2018 academic year?

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<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Disagree</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>No opinion</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
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<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
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</table>

7. Plus-minus systems at U.S. colleges and universities have different scales. If the UI were to adopt such a system, do you believe it should contain the following grades?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<th>No</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>1.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>1.96</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>A+</th>
<th>D-</th>
<th>F+</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>269</td>
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8. What other changes in the University of Idaho’s grading system would enhance student learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More time to submit final grades at the end of the semester. Spring is especially tough if one has a final exam Friday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All research credits/independent courses should be graded in P/F.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of rubrics with clear criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should also apply to graduate students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The entire grading structure is an artificial construct that reduces learning progress to a simple (really simple) formula that fails to serve non-traditional students/learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that the +/- system is a great first step. I also believe that separating lab classes from lecture classes will help grading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I actually prefer a decimal system, with grades simply being a 3.4, but this would be a huge step in that direction! Very exciting discussion...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't think of any.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving it as is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seems to me that a better solution to higher precision grades is to just go by percent. A student earns whatever percent in a course and that is their grade (e.g., grade of 76 or 92). This system would not encourage grade inflation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written evaluations summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of student performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater latitude for offering Pass/No Pass courses for which traditional scalar grading is either not appropriate or not particularly relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading systems are not the cause of student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiring instructors to use bblearn to post grades would help students. I use bblearn to deliver course materials, but I know many faculty do not, and I have heard from students about how frustrated they are at not being able to easily see their grades. I think faculty should also be required to return graded work within a specified period of time. My students often complain about professors who have not graded any of their work until midterm grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must retake class if earning a D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get rid of student evaluations so we are not pressured to inflate grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the +/- system would be sufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art &amp; Architecture studios to be pass/no pass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actually making grades reflect the percentage of their command of the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You could allow for instructor comments or, more radically, eliminate grades altogether.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't believe that student &quot;learning&quot; is solely based on grade assignment. A grade does not simply tell you what the student learned. Unless there is a majority of critical thinking and retention involved in graded materials. In other words, I don't think a change to a grading system will increase or decrease student learning and/or motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to make a comment on the grading page for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not directly related to grading: online course evals are a failure, with woefully low response rates. Make evals mandatory: no completed eval, no grade for the course. OR: bring back in-class evaluation forms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What a leading question! This question presumes that changing the grading system would enhance student learning, and I STRONGLY disagree with this assertion. Changing to a plus/minus system would do NOTHING to enhance student learning. The grading system that currently exists works well. If you want to enhance student learning, enforce the deadlines for student early warning grades, midterm grades, and PUNISH the lazy/apathetic professors who think they don't need to give students any idea of their standing in class until final grades. Students deserve to have up-to-date information about their current grade and status in the class. Not doing so is inexcusable, and does actual harm to students. A plus/minus system is just putting a different shirt on the same body.

No minus system at all. Only plus system.

Let's do it

None, except that we, as a self-respecting degree-granting institution, DESPERATELY need to implement a plus/minus grading system. It is simply the moral and academically-just thing to do. Period.

I would like to see 2 grades reported for upper division courses. First, the conventional grade that evaluates exams, papers etc. A second grade that reflects attendance, promptness, participation in discussions, teamwork involvement and the intangibles that would correlate well with a student's ability to "plug-in". In other words, a grade that represented my evaluation of them learning a grade not just earning a grade.

Since I did not advise students this year, I am not sure if we do this, but do we send mid term grades to advisors? I found that to be helpful for my students who were struggling so that I could meet with the ones who needed the most help. Maybe if we even just did this for students who were not doing well in classes? We may already do this, if so disregard this comment

Students should be graded by rank in class. For example "5th out of a class of 17" or in the case of regularly offered classes, by percentile of students who have taken the course in the last X number of years. Ideally, the test grades for regularly offered classes should be based on external examinations. The instructor of a course should not do the assessment; he or she should be a facilitator. This will never happen of course and institutions such as ours where the incentives are to retain students and give them as high grades as possible will continue to promote mediocrity.

Not directly grading, but related to assigned grades: The ability to drop courses a little later. My son took a lab course -- and the first meeting was AFTER the drop deadline. It was only after that first meeting that he found out that he signed up for the wrong course. Why the wrong course? Because his "advisor" just blindly lifts students blocks and does not actually advise students.

I would suggest the committee look at having grades reported as a number, a GPA for the course. With a finer resolution than the +/- system, the lack of letter grade labels might reduce grade inflation since the grade will be seen on a continuous scale rather than as steps. The reason I think this could be beneficial to student learning is that there will be no magical threshold to reach score-wise in a class to reach the coveted grade of A which they will need to sustain a 4.0 some other threshold overall GPA. In short, and for lack of a better expression, it would disincentivize students from being "grade whores" who only care about the letter grade and instead have them work to learn as an investment in themselves. My thoughts on this is only speculation and the impact of this having been implemented at other institutions would have to be investigated. Perhaps there is some psychology research results that could be consulted that could provide guidance regarding how instructors, professors and students react and relate to different grading systems and the impact on the student learning (NOT student satisfaction).

Changing the percentage of the letter grades. Example: An "A" 93-100", "B" 92-85 , "C" 84-77 "D" 76-70, "F" 70-0.

1) Actually grading them based on what they learned not on how well they can take a test. 2)
Require that tests be a) doable in the time limit by an average student and b) passable by an average student in the time limit. Tests that cannot be passed or completed in the time limit (and consequently are later curved) serve no purpose in assessing student learning. Simply put, they discourage students are are a lazy professor's approach to test writing. 3) Hire instructors who care about teaching rather than only tenure track professors who care about researching and teach because they are required to do so. 4) Require new hires to undergo training on how to teach classes and how to write tests. A PhD qualifies someone to research but we treat it like it also qualifies someone to teach. While many of our professors are outstanding teachers, by no means did their PhD help them become better teachers. Do something to improve the teaching of individual professors. 5) Actually have teaching factor into tenure assessments. I get the goal of tenure is traditionally to protect a professor against controversial research. However, a fantastic teacher who does mediocre research will likely not get tenure while a fantastic researcher who cannot teach to save their life (and frequently hinders student learning) is almost guaranteed to get tenure, thus ensuring that they will continue to be a terrible teacher. Even though we are a research institution, we cannot ignore our responsibilities as educators. Let education factor more heavily into tenure assessments as a means to encourage quality teaching.

the grading system isn't the problem.
If the administration could link BBLearn to Vandal Web so faculty with large classes would not be asked to input their grades multiple times, it would get more participation with early warning reports, mid term grades, etc. We have asked multiple times over the years to have this done, other universities do this and would greatly enhance student experience. Making Vandal web talk to Bbleanr so I don't have to constantly enter grades in 2 systems - especially with emphasis on retention and getting early warning and mid-term grades out. With desired increase in enrollment of undergrads this is going to continue to be a huge pain - and will get worse unless the UI can get the systems talking. Professors are reluctant to enter grades twice - so nothing goes into Bblearn and the students aren't savy enough anymore to figure their ongoing grade based on the breakdown in the course syllabus (they lack basic math skills and awareness of how assignments tie to their final grade) meaning the students don't know where they stand. They need to know so they can be motivated to enhance their learning. It is unclear to me how "+/-" system will enhance student learning.

Better teachers. This +-- system would not.

HAVE THEM TAKE TECHNICAL WRITING MOST STUDENTS I ENCOUNTER NOW CANNOT WRITE A CLEAR SENTENCE TO SAVE THEIR LIFE
Encourage faculty to assign points for frequent low-stakes quizzes. Encourage faculty to provide more frequent tests (rather than just one midterm and one final).
I am not convinced that grades are what drives student learning at all. I would like to see a focus on internal motivators for learning, rather than on external motivators.
For classes that use BbLearn, do away with "early warning" and midterm grades, and student athlete reports. At age 18+, our students are old enough to take that much responsibility for their learning.
no additional comments.

I do not feel that changes to the grading system are an effective way to enhance student learning.

I think student learning could be enhanced by requiring comprehensive exams prior to graduation that were competency based. That is, getting an A is not as useful as a C that includes the ability to apply the material learned. Adding certificates or badges that students could also list on their resume might be helpful. Having value-added opportunities (e.g., an App building certification or a budget management track).

Early warning grades and Midterm grade reports do a great job of enhancing student learning at present.
The ability to enter more extensive comments than the current system allows would be nice. I frequently want to explain to students (especially those who get poor grades), why they earned that grade, and the current system limits what I can enter.

Forget grading! Please work on getting a student course evaluation system that functions and gives proper feedback to instructors. The response rate is miserably low. It needs to be incentivized so students complete the evaluations!!!

Any opportunity to offer more feedback so students know exactly what is expected and required for success in a class.

A number scale could be more accurate. There would probably still be disputes about grading, and grades are never perfect, so that seems like it would cause more challenges.

I cannot image that adding +s and –s has anything to do with enhancing student learning.

Can't think of any.

No idea. Whose idea was it to switch to a plus-minus system in the first place? Do we have WSU - wanna be syndrome?

Showing actual passing grade in numbers (70% et)

I tie the BbLearn grade book system into VandalWeb so that faculty do not have to spend so much time re-entering grades. Grade entering is not a big deal when course sizes are small. But when one has multiple courses with 100+ students, the task is double-entering grades is extremely wasteful. Furthermore, midterm grade reporting would be automatic; the vice provost of academic affairs would not have to nag faculty with emails about entering midterm grades.

There are at least two software vendors that provide a connection between BbLearn and VandalWeb (i.e., Ellucian Company LP). Instead, the university administration seems to want faculty work harder rather than smarter....


Cannot think of any at the moment.

None

If the goal is to enhance student learning, adding plus minus grading doesn't seem to be the best solution. I think it will lead to increased focus on grades which doesn't necessarily foster greater learning. If we want to enhance student learning, we need to devote resources to training and development. For example, offer workshops for faculty on active learning techniques, facilitating intellectually stimulating classroom discussions, etc.

I don't strongly believe that all grades are a reflection of actual learning.

Convincing them to be less focused on grades and more on learning.

None

standards based grading. actual training in how to grade based on research talk to the College of Education; they do the research

Adopting the plus-minus system would, in itself, immensely improve our grading system. I see no other necessary changes at this time.

I would like to see transcription of special efforts such as significant service learning, capstone projects- something that distinguishes students who do exceptional work outside of the traditional classroom. This is a transcript issue I suppose, not a grading issue.

The "University" doesn't have a grading system; each faculty/instructor does. Grading systems can not possibly enhance learning. What a question!

Grades should be due biweekly instead of at midterm and final

Immediate feedback and communication from faculty.

N/A
Nothing specific. Any grading system is only as good as the time and care that instructors put into explaining their expectations for earning a certain grade and are fair, consistent, and clear in their assignment of grades.

I'm not certain my suggestion would necessarily enhance their learning, but a standardized grading scheme across the university should be adopted. By that I mean a B = 80-89% (or whatever we decide). Currently a B grade could be 85-90 in one course and 82-90 in another, for example. I have had students complain about this unevenness.

No specific comment here. The +/- grading system would be a big improvement by itself.

At midpoint grade, require a short course evaluation before students can view their grade. The course evaluation should remind students of the courses objectives and if they are being met. It would be insightful if grades they are receiving match with their perception of course objectives and allow instructors to adjust course content if needed.

I'm not convinced that other changes are needed.

Do what Hampshire college does and go to written evaluations instead of grades

None.

1. Ways to automatically take attendance and report attendance automatically to step in to help students with issues. This would also go a long way to solve the Registrar's problem of needing to know the last class a student attended for financial aid and faculty's need to offer an answer to that. 2. Marking on the transcript classes that had significant writing or numeracy requirements.

The University of Washington uses a four-point scale with grades ranging from 0.7 to 4.0. This allows for ultimate precision in grade reporting, and seems to me to be the most accurate with respect to student achievement.

MANDATORY mid-terms grades, or better yet, our own system like a "12 Week Grade Check."

Again, make it mandatory! 12 weeks is better than mid-term because it would give us time to score not only mid-term exams but also projects, internships, other activities than normally come in around mid-semester but take a little time to get into the grade book. Over 20 years of college teaching still leaves me amazed at the students who do not know where their grade stands in week 15 of the semester.

N/A

-grade of 'NA' for never-shows. It is simply wrong to fail a student who has never attended or submitted an assignment.

Allow the student to help "self-grade" themselves at the beginning of the course to see where they stand.

A+ does not change the GPA but it still has benefits to the student.

While grades are important feedback to students, ultimately it is the student who chooses whether they want to be engaged in school. My best students work within any system to excel. My worst students do not appear to be motivated by grades. I'm not sure any grading system will make a difference with that student population. My question is whether the plus/minus system would be welcomed by the A and B students?

I am comfortable with what we are using.

Full Professors teaching undergraduate classes with high standards.

Award B+ C+ D+, don't award any - grades.

None that I can think of.

unfortunately I don't know of any good method to encourage disinflation

Leave it alone

students should have a site where they can demand a meeting with their teacher about grades and where the teacher must meet with them within 7d. Of course students can do this any time now, but making it robotic might make it acceptable to their modern behavioral programs

Consistent grading between colleges and units as to what an A means and what a B means.
9. Which of the following best describes your status at the University of Idaho?

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<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Tenure-track faculty</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Clinical faculty</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Full-time instructor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. If "Other" was chosen for the question above, please describe your status.

Text Response

- can we add only + , not -
- Research Associate Professor, but I occasionally teach undergraduate and graduate courses
- PhD student teaching as part-time instructor COR science, 4 years
- tenured and part time
- n/a
- tenured faculty and administrator
- University Distinguished Professor. You guess.