

### **Motion from Committee on Instruction:**

Committee on Instruction moves that the Faculty approve the plan for annually dissemination of grading statistics to faculty members as described in the attached Report.

- These statistics will henceforth be tabulated annually after Spring semester grades are submitted and will be accessible to faculty through Banner web.
- Statistics will also be tabulated and reported for all years since this type of reporting was discontinued (1997).
- Students will not have direct access to these reports. However, faculty who find the data useful for advising (such as for interpreting an advisee's performance and aptitude in other disciplines) may of course discuss relevant data with advisees, as this knowledge may be helpful for students' understanding of their own achievements and aptitudes.
- Because the policy discussions for which these data may be useful are also of interest to student government, a member of the BSG Executive Board or the chair of the BSG Academic Committee may submit requests to COI for information contained in the annual tabulations, specifying the data requested and the purpose for which it is to be used. COI is authorized to determine whether a request is to be granted, and to set conditions for release of data and its distribution.

### **Report from the Committee on Instruction Nov 27, 2006**

#### **Background:**

- For historical background on this issue and additional rationale, please see a previous report from COI in the agenda of the Dec, 2005 faculty meeting.
- In response to the December, 2005 report the faculty voted (February, 2006 meeting) to refer the issue back to COI for further consideration. The data reporting format we had proposed would have potentially precluded accurate departmental totals from being reported for some departments. Having solicited and discussed additional faculty input we have revised the suggested reporting format so that accurate totals by department will be reported.
- The antiquated version of these reports (not generated since 1997) also included a list of the grade distributions of every individual faculty member, made anonymous but indexed by a random identifier. We do not propose to include such lists of anonymous individuals' grade distributions in the new reports. Having considered the input we've received from faculty on this issue, we have heard no convincing suggestions about how such anonymous individual-level data would be potentially useful (or even interpretable in a meaningful way), and thus the competing concerns about protecting anonymity led us to conclude that these lists are ill-advised at present.

#### **Caveats:**

- Grades are complex and multiply-determined. There are a huge number of factors that determine any single grade including characteristics of the student, the course, the instructor, the discipline, idiosyncratic factors, and complex interactions between all these. The rationale for making these reports available is to provide some insight into what the *distributions of grades* look like, not to describe the behavior of individuals or categories of *people who do the grading*. The latter is only one factor that influences the former, and cannot be separated from other factors based on these data.
- In proposing dissemination of these statistics, COI does not endorse any *a priori* assumptions about what grade distributions "should" look like. We do not intend for these reports to influence the grading practices of individual faculty nor create a climate of conformity to arbitrary grading norms. Differences in grading practices within departments and between departments can be educationally

appropriate. COI does not propose that dissemination of these statistics represents a strategy to address grade inflation.

- It is also reasonable to expect that there will be some fluctuation from year to year as academic personnel, students, and curricular offerings change.

**The data to be reported annually:**

At the end of each academic year, the Registrar's office will tabulate distributions of the grades given in each department/program according to the specifications below. There will also be tables with grand totals for the three Arts & Sciences divisions, for the College of Arts & Sciences, and for the College of Engineering.

The design of the tables is intended to provide information about trends at different levels of the curriculum, both within and across departments, while protecting the anonymity of individual faculty members.

- Typically each department's grades will be tabulated by 100, 200, 300 and 400 levels unless doing so would compromise anonymity of individual faculty (see "Special considerations").
- The number and percentage of A, B, C, D, and F grades within each level will be listed. Plus and minus grades will be collapsed with the corresponding letter grade (see Examples).
- Each row will also indicate the number of course "sections" and number of faculty members represented in that row. For those data, multiple sections of the same course taught by the same faculty member are counted as one section, but sections of the same course taught by different faculty members are counted as different sections.

**Special considerations:**

- If any row in a department's table would include data from only one or two faculty members, that department's entire table will be collapsed into departmental totals instead of by course level (see Examples).
- If all the courses for a particular department or program are taught by three to five faculty members, courses in that department will be aggregated, instead of tabulating by 100/200/300/400 level (see Examples). The only (very rare) case in totals data will be not be reported for a Department or Program would be when all courses in the Department/Program are taught by only one or two faculty members, in which case no data would be reported.
- Foundation Seminars and Capstones each will be treated as "departments" and tabulated separately. Department-specific Capstone courses in Arts & Sciences (those called Dept 4XX instead of CAPS 4XX) will only be included in the Capstone tabulation, and not in that Department's tabulation. That is because very few departments have more than two Departmental capstones, and including a 4XX level would thus cause many departments' tables to be collapsed for that reason only.
- For courses that are crosslisted in two or more departments, grades will be entered into department tabulations according to the CRN under which each student is registered.

**EXAMPLES**

These example tables (using fabricated data for hypothetical departments) illustrate the information that will be reported. Percentages in a row may not add to 100 because of rounding.

The first example illustrates what would ordinarily be reported for a department that was large enough that no row in the table includes data from only one or two individuals. 400-level classes would be reported in the appropriate Engineering departments, but in Arts & Sciences 400-level classes are all Capstones that would be reported in the Capstone tabulation.

**Department: Social Engineering**

Level	Sections	Faculty	# Grades	A	B	C	D	F
100	6	4	240	64 27%	89 37%	50 21%	30 13%	7 3%
200	22	9	390	124 32%	155 40%	73 19%	31 8%	7 2%
300	10	6	108	44 41%	50 46%	12 11%	2 2%	0 0%
400	5	4	40	30 75%	8 20%	2 5%	0 0%	0 0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>262</b> <b>34%</b>	<b>302</b> <b>39%</b>	<b>137</b> <b>18%</b>	<b>63</b> <b>8%</b>	<b>14</b> <b>2%</b>

This example illustrates what would happen if all courses in a department or program were taught by between three to five faculty members (no data would be reported if a dept or program had only one or two faculty), OR if any one row in a department's table (i.e., 100-level, 200-level, etc.) would contain data from only one or two faculty members. In such cases, only departmental totals will be reported instead of the breakdown by course level.

**Department: Oenology**

Level	Sections	Faculty	# Grades	A	B	C	D	F
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>40</b> <b>78%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>20%</b>	<b>1</b> <b>2%</b>	<b>0</b> <b>0%</b>	<b>0</b> <b>0%</b>

Foundation Seminars and Capstones each will be treated as "departments" and tabulated separately. Department-specific Capstones (DEPT 4XX) will only be included in the Capstones tabulation, not in that department's tabulations, simply because including these with the home department would usually cause collapsing of that department's table for the reason mentioned immediately above.

**Department: Foundation Seminars**

Level	Sections	Faculty	# Grades	A	B	C	D	F
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>362</b> <b>45%</b>	<b>370</b> <b>46%</b>	<b>54</b> <b>7%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>1%</b>	<b>1</b> <b>0%</b>