University of Idaho  
2018-2019 FACULTY SENATE AGENDA  

Meeting #13  
3:30 p.m. - Tuesday, November 13, 2018  
Paul Joyce Faculty-Staff Lounge & Zoom  

Order of Business  

I. Call to Order.  
II. Minutes.  
   • Minutes of the 2018-19 Faculty Senate Meeting #12, November 6, 2018 (vote)  
III. Consent Agenda.  
IV. Chair's Report.  
V. Provost's Report.  
VI. Unfinished Business and General Orders.  
VII. Other Announcements and Communications.  
   • Jazz Festival – student attendance (Sielert)  
VIII. Committee Reports.  
   University Curriculum Committee  
   • FS-19-015 (UCC-19-021): Final Exam Schedule (Hubbard)  
   • FS-19-017 (UCC-19-026a): Regulation C-3 (Nielsen)  
   • FS-19-018 (UCC-19-026b): Regulation H (Nielsen)  
   • FS-19-019 (UCC-19-026c): Regulation L (Nielsen)  
   TEAC (Chapman)  
IX. Special Orders.  
X. New Business.  
XI. Adjournment.  

Professor Aaron Johnson, Chair 2018-2019, Faculty Senate  

Attachments: Minutes of 2018-2019 FS Meeting #12  
Jazz Festival PP  
FS-19-015 through 019  
Plus/Minus documents
Present: Brandt (w/o vote), Bridges, Cannon (boise), Caplan, DeAngelis, Dezzani, Ellison, Foster, Grieb, Jeffrey, Johnson, Keim, Kern (Coeur d’Alene), Kirchmeier, Laggis, Lawrence (for Wiencek, w/o vote), Lee, Lee-Painter, Luckhart, McKellar (Idaho Falls), Morgan, Raja, Seamon, Tibbals, Vella. Absent: Benedum, Chopin, Lambeth, Schwarzlaender, Watson, Wiencek. Guests: 6

Call to Order and Minutes. The chair called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. A motion to approve the minutes (Lee-Painter/Seamon) passed unanimously.

Chair’s Report:
- Veterans and Military Week Events are taking place this week. These include “Working with Veterans: Professional Discussion for Faculty and Staff” at 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 8, Commons Clearwater Room, Idaho Commons and “NPR War Correspondents and Ensemble Galilei Present ‘Between War and Here’” at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 7, in the Administration Building Auditorium.
- The Teaching and Advising Committee has completed a report that will be circulated to senators and discussed at the senate meeting next week.
- The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is hosting a Teaching & Learning with Technology mini-conference on November 14 at 8:30-12:30 in the Commons: Conference Schedule and Sessions descriptions and Register to Attend.
- UI dining contract goes out to bid in mid-2019 and UI is hoping to gather information on current operations. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to attend a series of dining forums on Wednesday, November 7, at 4:45pm to 6:00pm in Living & Learning Center Garnet Room (Taco bar and beverages provided), Thursday, November 8 at 11:45am to 1:00pm in Wallace Morin Room (Taco bar and beverages provided) and Thursday, November 8 at 1:45pm to 3:00pm in Wallace Morin Room (“I” cookies and beverages provided).
- The next University Faculty Meeting will be at 3 p.m. Pacific time Wednesday, Dec. 5. Locations and more information will be available soon.

Provost Report: Vice Provost for Faculty Torrey Lawrence attended the meeting in Provost Wiencek’s absence. He did not have a report.

Ombuds. The chair introduced Laura Smythe, the university’s new ombuds. Smythe explained that she operates the ombuds office according to the four core tenets promulgated by the International Ombuds Association. She offers confidentiality unless there is an imminent risk of danger. She is impartial and does not advocate for either the university or individuals who consult her. She is particularly trying to let students know that she is available for their consultation. She offers informal services and is not an office of record for purposes of reporting. Finally, within the bounds of being a UI employee, she is independent. She is not part of a unit or department and does not report through a chain of command. She reports to the president on staff issues and makes him aware of patterns of issues that raise concern. In addition to meeting campus constituencies and reaching out to students, Smythe is also visiting various UI locations throughout the state. She was in Coeur d’Alene last week and has upcoming visits planned to Boise and Idaho Falls. She concluded by wishing senate a conflict-free evening!

Improving IT Support. Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer Dan Ewart presented plans for improving Information Technology Support (ITS). He has presented proposed general principles to the president who has authorized him to move forward.
Support for technology is currently provided through a combination of both centralized and decentralized services. Approximately half of the information technology (IT) support is provided through units and the other half is provided centrally through ITS. Decision-making and funding are also divided in both centralized and decentralized ways. This system has both good and bad aspects. Ewart is hoping to improve the system without harming its positive features. Throughout the university users experience problems with the level of support available, the consistency of support and the speed of support. The university also faces extensive security and compliance pressures. ITS must work to protect important and expensive data that is the livelihood for many researchers and for the institution. ITS also struggles to meet the level of user expectations for immediate and always available IT support. External changes also require the UI to improve. In 2015-16 the governor issued a cyber-security executive order that imposed unfunded mandates on state entities to implement higher levels of computer security. Both the state government generally and the State Board of Education (SBOE) are working on centralizing IT support and IT purchasing. These changes will put pressure on UI to also centralize its IT operations. The SBOE is specifically interested in the concept of “system-ness” among the various state universities and is considering the coordination of business operations across all the 4-year institutions. UI also has some budget challenges right now that can be addressed through efficiencies. Ewart believes that these problems are the result of trying to do too many things. He advocates that a small narrowing in the breadth of support would result in efficiencies, cost savings and higher levels of support for all users.

Currently ITS spends the vast majority of its time ensuring that UI technology operations remain functional. The university has over 400 software applications in its portfolio. It has approximately 140 staff to manage these apps and maintain functionality for end users of technology. One goal of the improvement process is to reallocate resources so that more planning and “upstream” support is possible, and less time is spent patching and fixing the various systems.

To accomplish the planned improvements, Ewart has identified six priorities.

1. **Improving IT governance and Prioritization.** Currently end users who need software often invest without consulting ITS but later need support from ITS. This has resulted in duplication of efforts and software and has resulted in slowing support to all users. This approach has also raised security risks. The institution must inventory the software it already has and should evaluate its capacity before purchasing new applications. Ewart gave the example that ITS supports multiple card-swipe software systems and multiple Customer Relations Management (CRM) applications. Not only does the institution need to make better use of existing applications, but the purchasing and implementation of new applications should be prioritized. Ewart recognized that reforming IT governance will require the university community to collaborate.

A senator asked for examples of software currently in the purchasing and implementation queue. Ewart responded giving examples of an artificial intelligence-based system that will enable admissions to more effectively use text messages that are in the queue to implement, software to support faculty curriculum vitae and the promotion and tenure process, software to support market-based compensation, student requests to improve wireless services and software to provide a student portal to BBLearn, VandalStar and Banner. He pointed out that the university does not currently have a process to determine whether existing applications can meet any of these demands or to prioritize the competing demands for support and implementation represented by these requests.

A senator asked whether the new process is completed or whether there would be an opportunity for faculty and staff input. Ewart responded that the president has approved the concept, but that each of the six priorities must be developed. He anticipates that there will be significant faculty and staff input on how the priorities are implemented. Ewart pointed out that procedures must be developed and that a process for exceptions and consideration of special circumstances must be included. The senator followed up expressing concern that neither his college dean nor IT staff were familiar with the initiative. Ewart responded indicating that he is in the process of presenting his approach to many different groups on campus. He was not able to present to the Provost Council until earlier in the day of the senate meeting. He also indicated that he has worked with others...
on a number of different aspects of his approach, although they have never been bundled together in a single proposal previously.

A senator asked where the funds to support the proposal were coming from. Ewart responded that he developed the proposal, in part, to decrease the demand on resources and thus no additional resources are needed for the proposal.

A senator asked how granular the proposed changes would be. Ewart responded that the scope of each priority is different. He recognized that the proposed changes should not stop innovation on campus but pointed out, again, that duplicative applications, unexpected demands on support and applications that raise security concerns must be more effectively managed. He plans to roll initial changes in the context of the institutions’ “big data” applications and needs. But he anticipates that the institution will move to a standard list of software and hardware that must be purchased through IT. He also acknowledged that at some levels the system must be self-executing – there must be a way for purchasers to move forward without waiting for IT approvals for relatively small matters. With respect to larger projects, the system will likely require executive-level support to move forward and will be part of a list of desired projects that are evaluated for duplication and are prioritized.

A senator asked about the review and evaluation process. Ewart responded that recommendations would be made by a high-level review committee, but that Ewart (or the person in his position) would be ultimately responsible for the final decision. The senator commented that the only faculty member represented on the proposed review committee is the head of the university IT committee. The senator suggested that more faculty representation is needed and that faculty on the review committee should serve for a longer term than a single year so as to develop expertise. The senator cautioned that the review committee should not become a vehicle by which responsibility for the ultimate decision is deflected. Ewart indicated that he appreciated the comments and would take them under advisement. He pointed out that decisions about hardware and software support are being made now with no process. His goal is that the institution develop a transparent process up front. A senator asked if Ewart had a sense of the time the process will required. Ewart responded that his goal would be to make decisions within a month of a proposal being submitted.

Finally, the senator suggested that the process should include some sort of an appeal mechanism in case a request for support is denied. Ewart responded that he does not anticipate an appeal process and that he anticipates that employees would work through existing supervisory channels to seek review.

2. **Annual IT Security Training for All Employees.** This is a priority that is already being implemented through the Employee Development and Learning Process. This training must be completed at least annually because changes in technology happen rapidly.

3. **Common Work Flow Management System for All Employees.** Ewart envisions a common system for submitting requests for support that will automatically route requests to the most appropriate central or decentralized support location. Under the current system, not all requests for support are routed through the central support ticket system. This means that central IT support personnel end up handling matters that should be more properly handled by local IT support and vice versa. Ewart wants to give everybody access to a ticket system so decentralized support personnel can get access to ITS and has already implemented this approach on a volunteer basis. Universal use of the support ticket system will also help ITS analyze workload issues and address common problems. A senator asked whether the system uses an algorithm or Artificial Intelligence to analyze trends. Ewart indicated that the system does this. Another senator expressed frustration that the institution has changed how employee access IT support several times. Ewart responded that we have uneven levels of support across the university that impose challenges for implementing a system for accessing support.
4. Central and End-User Technology Procurement and License Management. To gain efficiencies and reduce the amount of money used for end-user technology, the university must be able to procure technology in bulk. Also, more consistency in end-user computers is needed. Each laptop has different support systems and drivers. This means ITS must spend more time supporting the diversity of computers on campus. Ewart stressed that he recognizes that different users have different needs. However, he stressed that the institution must identify two or three laptops across campus to streamline support needs. He envisions a system in which the supported systems would be purchased centrally and would be configured, tagged with university asset tags before being provided to the end user. This approach would also permit the institution to recycle more used machines.

A senator commented that there is a need for individualized computers in many parts of the university for example some faculty need Linux machines and other high-power workstations. Ewart acknowledged these needs and stated that there would be a process for exceptions. Ewart stressed that most users should be able to order a computer from a list of supported systems.

A senator commented that the proposals seem to envision a lot of process that might be overly burdensome. Ewart commented that at some level these processes would result in cost savings and efficiencies for all. But he also stated that his goal is to make the system as efficient as possible.

5. Central Device Management. Ewart explained that IT needs to know all the devices and applications with access to the university’s network. This includes instituting an automated process for updating computers. This process will eliminate some of the hands-on time for ITS. He acknowledged that some faculty and staff worry that this will allow ITS to “spy” on them through their computer. Ewart stressed that ITS does not have the time to do this, rather the proposal is needed for basic security so that software and devices accessing the system are up-to-date and loopholes in security are minimized.

6. IT Personnel and Risk Study. Ewart proposes to more clearly define the responsibilities of centralized and decentralized support personnel and to provide better coordination between the two groups. Currently some of the decentralized personnel are “islands” institutionally crucial information that could be jeopardized if they leave employment. This can not only lead to disruption but also subject the entire network to risks. He stressed that he is not proposing to centralize ITS support personnel. However, ITS must be familiar with the responsibilities and work of the decentralized personnel.

In conclusion, Ewart stressed that there is much that must be fleshed out regarding the concepts and priorities he has outlined. He is committed to listening to feedback and collecting suggestions for implementation and, as mentioned earlier, is in the process of introducing the proposal to many different groups. ITS will be sponsoring open fora in December to further disseminate the proposal and to gather input.

A senator asked if Ewart could discuss the SBOE initiative to centralize IT across all Idaho 4-year institutions. Ewart responded that he could not address the specifics. However, he believes his proposal places UI in a better position to respond to SBOE inquiries about centralization. He believes the board will respond positively to the institutions in house efforts to eliminate duplication and gain efficiencies. He believes that the consultants hired by the SBOE will see that four institutions in Idaho have very different needs. However, he believes there are possible efficiencies, particularly regarding such operations as purchasing.

The chair thanked Ewart for his presentation.

FS-19-004 - FSH 4930 Honorary Degrees. Professor Beth Hendrix, chair of the Commencement Committee presented a seconded motion from the committee to clarify the eligibility language for honorary degrees. She explained that when the policy was last revised in 2002 some language was omitted. The current proposal attempt to resolve this long-standing problem. The motion passed unanimously.
**FS-19-013 and FS-19-014 - APM 30.10 and APM 30.17 Identity and Access Management and Identity Theft Protection.** Dan Ewart returned to the meeting along with Chief Information Security Officer Mitch Parks to discuss recent procedure updates. Parks explained that APM 30.10 replaces an out-of-date policy. It attempts to implement current best practices to manage user accounts in compliance with federal and state law (e.g., the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability and Privacy Act (HIPAA) and the governor’s cyber security executive order). The proposal aligns UI with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework. The new policy establishes that the university user account is the preferred email address for all important communications. It also establishes more clear policy for the lifecycle of accounts. Under the new policy no account will be created until properly authorized and the access permissions for each account will be evaluated when a user’s position changes. Mapping our account access and management policies to NIST will also help the UI as it interfaces with other networks in support of research and other operations. In HR employees have access to protected info but when they move, we need to have that access changed.

A senator commented that social science graduate students who interact with the public do not want to use the term “vandals” in their email addresses. Parks responded that the new policy establishes a clear way for such students to obtain a sponsored account that does not include “vandals” in the address. He also pointed out that Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants will also generally be considered university employees.

A senator expressed concern that the lifecycle of student accounts may result in closing accounts for students who take a break from school. Parks stressed that the policy is focused on truly inactive accounts and would require a two-year period of inactivity.

APM 30.17 applies to accounts maintained by the UI. Parks explained that for some purposes, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) considers the UI to be an account provider analogous in some ways to a financial institution because UI handles monies in accounts such as student financial aid accounts and short-term loan accounts. For this reason, the UI is required to comply with the FTC’s “Red Flag Rule” that requires security that prevents a third party using a stolen identity from accessing the accounts.

**FS-19-009 (FSH 3220), FS-19-010 (APM 95.15), FS-19-011 (APM 95.20), FS-19-012 (APM 95.33) - Sexual Harassment Policies.** Associate General Counsel Jim Craig and Director of Civil Rights and Investigations Erin Agidius presented editorial changes to the Faculty-Staff Handbook and three APM provisions. The changes were required to bring UI policy into compliance with SBOE policy. The changes require employees to report Title IX violations within 24 hours of obtaining knowledge of the violation. Agidius pointed out that the institution has already been providing training on the SBOE provision. A senator asked whether the language in FSH 3220.C-1 should be “learn of behavior or of an allegation of sexual harassment.” He suggested that the reporting responsibility of employees should extend to behavior that is observed directly not just allegations reported to the employee. Agidius and Craig responded that the proposed language tracks the SBOE policy. The faculty secretary suggested that she, Craig and Agidius review the policies and the SBOE language and suggest appropriate changes. The senator also pointed out that the language problem is present in the related APM also.

A senator asked what is the consequence of failing to report under the policies? Agidius responded that such a failure would be addressed by the supervisor. She stated that possible consequences could include a letter of warning, or educational reminder of obligations. The senator suggested that, as a matter of due process, the consequences of not reporting should be included in the policy. Craig responded that any violation of university policy can have employment consequences up to and including termination. The senator reiterated his request.

The agenda having been completed, a motion (Morgan/Foster) to adjourn passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Liz Brandt, Faculty Secretary & Secretary to the Faculty Senate
LIONEL HAMPTON JAZZ FESTIVAL

“GROUNDING IN TRADITION BREAKING NEW GROUND” 2019
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

• **ADOPT-A-SITE**
  • Ideal for Units or organizations that want to work as a team

• **SITE MANAGER**
  • Individuals needed to manage performance and workshop sites

• **SITE VOLUNTEER**
  • Individuals needed at performance and workshop sites

• **DRIVERS**
  • Drive artists and VIP’s to their workshops, concerts, airport and more
JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM

HOW TO SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER

www.uidaho.edu/class/jazzfest/get-involved

Click yellow "VOLUNTEER" link to fill out Google interest form
CONTACT INFORMATION

Jazz Festival Manager:

- Josh Skinner
- 208-885-0112
  jwskinner@uidaho.edu

Volunteer Coordinators

- Ben Price & Jon Stein
- (208) 885-5900, or email
  jazzvolunteer@uidaho.edu
THINKING ABOUT COLLEGE

WORKSHOPS BY U OF I FACULTY

Offered to visiting students to think about all of the exciting opportunities at the U of I.

- The Interconnection of Jazz Dance and Music
- The Collision of Science and Art
- The Blues and the Rule of Law: Musical Expressions of the Failure of Justice and of Extra-Legal Recourse
- Rad Rhythms: Learning Languages to a Global Beat
- What Might Be Living In My Instrument?
- Math and Musical Scale
Envision Idaho style experiences in your home departments

Willing faculty engaging with educators to thank them for attending
IDEAS FOR ENGAGEMENT

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

- Easy ideas to implement this year
- Long term goals for next year and beyond
- Crazy ideas that may not even be fully-formed

With nearly 5000 students on your campus, let’s make this advantageous for you
Fall Final Examination Schedule
December 16-20, 2019

Regular classrooms will be used for the exam unless the instructors make special arrangements through the Registrar’s Office. In order to avoid conflicts, rooms must be reserved in the Registrar’s Office for “common final” exams. Instructors will announce to their classes rooms to be used for all sectioned classes having common final exams. Instructors may deviate from the approved schedule only upon recommendation of the college dean and prior approval of the Provost.

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- **Common final exam** periods are from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
- **Students** with more than two finals in one day may have the excess final(s) rescheduled. The **conflict exam** periods are from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. A student must make arrangements with the department and the instructor of the course to schedule the final exam in one of the conflict exam periods.
- **Evening classes**, those starting at 5:00 p.m. or later, will have the final examinations during the final exam week at the regular class time.
- **For online classes** that have in person finals, the final examination will be on the Saturday following the final examination week in the Fall semester. In the Spring semester these in person finals will be held on the Saturday prior to the final examination week.
- **Non-Standard time patterns** will use the final exam start time in the day/time pattern of the earlier hour. For example, a Tuesday section with an 8:30 a.m. start time would use the 8:00 a.m. final exam time for Tuesday.
- **If a class meeting day and time is not found in the final examination schedule above**, the instructor of the class is responsible for contacting the Office of the Registrar to identify the appropriate day and time for the final examination.
Spring Final Examination Schedule
May 10-14, 2020

Regular classrooms will be used for the exam unless the instructors make special arrangements through the Registrar’s Office. In order to avoid conflicts, rooms must be reserved in the Registrar’s Office for “common final” exams. Instructors will announce to their classes rooms to be used for all sectioned classes having common final exams. **Instructors may deviate from the approved schedule only upon recommendation of the college dean and prior approval of the Provost.**

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- **Common final exams** are from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
- Students with more than two finals in one day may have the excess final(s) rescheduled. The **conflict exams** periods are from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. A student must make arrangements with the department and the instructor of the course to schedule the final exam in one of the conflict exam periods.
- Evening classes, those starting at 5:00 p.m. or later, will have the final examinations during the final exam week at the regular class time.
- For online classes that have in person finals, the final examination will be on the Saturday following the final examination week in the Fall semester. In the Spring semester these in person finals will be held on the Saturday prior to the final examination week.
- Non-Standard time patterns will use the final exam start time in the day/time pattern of the earlier hour. For example, a Tuesday section with an 8:30 a.m. start time would use the 8:00 a.m. final exam time for Tuesday.
- If a class meeting day and time is not found in the final examination schedule above, the instructor of the class is responsible for contacting the Office of the Registrar to identify the appropriate day and time for the final examination.
Office of the Registrar
Proposed Catalog Changes
Effective Summer 2019

J-5. Credit Limitations

A candidate may count toward a baccalaureate degree no more than:

J-5-a

Thirty credits earned in alternative credit opportunities Experiential Learning and Technical Competency (see regulation I-2-b and I-2-c).

J-5-b

Twelve credits earned under the pass-fail option (see regulation B-11).

J-5-c

Zero credits in remedial-level courses.
Regulation C-3. Withdrawing from a Course

Beginning with the eleventh day of the semester and ending with the tenth week of the semester a student may withdraw from a course. During this period a grade of W will be recorded on the student’s record and will count against their 21 credit withdrawal limit (see regulation C-4). This period is prorated for accelerated or short courses. A student may not withdraw from a course after a final grade has been assigned for that course, even if this occurs before the deadline to withdraw from the course.
Regulation H - Final Examinations

H-1. The last five days of each semester are scheduled as a final exam week (two-hour exams) in all divisions except the College of Law. The following provisions apply:

H-1-a. No quizzes or exams may be given in lecture-recitation periods during the week before finals week. Exams in lab periods and in physical education activity classes, final in-class essays in English composition classes, and final oral presentations in speech classes are permitted.

H-1-b. Final exams or final class sessions are to be held in accordance with the schedule approved by the Faculty Council. Instructors may deviate from the schedule only on the recommendation of the college dean and prior approval by the provost or provost's designee.

H-1-c. The final exam time will be scheduled based on the lecture portion of a course. The final exam time is based on the meeting schedule of the course section, as it exists in the class schedule for that semester. If a class meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, for example, the final exam time will be based on the time the class is scheduled to meet on these days. If the meeting day(s) and/or time of the lecture portion of a course change during the semester the final exam time will be scheduled based on the first meeting time.

H-1-d. Where exams common to more than one course or section are required, they must be scheduled through the Registrar's Office and are regularly held in the evening.

H-1-e. Students with more than two/three finals in one day may have the excess final(s) rescheduled. A student must make arrangements with the department and the instructor of the course to schedule the final exam in one of the conflict exam periods. Students who need to have a final rescheduled should make arrangements as early in the semester as possible; but in no case later than two weeks prior to the start of final examination week. Requests submitted after this date are left to the discretion of the instructors. If voluntary accommodation is not achieved, the instructor of the class with the lowest enrollment will offer an alternative exam. The rescheduled exam will take place during one of the designated conflict exam periods or as arranged with the course instructor.

H-1-f. Athletic contests are not to be scheduled during finals week.

H-2. Students who miss final exams without valid reason receive Fs in the exams. Students who are unavoidably absent from final exams are required to present evidence in writing to the instructor to prove that the absence is/was unavoidable.
H-3. Instructors, with the concurrence of their departments, may excuse individual students from final exams when such students have a grade average in the course that will not be affected by the outcome of the final exam. In such instances, the grade earned before the final exam is to be assigned as the final grade.

H-4. Early final exams are permitted for students, on an individual basis, who clearly demonstrate in writing that the reasons for early final exams are compelling. Such requests require approval by the department and instructor of the course.
Regulation L-7. Fresh Start

Qualified Former University of Idaho undergraduate students who wish to reenter the university as an undergraduate student in a specific degree program after a period of absence will be allowed may apply for a "Fresh Start" as described below. A student may receive a Fresh Start only once.

L-7-a. To qualify for a Fresh Start, students (1) must not have been enrolled as a degree seeking student at the University of Idaho in any college or university as a full-time matriculated student for at least the five years immediately before reentering the university as a degree seeking student applying for the program, and (2) must have a University of Idaho cumulative GPA of less than 2.00, and (3) must be approved for the program by the college dean that administers the academic program they wish to pursue.

L-7-b. After returning to the University of Idaho, a student must complete 24 credits of academic courses with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 before applying for a Fresh Start. A student must apply for a Fresh Start through their College Dean’s Office by the end of the semester following that in which they met these minimum credit and GPA requirements. Once the student has completed an additional 24 credits of course work with a Fresh Start cumulative GPA of at least 2.00 and has been in the program at least two semesters, Once the student’s Fresh Start application has been approved the student’s cumulative GPA will be reset to 0.00 as of the time of readmission to the Fresh Start Program University of Idaho.

L-7-c. Students in the Fresh Start Program will be allowed a maximum of six credits of "W" during the first two semesters after admission to the program. If the Fresh Start is successfully completed approved by the college, the count for the 21-credit limit on withdrawals (see C-2) will be reset to 0 as of the time of admission to the Fresh Start Program.

L-7-d. University probation and disqualification regulations apply throughout the Fresh Start process.

L-7-e. To graduate with honors, a student in the Fresh Start Program must have at least 56 credits in UI courses after the Fresh Start (see K-1). Fresh Start Program participants are eligible for the dean's list (see K-2) on a semester-by-semester basis.

L-7-f. Application forms and explanatory materials are available at the Registrar's Office.
TO: Faculty Senate, University of Idaho
FROM: Teaching and Advising Committee (TeAC)
RE: Proposed Changes to UI Catalog to Shift to Plus/Minus Grading System
DATE: 31 October 2018

Proposed Changes to UI Catalog, from the Teaching and Advising Committee, recommended to take effect Fall Semester 2023 to Enact Shift to Plus/Minus Grading

Note: This proposal excludes the grades of A+ and D-. See supplemental notes on these recommended changes, a rationale, and responses to select questions and concerns, below the specific changes highlighted in the catalog language (deleted language highlighted in red, with strikeouts, and new language to be added, highlighted in blue).

https://catalog.uidaho.edu/general-requirements-academic-procedures/e-grades/
UI 2018-2019 Catalog

E-1. Grading System
E-1-a

For purposes of reporting and record, academic work is graded as follows: A-superior; A-; B+; B-above average; B-; C+; C-average; C-; D+; D-below average; F-failure; I-incomplete work of passing quality (see regulation F); W-withdrawal; WA-withdrawal to audit; WU-withdrawal from the university; P-pass (see below); IP-in progress (see E-2); N-unsatisfactory and must be repeated (used only in ENGL 101 and ENGL 102); S-satisfactory (used only in CEU courses); CR-Credit, and NC-No Credit (may be used only in professional development courses).

E-2. In-Progress (IP) Grades.
E-2-a. Grades in Undergraduate Senior Thesis or Senior Project

The grade of IP (in progress) may be used to indicate at least minimally satisfactory progress in undergraduate courses such as senior thesis or senior project that have the statement "May be graded IP" in the course description. When the thesis or project is accepted, the IP grades are to be removed (see E-2-c). Grades of IP in undergraduate courses are considered to represent grades of at least C or P. If, in any given semester, the instructor considers the student's progress unsatisfactory, an appropriate letter grade (C-, D+, D or F) should be assigned for that semester.

E-2-b. Grades in Graduate Research Courses

The grade of IP (in progress) may be used in courses 500 (Master's Research and Thesis), 599 (Non-thesis Master's Research), and 600 (Doctoral Research and Dissertation). When the thesis, dissertation, or other research document is accepted, or when a student ceases to work under the faculty member who is supervising his or her research, the IP grades are to be removed (see below). Grades of IP in graduate courses are considered to represent at least grades of B or P. If, in any given semester, the faculty member supervising the student's research considers the student's progress unsatisfactory, a regular letter grade (C+, C, C-, D+, D, or F) should be assigned.

E-2-c. Removal of IP Grades
Departments may use on a department-wide basis either the P/F grading system, or regular letter grades, as well as P, when removing the previously assigned IP grades (e.g., a student who enrolled for six credits in course 500 one semester, four credits another semester, and five credits an additional semester could have 15 credits of IP grades removed with different grades for each of the blocks of credit registered for each semester, such as six credits of A, four credits of B, and five credits of P).

E-4. Computing Grade-Point Averages

Grades are converted by assigning the following number of points per credit for each grade: A-(4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); 4; B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D+ (1.3); D (1.0); D- (0.7); F (0.0). In computing the grade-point average, neither credits attempted nor grade points earned are considered for the following: courses graded I, IP, P, S, W, WU, N, CR, NC, correspondence courses, continuing education units, credits earned under regulation I, or courses taken at another institution. Credit earned at non-U.S. institutions is recorded as pass (P) or fail (F), except for some courses taken through an approved study abroad program.

[The UI considers only the Institutional grade-point average official. Although both institutional and overall grade-point averages are printed on transcripts, the overall grade-point average (which includes transfer courses) is informational only. To calculate a grade-point average divide the Quality Points (course credits times the points assigned for the grade earned) by the GPA Hours (course credits attempted not including grades of I, IP, P, W, WU, or N). Earned Hours indicate the total number of semester credits successfully completed (course grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, or P earned). Grades of P are included in Earned Hours but do not earn any quality points; grades of F are included in GPA Hours, but not in Earned Hours.]

E-5. Replacing Grades

E-5-b. Replacing a Grade by Repeating a Course

A student who has received a D+, D or F in a course at UI may repeat the course at the UI provided credit has not been earned in a more advanced vertically related course in the same subject area. Although all grades remain on the record, the first repeat will replace the grade and credit earned initially in the course. The second and subsequent repeats of the same course will be averaged in the student’s institutional GPA. See the College of Law section for the exception to this regulation applicable to students in that college.

Supplemental Notes and Observations on the Proposed Changes:
1. Plus/Minus grading to be implemented beginning Fall semester 2023. This should provide sufficient time to transition to a plus/minus grading scale and provide for advance notice to incoming undergraduate and graduate students about this upcoming change.
2. A grade of C or better is still required to receive a grade of S.
3. The plus/minus system proposed above provides for a full range of grades from A to D, and does not use plus or minus grades for the failing grade of F. There is not an A+ grade available in this scale—this maintains the grade of A as well as the 4.0 as the top of the grading scale; the D- is not available—to maintain our current grade system criteria, this continues to draw a line at D rather than D-, for a passing grade and may prevent inadvertent awarding of a D- grade by faculty who either think it would be a passing grade, or who think it would not be a passing grade. The perception that a D- grade is too marginal to be considered in the same category as “below average” in the way that a D+ and D may be considered, and yet also too close to register a meaningful distinction from a failing grade, may be reasons why some institutions do not include the D- in their grading systems. These proposed changes would match the same range of plus/minus grades
(excluding A+ and D-) used, for example, at Lewis Clark State College, Washington State University, Utah State University, and the University of Wyoming.

4. Institutions vary on whether descriptive, definitional language is attached for each grade and grade range, such as Distinguished and/or Superior, Above Average, Average and/or Adequate or Acceptable, or Below Average or Marginal. The revisions suggested above follow the lead of institutions that do not try to parse out precisely such definitions, because typically the same term is used for two to three different grades, which itself may pose a contradiction when, for example, all grades in the B range are defined as above average, or all grades in the C range are defined as average.

5. These specific changes to the UI catalog would not apply to the College of Law, which already uses a plus/minus grading system as noted in the current catalog, and which therefore already has an approved system in place for its own range of plus/minus grades.

Rationale for Shifting from a Whole Letter Grade system to a Plus/Minus Grading System

- Plus/minus grades letter grades provide for a more specific representation of a student’s performance than a whole grade letter system.
- An academic transcript with plus/minus grades provides a more nuanced account of a student’s academic performance.
- A transcript of plus/minus grades can sharpen academic advising to support students’ progress towards degree.
- Plus/minus grades can support and clarify a sense of academic integrity, both in the student’s individual academic record and in differentiations/distributions of grades assigned among students.
- Transferring credits and grades from other Idaho colleges and universities, and also cooperative/shared degree programs between the University of Idaho and Washington State University (which uses this proposed plus/minus system) will enable one-to-one equivalencies, be more transparent, and more equitable.
- Other Idaho institutions use plus/minus grading, and it may be that the Idaho State Board of Education supports continued efforts to align the grading systems of the state’s institutions, as the institutions work in other ways to align and to clarify what institutions share in common, such as ongoing efforts to align select courses in general education.
- USAC and other study abroad program grades may be easier to transfer.
- Students may be motivated to persist to achieve a higher grade when there are at least ten passing grades possible in a plus/minus system compared to four grades in a whole letter grade system: with sustained effort, incremental improvement may enable a student to achieve the next higher grade.
- Faculty would have and may appreciate the flexibility to decide grades more readily in borderline cases.

Responses to Several Perceptions and Concerns Expressed by Faculty and Students about Shifting to Plus/Minus Grading

Concern: Students with 4.0 GPAs may have their ‘perfect record’ undermined.
Response: This may occur in a transition to a more accurate record of a student’s academic performance. Note, however, that the number and percentage of seniors who graduate with 4.0 GPAs is small, less than 3%. For UI graduates earning undergraduate degrees from 2015-2017, 2.9% (104 students of nearly 3500 graduates) graduated with 4.0 GPAs (104/3492 = .029).

Concern: Students may be more likely to challenge grades when they just miss achieving the next higher grade increment.
Response: As at present, faculty determine grades that students earn and achieve, and as before, continue to need to communicate as fully as possible criteria for evaluation to support student’ education and learning. As noted above, some faculty may decide that they can decide borderline grade situations more readily, when in a plus/minus system shifting a grade increment involves a significantly smaller percentage than in a whole letter grade system. The priority remains awarding grades that are more closely commensurate with students’ performance than what is possible to specify under a whole letter grade system.

Concern: Might the shift to plus/minus grading affect enrollments and morale among students?
Response: Other peer and regional institutions with plus/minus grading have experienced strong enrollments, and once established, the plus/minus system in due course becomes the anticipated ‘norm,’ as it is with all other university and colleges in Idaho, as well as with several of designated official peer- and aspirational-institutions, and also at Washington State University.

Concern: Might some students’ overall cumulative GPAs be affected negatively under a plus/minus system, particularly with students whose C average (2.0) may slip to C- (1.7), placing them on academic probation?
Response: As research and the Teaching and Advising Committee report shows, studies vary a bit on this question, with some institutions showing no shift in the mean GPA following a change to plus/minus grading, another study showed a slight shift downward (-0.03) that was not statistically significant, while another study also showed a very slight decline. As the University of Texas stated when announcing its shift to plus/minus grading (to match all other institutions in Texas), for the substantial majority of students “effects on GPA will likely even out.”
TO: Faculty Senate, University of Idaho  
FROM: Teaching and Advising Committee (TeAC)  
RE: Proposal to Adopt Plus/Minus Grading, with Report  
DATE: 31 October 2018

The Teaching and Advising Committee recommends that a plus/minus grading system be implemented at the University of Idaho beginning Fall Semester 2023. The recommended plus/minus grading system proposed would include grades from A to F, but not include the grades of A+ and D-. This is the same grade range used, for example, by Washington State University, Lewis Clark State College, and several regional and peer institutions. All colleges and universities in Idaho other than UI, use a plus/minus grade system.

Votes in favor of adopting a plus/minus system of grading were cast by faculty representatives from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (two members), the College of Engineering, the College of Art and Architecture, the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences (two members), and a student representative (ASUI Vice President); one member expressed support for plus/minus grading systems but abstained from voting; one faculty member (CLASS) also abstained.

In a separate vote to specify the precise range of grades to recommend to Faculty Senate, the committee voted unanimously to approve a plus/minus system that does not include A+ or D-.

List of Sections and Subsections of this Report:
- Proposed Changes to UI Catalog to Adopt a Plus/Minus Grading System (pp. 1-3)
- Supplemental Notes on the Changes Proposed to the Catalog (pp. 3-4)
- Rationale for Shifting from a Whole Letter Grade system to a Plus/Minus Grading System (p. 4)
- Responses to Several Perceptions and Concerns Expressed by Faculty and Students about Shifting to Plus/Minus Grading (pp. 4-5)
- Research Report of the Teaching and Advising Committee on the Question of Adopting a Plus/Minus Grading System (5-19)
  - Recent History of this Issue at UI (p. 6)
  - Observations from the Teaching and Advising Committee (pp. 6-7)
  - Examples of Plus/Minus Grading Systems (pp. 7-8)
  - UI 2018-2019 catalog, excerpts on the current grading system (pp. 8-9)
  - UI Surveys of Internal Perspectives on Plus/Minus Grading (p. 9)
  - External Perspectives and Studies (pp. 10-16)
  - Sampling of comments from 2016 Faculty Survey (pp. 16-18)
  - Sampling of comments from the 2017 Survey of UI Students (pp. 18-19)

Proposed Changes to UI Catalog, from the Teaching and Advising Committee, recommended to take effect Fall Semester 2023 to Adopt a Plus/Minus Grading System

Note: This proposal excludes the grades of A+ and D-. See supplemental notes on these recommended changes, a rationale, and responses to select questions and concerns, included below the specific changes highlighted in the catalog language (deleted language highlighted in red, with strikeouts, and new language to be added, highlighted in blue).

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E-1-a

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E-2. In-Progress (IP) Grades.
E-2-a. Grades in Undergraduate Senior Thesis or Senior Project

The grade of IP (in progress) may be used to indicate at least minimally satisfactory progress in undergraduate courses such as senior thesis or senior project that have the statement "May be graded IP" in the course description. When the thesis or project is accepted, the IP grades are to be removed (see E-2-c). Grades of IP in undergraduate courses are considered to represent grades of at least C or P. If, in any given semester, the instructor considers the student's progress unsatisfactory, an appropriate letter grade (C-, D+, D or F) should be assigned for that semester.

E-2-b. Grades in Graduate Research Courses

The grade of IP (in progress) may be used in courses 500 (Master's Research and Thesis), 599 (Non-thesis Master's Research), and 600 (Doctoral Research and Dissertation). When the thesis, dissertation, or other research document is accepted, or when a student ceases to work under the faculty member who is supervising his or her research, the IP grades are to be removed (see below). Grades of IP in graduate courses are considered to represent at least grades of B or P. If, in any given semester, the faculty member supervising the student's research considers the student's progress unsatisfactory, a regular letter grade (C+, C, C-, D+, D, or F) should be assigned.

E-2-c. Removal of IP Grades

Departments may use on a department-wide basis either the P/F grading system, or regular letter grades, as well as P, when removing the previously assigned IP grades (e.g., a student who enrolled for six credits in course 500 one semester, four credits another semester, and five credits an additional semester could have 15 credits of IP grades removed with different grades for each of the blocks of credit registered for each semester, such as six credits of A, four credits of B, and five credits of P).

E-4. Computing Grade-Point Averages

Grades are converted by assigning the following number of points per credit for each grade: A-4.0; A-3.7; B+3.3; 4,B (3.0); B-2.7; C+2.3; 3,C (2.0); C-1.7; D+1.3; 2,D (1.0); 1,F (0.0). In computing the grade-point average, neither credits attempted nor grade points earned are considered for the following: courses graded I, IP, P, S, W, WU, N, CR, NC, correspondence courses,
continuing education units, credits earned under regulation I, or courses taken at another institution. Credit earned at non-U.S. institutions is recorded as pass (P) or fail (F), except for some courses taken through an approved study abroad program.

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A student who has received a D+, D or F in a course at UI may repeat the course at the UI provided credit has not been earned in a more advanced vertically related course in the same subject area. Although all grades remain on the record, the first repeat will replace the grade and credit earned initially in the course. The second and subsequent repeats of the same course will be averaged in the student's institutional GPA. See the College of Law section for the exception to this regulation applicable to students in that college.

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all grades in the B range are defined as above average, or all grades in the C range are defined as average.
5. These specific changes to the UI catalog would not apply to the College of Law, which already uses a plus/minus grading system as noted in the current catalog, and which therefore already has an approved system in place for its own range of plus/minus grades.

Rationale for Shifting from a Whole Letter Grade system to a Plus/Minus Grading System

- Plus/minus grades letter grades provide for a more specific representation of a student's performance than a whole grade letter system.
- An academic transcript with plus/minus grades provides a more nuanced account of a student’s academic performance.
- A transcript of plus/minus grades can sharpen academic advising to support students’ progress towards degree.
- Plus/minus grades can support and clarify a sense of academic integrity, both in the student’s individual academic record and in differentiations/distributions of grades assigned among students.
- Transferring credits and grades from other Idaho colleges and universities, and also cooperative/shared degree programs between the University of Idaho and Washington State University (which uses this proposed plus/minus system) will enable one-to-one equivalencies, be more transparent, and more equitable.
- Other Idaho institutions use plus/minus grading, and it may be that the Idaho State Board of Education supports continued efforts to align the grading systems of the state’s institutions, as the institutions work in other ways to align and to clarify what institutions share in common, such as ongoing efforts to align select courses in general education.
- USAC and other study abroad program grades may be easier to transfer.
- Students may be motivated to persist to achieve a higher grade when there are at least ten passing grades possible in a plus/minus system compared to four grades in a whole letter grade system: with sustained effort, incremental improvement may enable a student to achieve the next higher grade.
- Faculty would have and may appreciate the flexibility to decide grades more readily in borderline cases.

Responses to Several Perceptions and Concerns Expressed by Faculty and Students about Shifting to Plus/Minus Grading

Concern: Students with 4.0 GPAs may have their ‘perfect record’ undermined.
Response: This may occur in a transition to a more accurate record of a student’s academic performance. Note, however, that the number and percentage of seniors who graduate with 4.0 GPAs is small, less than 3%. For UI graduates earning undergraduate degrees from 2015-2017, 2.9% (104 students of nearly 3500 graduates) graduated with 4.0 GPAs (104/3492 = .029).

Concern: Students may be more likely to challenge grades when they just miss achieving the next higher grade increment.
Response: As at present, faculty determine grades that students earn and achieve, and as before, continue to need to communicate as fully as possible criteria for evaluation to support student’ education and learning. As noted above, some faculty may decide that they can decide borderline
grade situations more readily, when in a plus/minus system shifting a grade increment involves a significantly smaller percentage than in a whole letter grade system. The priority remains awarding grades that are more closely commensurate with students’ performance than what is possible to specify under a whole letter grade system.

**Concern:** Might the shift to plus/minus grading affect enrollments and morale among students?
**Response:** Other peer and regional institutions with plus/minus grading have experienced strong enrollments, and once established, the plus/minus system in due course becomes the anticipated ‘norm,’ as it is with all other university and colleges in Idaho, as well as with several of designated official peer- and aspirational-institutions, and also at Washington State University.

**Concern:** Might some students’ overall cumulative GPAs be affected negatively under a plus/minus system, particularly with students whose C average (2.0) may slip to C- (1.7), placing them on academic probation?
**Response:** As research and the Teaching and Advising Committee report shows, studies vary a bit on this question, with some institutions showing no shift in the mean GPA following a change to plus/minus grading, another study showed a slight shift downward (-0.03) that was not statistically significant, while another study also showed a very slight decline. As the University of Texas stated when announcing its shift to plus/minus grading (to match all other institutions in Texas), for the substantial majority of students “effects on GPA will likely even out.”

**Research Report of the Teaching and Advising Committee on the Question of Adopting a Plus/Minus Grading System**

The Teaching & Advising Committee has explored different perspectives on the prospect of shifting from the current whole letter grade system to a plus/minus grading system. This inquiry included internal surveys of UI faculty (2016) and UI students (2017), and review of research reports from other colleges and universities, with examples from institutions that shifted to plus/minus grading scales as well as those that decided against such a shift.

Members of the committee acknowledge different perspectives on shifting to plus/minus grading, including varying degrees of support as well as expressions of reservation or opposition. Those who support shifting to plus/minus grading accord with the majority of UI faculty (60%) who favor switching to plus/minus grading. Some TeAC members voiced reservations about a shift, with concerns that echo those expressed by approximately a third of surveyed faculty, who anticipate, for example, that students may challenge grades more frequently under a plus/minus system. TeAC also recognizes that 65% of students are strongly opposed to a plus/minus system (at least 77% overall oppose a plus/minus system).

A representative sampling of the range of reasons and sentiments over this issue are collected at the end of this report, excerpted from comments by faculty and by students. These comments are preceded by a series of excerpts and encapsulations of studies from other universities. Full results from the surveys also are available.

**Summary-Review** observations from the committee’s findings, reflections, and conversations follow. As might be anticipated, particularly given such different perspectives on this issue, any ‘final’ determination and decision proceeds initially with the committee presenting these findings and
deliberations to the Vice Provost of Academic Initiatives, and to Faculty Senate for representative consideration, and these representatives in turn report to the university faculty and to the president.

Recent History of this Issue at UI: in spring 2005 UI faculty approved shifting to a Plus/Minus system of grading (FC-05-025, vote to approve by Faculty Council was 10-2, with one abstention; approx. 3/8/05; approved at General Faculty meeting 5/4/05): President Tim White vetoed the proposed change (6/28/05).

Here is the plus/minus grading system proposed in 2005 (FC-05-025), as quoted below:

“The University of Idaho uses letter grades and the four (4) point maximum grading scale. The grade A is the highest possible grade, and grades below D are considered failing. Plus (+) or minus (-) symbols are used to indicate grades that fall above or below the letter grades, but grades of A+ and D- are not used. For purposes of calculating grade points and averages, the plus (+) is equal to .3 and minus (-) equals .7 (e.g., a grade B+ is equivalent to 3.3 and A- is 3.7). (This statement would replace language in first two and half lines of E-1 Grading System in current catalog)

Grades are converted by assigning the following number of points per credit for each grade: A=4, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, B=3, B-=2.7, C+=2.3, C=2, C- = 1.7, D+=1.3, D=1, F=0.

(This would replace the first sentence in E-4 Computing Grade-Point Averages in current catalog).”

Observations from the Teaching and Advising Committee

A shift to plus/minus grading may register most visibly among the less than nearly 3% of graduating (undergraduate) students who have 4.0 GPAs (e.g., 104 students of 3500 graduating seniors, 2015-2017). It is to be expected that plus/minus grading would affect other students along a distribution within each grade range in which, for instance, students who might be likely to receive B- grades (according to, for example, an instructor’s point system) would fare differently than students who tend to receive B+ grades, with additional possibility of variation if some faculty members end up altering their grading practices in a shift to a plus/minus system. In other words, in aggregate, the distribution of GPAs for undergraduates should not be affected greatly by a shift to plus/minus grading though some studies suggest that overall GPAs may decrease; nevertheless, a high percentage of UI students oppose such a shift.

The committee's discussion included the challenges posed for students in some disciplines where a plus/minus system could mean that it would be more difficult to earn a high grade—that is, the amount of work required to earn an A would increase "exponentially" for high-achieving students, and also that the number of students who challenge grades may increase under a plus/minus system. There was also some discussion about how precisely faculty could accurately differentiate among different percentages or grades within a range, in order to assign grades in a plus/minus system. On the other hand, the authority to assign and determine grades always rest with faculty, who must assign grades in any system of grading, whether there are whole grades or plus/minus grades.

Another concern has to do with undergraduate students who are on academic probation because of a cumulative GPA that falls below 2.0. Under a plus/minus system that counts the grade of C-, for example, the GPA equivalent for a C- grade (and for a cumulative C- average) is approximately 1.7. A similar concern is that students on financial aid must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress for renewal of aid, which for undergraduates includes a minimum 2.5 GPA—“At the end of each
academic year, a student’s University of Idaho Grade Point Average (GPA), completion rate of all attempted classes (Pace) and maximum number of attempted credits are evaluated to determine if satisfactory progress towards a degree has been made” (https://www.uidaho.edu/financial-aid/keep-your-aid).

Examples of Plus/Minus Grading Systems

Example of Plus/Minus Grading System adopted by Western Kentucky University: As noted below, in approving a shift to plus/minus grading (2008), Western Kentucky University considered four different plus/minus grading systems; they adopted a “widely used” scale for a full range of grades from A+ to F, with no reduction in G.P.A. for a C-, as follows:

A+ (4.3)  
A (4.0)  
A- (3.7)  
B+ (3.3)  
B (3.0)  
B- (2.7)  
C+ (2.3)  
C (2.0)  
C- (2.0)  
D+ (1.3)  
D (1.0)  
D- (1.0)  
F (0.0).

For comparison note that Boise State University, in contrast to WKU, does not award extra points for an A+ (4.0 rather than 4.3), and a C- receives 1.7 (rather than WKU’s 2.0). As noted further below, BSU’s scale is the same as that implemented at the University of Maryland in Fall 2012.

Example of Plus/Minus Grading Scale at Boise State University

A+ 4.0  
A 4.0  
A- 3.7  
B+ 3.3  
B 3.0  
B- 2.7  
C+ 2.3  
C 2.0  
C- 1.7  
D+ 1.3  
D 1.0  
D- 0.7  
F 0

Example of Plus/Minus Grading Scale at Lewis Clark State College (same range as Washington State University, Utah State University, and University of Wyoming).

Grade  Points  Status
A 4.0  Distinguished
A- 3.67  Distinguished
B+ 3.33  Superior
B  3.0   Superior
B- 2.67  Average
C+ 2.33  Average
C  2.0   Average
C- 1.67  Below average
D+ 1.33  Below average
D  1.0   Below average
F  0.0   Failing

Additional Examples of Peer and Regional Institutions with Plus/Minus Grading
- Iowa State University (Aspirational Peer, full range, A to F, A+/4.0, A+/3.67 ...)
- University of Nebraska, Lincoln (fullest range, A+ to F, A+/4.0, A+/3.67 ...)
- University of New Hampshire, Durham
- University of Wyoming (ranges A to F, with no D-, A/4.0, A-/3.667, B+/3.333)
- Utah State University (A to F, no D-, A/4.0, A-/3.67 ...)
- Washington State University (ranges A to F, with no D-, A/4.0, A-/3.7 ...)
- Virginia Tech (Aspirational Peer, ranges A to F, A/4.0, A-/3.67 ...)
- University of Montana (full range from A to F, A/4.0, A-/3.7 ...)
- Oregon State University (full range from A to F, A/4.0, A-/3.7, ...)

Idaho State University (full range from A to F, A/4.0, A-/3.7, ..., with grades in the A-range described as Excellent Performance, B range/Good Performance, C range/Adequate Performance, D range/Marginal Performance, F/Unacceptable Performance)

Additional comparison: the conversion scale used by the College Board is as follows: A+ or 97 to 100 = 4.0, A or 93 to 96 = 4.0, A- or 90 to 92 = 3.7, B+ or 87 to 89 = 3.3, B or 83 to 86 = 3.0, B- or 80 to 82 = 2.7, C+ or 77 to 79 = 2.3, C or 73 to 76 = 2.0, C- or 70 to 72 = 1.7, D+ or 67 to 69 = 1.3, D or 65 to 66 = 1.0, F or below 65 = 0.

An alternative grading system uses fewer points of differentiation (7-8 points along the scale): 4.0, 3.5, 3.0, 2.5, 2.0, 1.5, 1.0, 0, but this is not typical and not the case with other institutions in Idaho. Some committee members agreed that this alternative scale offers some greater ability to differentiate further among students' grades relative to a whole grade system while not prompting some of the perceived difficulties and effects of a finer grading scale, such as the plus/minus system (11-12 points along the scale).

UI 2018-2019 catalog, excerpts on the current grading system.
E-1. Grading System
E-1-a
For purposes of reporting and record, academic work is graded as follows: A-superior; B-above average; C-average; D-below average; F-failure; I-incomplete work of passing quality (see regulation F); W-withdrawal; WA-withdrawal to audit; WU-withdrawal from the university; P-pass (see below); I-P-in progress (see E-2); N-unsatisfactory and must be repeated (used only in ENGL 101 and ENGL 102); S-satisfactory (used only in CEU courses); CR-Credit, and NC-No Credit (may be used only in professional development courses).
E-4. Computing Grade-Point Averages
Grades are converted by assigning the following number of points per credit for each grade: A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1, F-0. In computing the grade-point average, neither credits attempted nor grade points earned are considered for the following: courses graded I, IP, P, S, W, WU, N, CR, NC, correspondence courses, continuing education units, credits earned under regulation I, or courses taken at another institution. Credit earned at non-U.S. institutions is recorded as pass (P) or fail (F), except for some courses taken through an approved study abroad program.

Internal UI Surveys: Perspectives on Plus/Minus Grading

The Teaching and Advising Committee discussed perspectives from undergraduates (Spring 2017 survey, see Appended Studies) and faculty (Spring 2016 survey, see Appended Studies) on a potential shift from the current whole letter grade system to a Plus/Minus grading scale, for undergraduates. Note: other public colleges and universities in Idaho use a Plus/Minus grading scale for undergraduates.

Faculty Survey: The Spring 2017 survey shows that of 269 UI instructional faculty surveyed, 60% strongly agree or agree that the UI should shift to a Plus/Minus system (64% of faculty had taught at a college that used a Plus/Minus grading system); 78% believe that a Plus/Minus system would “allow faculty members greater precision in assessing student work”; 35% believe that a Plus/Minus system would “lead to more student appeals of grades.” Note: Nearly ten years prior to this 2016 survey, UI faculty approved shifting to Plus/Minus grading, but President Tim White vetoed that proposed change.

Student Survey: The Spring 2016 survey included a concise rationale for exploring a shift to Plus/Minus grading, along with contextual information of several examples of peer and aspirational institutions that use a Plus/Minus system, and a sample grading scale from Boise State University.

The spring 2016 survey of 820 UI students showed that they overwhelmingly oppose a shift to a Plus/Minus system (approximately 65% strongly disagree with and 12% somewhat disagree with). 44% of those students did not have experience with a Plus/Minus grading system; 31% had experienced a Plus/Minus system in high school. Students disagreed that Plus/Minus grading will allow for “more accurate representation of students’ performance,” will make it “easier to assign grades in borderline cases,” will reduce “grade inflation,” and will reduce “discrepancies when courses are transferred from another university or college.” Students also disagreed that a Plus/Minus system will make them “more competitive in the job market,” “more competitive in applying to graduate programs and/or professional schools”; they also disagreed strongly that a Plus/Minus system will help them to “earn a higher GPA at the University of Idaho,” or that a Plus/Minus system will help them to “better calculate” their GPA. 77.21% of the students stated that they have a scholarship or financial aid that depends upon maintaining a certain GPA; 60% stated that their current GPA was in the range of 3.5-4.0; 29% stated that their GPA was 3.0-3.49; 9% in the 2.5-2.99 range; 1% in the 2.0-2.49 range. Note: according to the UI Registrar’s office, for UI graduates earning undergraduate degrees from 2015-2017, 2.9% (104 students of nearly 3500 graduates) graduated with 4.0 GPAs (104/3492 = .029).
External Perspectives and Studies

The committee also surveyed and reviewed studies and rationales from other colleges and universities, including a number that have shifted to Plus/Minus grading and instances where faculty elected not to switch to or to reestablish Plus/Minus scales.

Excerpts and encapsulations of those studies appear immediately below, beginning with examples of institutions that decided to shift to a plus/minus system, followed by examples of more divided and also negative perspectives on implementing a shift to plus/minus grading, and concluding with further examples of several institutions that made the shift to a plus/minus system.

1. Western Kentucky University's final “Report of the Senate Academic Quality Committee on Potential Revisions to the Grading System” (March 18, 2008)

The UI Teaching and Advising Committee (TeAC) reviewed the primary findings of WKU’s report; this report was an outcome that followed a vote of the WKU university senate in March 2007 to implement Plus/Minus grading. That vote followed earlier studies (2005-2006) of data and a three-semester pilot program “during which plus/minus grades were assigned by faculty but did not appear on student transcripts or affect students’ G.P.A.s” (report on prior data study entitled “Report on Plus and Minus Grading Fall 2006”).

The final report of WKU’s Senate Academic Quality Committee recommended unanimously changing in two years to a full-range plus/minus grading system that would be implemented “wholesale” without an opt-in or a rolling option for all students.

WKU’s report stated several reasons for advocating the shift to a plus/minus grading system, including citing research that suggests plus/minus grading increases student motivation and academic performance, that it promotes academic quality and fairness in grading, and that in repeated surveys, a majority of faculty were in favor of plus/minus grading.

The WKU committee considered four different plus/minus grading systems, and recommended a “widely used” (IV.4 ‘Rationale’) scale for a full range of grades from A+ to F, with no reduction in G.P.A. for a C-. This is WKU’s recommended Plus/Minus Grading Scale: A+ (4.3)/A- (3.7)/B+ (3.3)/B (3.0)B-(2.7)/C+ (2.3)/C(2.0)/C- (2.0)/D+ (1.3)/D (1.0)/D- (.7)/F (0.0).

2. Barnes and Buring, “The Effect of Various Grading Scales on Student Grade Point Averages” (U of Cincinnati College of Pharmacy, 2012)

Excerpt: “From 2005 to 2010 there was transition from use of predominantly whole-letter scales to plus/minus grading scales. The type of grading scale used did not affect the mean cumulative GPA. Students preferred use of a plus-only [whole letter] grading scale while faculty members preferred use of a plus/minus grading scale. In this study, there was no difference between the mean cumulative GPA calculated using a plus/minus and that using a whole-letter grading scale. Similar results occurred in a Principles of Management course in which the GPAs of 944 students taking the course either before or after implementation of plus/minus grading were compared. Mean GPA on a whole-letter grading scale before and after implementation of plus/minus grading was 2.2 and 2.2, respectively. Despite no change in the average course GPA after implementation of plus/minus
grading, the new grading scale did impact individual students’ grades with 129 (13.7%) grades being increased, and 115 (12.2%) grades being decreased. Although most faculty members and students believed implementation of plus/minus grading would decrease GPA, our study showed no difference in cumulative-mean GPA when calculated using retrospective application of plus/minus and whole-letter grading scales.

Excerpt: “The majority of comparable Universities considered currently employ suffix grading scales. Based on available information, use of a suffix grading scale would have negligible effects on GPA, grade distribution and credentialing. There was general agreement that use of a suffix [Plus/Minus] grading system is consistent with current standards in the majority of peer Universities considered and that the suffix grading system provides greater resolution in student grades that is relevant to some, but not all courses. Further, there is no conclusive evidence of negative effects on student GPAs, credentialing, or admission to post-baccalaureate programs.”

This year-long study by an ad-hoc committee comprised of faculty, student representatives, and the registrar, concludes that Plus/Minus grading has positive effects in four areas: “reduced grade inflation, better differentiation among students, increased student motivation, and enhanced image of grades and an undergraduate degree.” The reduced rate of grade inflation included data from Washington State University; their own institution’s study showed “that students involved in majors that traditionally have lower GPAs [such as the sciences] would be less affected by adoption of a +/- grading system.” The committee excluded A+ and D- from its scale [note that this, for example, matches the grading scale at the UI College of Law]. Bressette’s study also draws on others’ (psychometricians) research to argue that the reliability of grades increases as the number of marking categories also increases, such as in a shift from a five-letter grading scale to a 10-11 categories scale (plus/minus scale). The ah-hoc committee argues that adding a plus/minus system motivates students throughout the semester, because as the spread between grades becomes smaller, students “are able to increase their grades through extra effort even at the end of the semester,” or they may increase effort to avoid dropping to the next lower grade, whereas in a whole grade system, after mid-semester a student may determine that she or he is not likely to be able to improve to the next grade level, or fall to the lower grade level (38). The shift to a plus/minus system was set three years in the future, to enable most current students to complete their degrees before the change, and to give sufficient advance notice to future students.

Analyzes results of providing instructors at the College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences at the University of Arkansas, the option of assigning plus and minus grades; consequently, one-half of courses were graded using plus/minus and one-half were graded with a straight letter grade system. A majority of students opposed plus/minus grading; a slight majority of faculty felt that plus/minus grading was fair to students, while others felt that though a plus/minus system helped average and low achieving students, it also resulted in lower student GPAs and preferred straight letter grades. Effects on GPA showed that for “straight letter grade, pre-period mean was 3.35 and
post-period mean was 3.32. The difference between the two periods, -0.03, was not statistically significant. For plus/minus the pre-period mean was 3.01 [significantly lower, perhaps indication of faculty grading practices who opted for plus minus grading system] and post-period mean was 2.89 with a difference of -0.12 which was statistically significant (192). “Within the B, C, and D categories, the proportions of plus grades were larger than for minus grades . . . . the overall proportion of minus grades exceeded the plus grades . . . . This was attributable to no A+ grades being assigned” (193-194, 196). Again, while “a plurality of faculty agreed plus/minus grading helped average and low-achieving students, a majority of students disagreed” (195). Use “of the plus/minus grading system resulted in lower grades on average reversing grade inflation” (195). Also, “if the plus/minus system is retained, there may be value in removing the minus from the A scale since it is not counterbalanced with an A+ . . . . These findings by and large support previous research that noted students do not like the plus/minus grading system;primarily because students have the chance of earning an A-. However, faculty tend to support a plus/minus grading system because it allows them to differentiate between students in a course” (196).

Primary findings of this study show that “1) an overwhelming majority of students (83%) are satisfied with Southern Illinois University Edwardsville’s current whole letter grading scale, 2) most faculty (59%) favored a change to plus-minus grades, and 3) students and faculty alike noted that an accurate reflection of performance was the most important issue to consider when choosing a grading system. Based on the evidence collected, SIUE chose to retain the whole letter grading system for the time being” (49). In this study’s review of the literature on this issue, “Faculty and students in favor of plus-minus grades cite more accurate grades as a benefit of this system, while those opposed consider a low benefit/cost ratio as a downside” (50-51). In contrast, this study also notes that faculty at Northern Illinois University recently (2011) recommended a change from a whole-letter grading system to a plus-minus system (57).

Excerpts: 
Cites Wake Forest University study supporting the “the common sense understanding that a student whose “true” grade is represented by the score of 81 on a 100 point scale is more accurately captured with a grade of B– (assuming 80 is the minimum required to fall in the B range) than either a grade of B or C” and an MIT survey: “A 1999 analysis of faculty and student reactions to the implementation of +/– at MIT over the previous three years revealed overwhelming support by faculty and strong support from students regarding the efficacy of +/-.” 
On articulation with other Arizona institutions: “If adopted, ASU will be the only higher education institution among Arizona’s state universities and the community colleges to employ +/-” [report also notes, however, that all other universities in the Pac-10 system use plus/minus grading]. 
“Committee Recommendation: The majority expression of the Committee is that the University maintain a grading system that does not use +/- . However, given the previous resolution of the Senate to adopt a +/- system, the Committee has opted to place a +/- option before the Senate.”

8. Eastern Kentucky University, “Ad Hoc Committee on Plus/Minus Grading, 2002-2003” 
Excerpts: 
Only one of the seven other Kentucky public universities use plus/minus grading, and 50% of Kentucky’s other ‘benchmark’ institutions use plus/minus grading.
“Participants from the benchmark and Kentucky public universities reported that they thought plus/minus grading had a positive effect on student motivation and grading accuracy. Participants were split on grade inflation. . . . Furthermore, the nine benchmark and Kentucky public universities using plus/minus grading were asked what benefits their university perceived their plus/minus grading system to have. Reported benefits included more accurately reflects students’ work, more precision in grading, and increased student initiative. EKU faculty reported that positive effect of plus/minus grading was grading accuracy. EKU students reported no positive effects of plus/minus grading.” The committee concluded: “Plus/minus grading was instituted on the EKU campus as a method of reducing grade inflation. Research from this campus, other campuses, and the scientific literature suggests that it does not accomplish that goal. In addition, members of the campus community perceive far more drawbacks than benefits of plus/minus grading. Furthermore, the majority of the faculty and students are opposed to re-establishing plus/minus grading on this campus. Therefore, the Ad Hoc Committee on Plus/Minus Grading recommends that plus/minus grading not be reinstated at EKU at this time.”

With the experience of using plus/minus grading for the 2001-2002 academic year, this follow up survey reports that slightly more EKU faculty were dissatisfied with plus/minus grading (48%) than those satisfied (40%), and most faculty were against re-establishing plus/minus grading (51% vs. 41%).

9. Mohler, Chad. “Information on Plus/Minus Grading” (Truman State, 26 October 2000)
Excerpts:
Advantages of the plus/minus grading system
• More accurate reflection of differing levels of student achievement in a class
• Less grading error (greater reliability) in the grades that are assigned
• Greater fairness in grading: students who do (for example) B+-quality work will get a better grade than those who do B- -quality work.
• More informative feedback to students on the quality of their work
• More honest to our liberal arts commitment to the value of a discriminating mind
• Students in the middle of a letter grade range will find themselves with greater motivation to do end-of-the-semester work. They will want to try achieve the “+” grade and avoid the “-” grade.
Under the current system, doing a little better or doing a little worse on end-of-the-semester work will have no effect on those students’ grades.
• For A-level students, a greater competitive edge in the grad school admission process: a 4.0 GPA from a school with the A- (3.667) grade looks better than a 4.0 GPA from a school without the A-grade, since the latter 4.0 may consist entirely of A’s, whereas the former 4.0 is straight A’s (and/or A+'s).
• Grading scale can be set up so that straight letter grades retain their current meaning (A equals a 4.0, B equals a 3.0, etc.).
Disadvantages of the plus/minus grading system
• Studies (e.g., Wake Forest’s and NC State’s studies) show that while plus/minus grading generally has little effect on student GPAs, GPAs may decrease very slightly in a plus/minus system. For instance, the mean undergraduate GPAs from the six semesters NC State has been using a +/- system are within four hundredths of a point of what they would be under a simple letter grade system. The Wake Forest study indicates that the GPAs of students with GPAs close to 4.0 may decrease by up to eight hundredths of a point. Students with GPAs in the D-range may also have GPAs reduced by a tenth of a point or so.
- Note that... the small decrease in near-4.0 GPAs can be made even smaller with the adoption of a 4.333 A+ grade (together with a cap on cumulative GPA of 4.0, if desired). See also the accompanying NC State charts.

• Possibility of greater clerical error in the recording of grades

10. Notes on “Plus and Minus Grading Options: Toward Accurate Student Performance Evaluations”
The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (1996)
Excerpt: Proposed grading scale excludes C- and an A+ is not calculated into the GPA (A+=4.0, A=4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3 ...). “The primary motivation for use of the plus/minus grading option stems from an ethical imperative. Faculty are ethically obligated to ensure evaluations of student performance are consistent, fair, and accurate... In essence, the implementation of the plus/minus grading option allows for better and more accurate information to and for students about their performance.... The current system is too coarse. Students’ achievement can differ by nearly 25% and result in the same grade... Conversely, students’ achievement may not differ by more than 1% yet result in adjacent grades 25% apart in value for GPA purposes.” “...the use of plus minus grading could support student motivation and success... In the current system, students... can become... discouraged by having significant improvement evaluated as if there were no improvement and, in another circumstance, complacent by having significant decline in achievement evaluated as if there were no decline.”

11. Plus/Minus Grading Implemented Fall 2009 at the University of Texas
(Jul 27, 2009)
Excerpts:
Starting in the Fall of 2009, the University of Texas will switch from its current [whole letter] system to a plus/minus system [A/4.0, A-/3.67 ...C-/1.67, D+/1.33, D-/1.67, F]
Why is the University Switching*?
Plus/minus grading allows for more accurate representation of students’ performance.
• Plus/minus grading makes it easier to assign grades in borderline cases.
• Plus/minus grading may be used to reduce grade inflation.
• All 11 of our peer institutions (the group of large public universities that UT Austin uses for comparison purposes) use some form of plus/minus grading.
• The new system will help with transfer student discrepancies.
• The more grade options we have means that students are awarded grades appropriate to their performance in a course.

Will Student’s GPAs be Affected*?
No. Effects on GPA will likely even out, and the effect on top students is as likely to be positive. In any case, given that most of our peer institutions use plus/minus grading, this change would increase the equity of comparisons for students from different universities.

12. Plus/Minus grading implemented fall 2012 at U. Maryland (A+, A/4.0, A-/3.7, ... C-/1.7, D+/1.3, D/1.0, D-/0.7, F/0):
http://www.testudo.umd.edu/plusminusimplementation.html

Excerpts:
In Fall 2005, the [University of Maryland] University Senate voted to adopt a policy for plus/minus grading, which was approved by the President. A slight revision to the policy was passed by the Senate and approved by the President in Fall 2011. As of Fall 2012, plus/minus grading is the University’s new official grading policy. Under the policy, quality points for each letter grade from A through D reflect plus and minus components of the grade, as shown below. The plus/minus system applies to both undergraduate and graduate courses.

**Degree Requirements Based on Calculated GPA**

All existing requirements that are based on any calculated GPA of grades earned in more than one course will continue under the plus/minus policy. For example, the College of Education has a degree requirement that students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.75. This requirement is unaffected by the introduction of plus/minus grading.

**University Requirements for Graduation**

The University’s current requirements of a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 for bachelor’s degrees and 3.0 for graduate degrees are unchanged.

Undergraduate students who matriculate to the University in Fall 2012 and after must earn a minimum grade point average of 2.0 in their major/minor/certificate requirements. All students must also earn an overall cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in all courses in order to graduate. Individual department, college, school or program requirements may exceed this minimum.

**Acceptance of Undergraduate Transfer Credits**

In general, credit from academic courses taken at institutions of higher education accredited by a regional association will transfer provided that the course is completed with a grade of at least C- and the course is similar in content and level of work offered at the University of Maryland, College Park. Grades of D- or better will be accepted from appropriate course work completed at a regionally accredited Maryland public institution. The University will accept grades of C- (or D- from Maryland public institutions) from students who matriculate to the University of Maryland in Fall 2012 or after. The University will accept transfer course grades of C- (or D- from Maryland public institutions) from current students for transfer courses completed in Fall 2012 or after.

13. Minus grades added to reg. and plus grades for a plus/minus system at U. Florida in 2009
(A/4.0, A-/3.67 ... C-/1.67, D+/1.33, D/1.0, D-/ .67, F/0): [http://www.clas.ufl.edu/faculty/minus-grades.html](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/faculty/minus-grades.html)
Excerpt:
- The implementation of minus grades will not change the definition of a grade point deficit. A C average will remain a 2.00.
- Only grades higher than C will lower a deficit. Every credit of C+ earned removes .33 from a deficit (a C+ in a three-credit course removes .99 deficit points); every credit of B removes 1 deficit point; and every credit of A removes 2 deficit points.
- UF academic policies relative to “C” thresholds remain the same (“C” equals 2.0)!
- A “C-” will be treated differently than a “C” in repeat course processing since “C” is the threshold grade.
**S/U Option**

Currently an S/U course must be graded as a “C” or better to receive an “S.” Therefore, if a faculty member assesses the work of a student as a “C-” (1.67) or lower they should assign a grade of “U.”

**General Education Credit**

A “C-” (1.67) will *not* result in an award of General Education credit.

**Writing and Math (Gordon Rule) Requirement**

Students earning a “C-” (1.67) in writing/math courses taken to fulfill these requirements will *not* receive writing/math (Gordon Rule) credit.

*President’s Honor Roll policy remains the same!*

“A-” grades will *not* yield the perfect 4.0 GPA required to achieve the President’s Honor Roll designation.

**Sampling of comments from 2016 Faculty Survey:**

*Potential benefits of giving plus/minus grades.*

- 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."
- Would provide a more accurate assessment of student performance.
- 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

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.

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.

-For graduate students, I think it will show important differences between top students. Will help decrease grade inflation.

Potential drawbacks of giving plus/minus grades.

- 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.
- I believe there are NO drawbacks to this system (multiple replies just like this, such as “
- Having worked in an R1 university that uses this system, I can honestly say I see no drawbacks whatsoever, only potential benefits.
- 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 eff
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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.

- 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.

- Student disappointment at losing half a letter

**Sampling of comments from the 2017 Survey of UI Students**

- I feel very strongly against a plus/minus grading system. As a 4.0 student my whole life, I feel as though the current grading system accurately reflects my skills as a student. I don't think students should be penalized for having "less of an A" than someone else. An A should remain an A, whether you get a 90% in the class or 100%.

- I think this would definitely bring down the all men's and all women's gpa on campus which will make our university less competitive with other schools. I currently have a very high cumulative gpa (3.81) after about 80 credits of undergraduate work and I definitely feel this would have a negative impact on my gpa. I really hope that this will not pass and I know the majority of students will be very upset.

- I don't see the point in changing it. It may reduce the amount of actual 4.0 students we have but in the end I think everyone's grades will still average out pretty equally. It would be interesting to take a study and look at say 100 students and their grades. Apply a +/- scale and compare if their actual GPA changed or remained pretty constant. Then report these findings to the students for a second opinion.

- It's very difficult to get an A in classes. I don't want to have to get a 93 to get an A. ---Not concerned with achieving any other grade other than A.

- I think that this grading system will keep students motivated to work towards achieving higher grades within individual classes, especially when they're well into the semester and would otherwise be locked into a letter grade. For example, if I have an 85% and I am 2/3 through the semester, the likelihood of me getting good enough grades to achieve an 'A' are slim so I will put in the minimum effort to sustain my 'B' rather than continue working hard towards a 'B+' if we had a plus-minus grading system. That being said, as I typically get A's that are in the lower end of the range, my GPA will likely go down as a result of this change but it would provide extra incentive to continue pushing towards that next break-point should this system be implemented.

- I appreciated the plus/minus grading system at my undergrad school. Also, I would suggest including an A+. At times, I was in a very small % of students (1-3% of a total class) at that performance level and it was good reference for ppl writing my LOR to see that I had earned A+s in rigorous and competitive classes.

- I think it is a good switch if the University's comparative schools have implemented the plus/minus system. It mostly helps to separate the low/high within the A's/B's. -Maybe some value in that but GPA is an increasingly less important component of my portfolio because there is already so much variation in course difficulty levels.

I believe that a plus minus grading system should still allow a student to maintain the same GPA as a traditional letter system. There will be times that the system falls in the students favor and times it does not. It does make achieving a 4.0 more difficult however for the majority of students they will see in a benefit in working hard to try and do their best because someone with a 80% in a class and someone with an 89% will not be treated the same which can be very frustrating and demotivating.
-As a student, teaching assistant, and instructor of record in Computer Science - I am strongly in favor of UIDaho adopting a +/- grading system. It helps not only in grading, but better evaluating students' performance. As of now, students who work hardest and students who not so hardworking get the same grade: "A". This creates a vacuum of no-motivation of hardworking students because they see others no working so hard get the same grade as well.

-This is literally the dumbest thing this university could do. If I got a 90% in a class, that should be an A. PERIOD! Therefore I should get a 4.0 for that course, not anything else. It's bullshit that if I work my ass off to get an A, that it not be rewarded as such. I have heard that a majority of students are against this, and a majority of professors are for it. Why should the professors get any say in this? They're not paying for anything. The students are the ones paying for an education, so they should get a say in things like a grading scale. If this passes, I guarantee a drop in attendance at the University of Idaho. I warn you not to pass this.

-I think that the grading system that is currently in place does a fine job of representing students and their achievement in classes. I believe that I have earned the grades I received even if they were on the fringe of a higher or lower grade. I am sure that many other students share my same opinion and I believe that the student body opinion should take precedence in this matter, seeing as we as a student body are paying to be enrolled at this university. I do not think that the teachers opinion should outweigh the students in this matter and hope that the university decides to back its students in the end.

-I strongly believe that we should switch to this system. It is unfair that if I have an 89% I get the same grade as someone who has an 81%. Furthermore, it sucks that I'm 1% away from getting an A but I lose a whole point on my GPA. Switching to the plus/minus system more accurately depicts a students GPA.

-A plus minus grading system would create an unnecessary stressor. With the current system students can be more confident that their grade will be near their perceived performance. With the smaller range of a plus/minus system any small change (up or down) will result in a GPA change (instead of only borderline grades). I feel this constant change of grade would cause stress that currently doesn't exist.

-It would be more difficult for students to maintain a 4.0 GPA if a difference is made between A and A+ (I like that for selfish reasons), and so it could easily make for less competitive pre-med graduates (my area of concern). However, it’s probably a good idea in that it would combat grade inflation, and allow for more nuanced assessment.