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Subject: proposal for changes to student assessment

Here is my proposal.

1. UCSC adopts a standard UC grading policy for all students, both graduate and undergraduate and any other categories.

2. UCSC continues to support a narrative evaluation system, but with some changes. The mechanics should remain about the same, in terms of class lists being sent out at various points in the quarter,
and the last e-mailed class list being a starter for narrative evaluations.

Recommended changes follow.

In the new system, instructors are free to enter an evaluation or not, for each student (they still return the file, even if all the evaluations are blank, to confirm that they are finished with the process). The rules on what is appropriate material for an evaluation should remain in place.

Narrative evaluations will be used for internal purposes, and for the students' own information. The registrar might establish a service of sending a complete copy of a student's evaluations off campus, at the student's request, with an appropriate fee for the service; however, narrative evaluations are no longer considered part of the transcript (for courses taken after the cut-over, but see (4) below).

3. In deciding technical details, like how to handle pass-no-credit, retaking for a better grade, etc., wherever UCB and UCLA are in agreement, UCSC should follow suit. If we can't follow UCB and UCLA due to differences in administrative structure, for example, on approvals, appeals, etc., then we should make the closest fit of their rules to our administrative structure.

4. The cost of transition in time and money is a serious issue. I recommend that students who have already completed courses at UCSC will be under the new grading system for subsequent courses, but BY DEFAULT they will not receive GPAs and their past narratives will be part of their transcript, as in the present system.

However, during a certain time frame all students may apply to have their records switched to the new grading system. Re-entering students may apply coincidentally with their re-entry. If the campus decides on a change of this magnitude, it must be perceived to be a big improvement, and no students should be excluded because they are ongoing.

Ongoing students may select from 2 assimilation modes to get a GPA: as-is mode and grade-conversion mode. (They can also elect the default, and not receive a GPA.)

> ``As-is mode'' is appropriate if the student has already been taking courses for grades. The student simply keeps all the existing grades, including P's; possibly NP's become F's if that is the new system. The student DOES receive a GPA. To be eligible for this mode, the student must be able to satisfy the requirements of the new system for

> percentage of courses
> taken for grades, say within one year's grace.
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> ``Grade-conversion mode'' means that grades of ALL past courses are converted to the new system, as though the new system were in place when the student actually took the course, and the student had taken the course for a grade. That is, any P is transformed into an A-D unless the course is one for which no grades are offered, even under the new system. The student DOES receive a GPA.

Depending on the volume of requests, it might be necessary to prioritize students that request grade-conversion mode. Generally, students who have elected grades where offered in the past would have first priority. Students who have consistently elected P/NP instead of a grade would have last priority. A simple scheme is to prioritize by number of P's needing conversion, with fewer P's receiving higher priority. Hopefully, all students can receive the assimilation mode they request, but students requesting grade-conversion should specify whether they want to fall back to as-is mode or remain without a GPA if they cannot be accommodated for grade-conversion mode.

After the application period for grade conversion is closed, the campus can set up a ``mass-production'' grade-change system. Departments, not individual instructors, should have responsibility for completing the required grade c hanges, because instructors might have left or be on leave. Department chairs will re-assign responsibilities appropriately. A flexible system that permits automation in a variety of ways should be established. It should NOT be assumed that someone will manually enter grades, as many people already have a ``code'' of adjectives that indicate grades, and they may well have an automated method for picking up those adjectives and outputting grades. If possible, the complete set of grades and narratives for a class should be furnished, so the people making the conversions will have as much context as possible.