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To: Dr. Concepcion Godev, Chair, Graduate Council

From: Sandy Krause, Graduate School Assistant Dean

Date: August 28, 2020

RE: New grade type for continuing research

We ask that Graduate Council consider the following proposal.

Proposal: Revise the multi-semester grading scheme for research coursework
Location: Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/Grading and Related Policies/Grade of (IP) In Progress

Rationale:

The Graduate School is proposing a revision to the grading scheme for multi-term research work. Currently most – but not all - programs use the IP “in-progress” grade when a student enters the research phase of the program. This presents several challenges:

1. In-Progress grades remain on the transcript until the final term when the research is finished. Then all the previous IP grades are changed to “Pass” or to the assigned letter grade.
2. Over the course of a student’s career, faculty may leave the institution. This requires that a department chair or GPD make grade changes to each term in which an IP was issued. This is time consuming and may be unfair, since the faculty member who assigned the IP is not assessing the final product.
3. In addition, the current grading option is IP or U = unsatisfactory. The U grade is part of the graduate grading scale. As such it triggers suspension or termination from the program. The sanctions associated with U grades may be extreme for a student who did not make sufficient progress in a particular term.
4. When letter grades are used instead of the IP, the student’s GPA may be inflated by the grades.

This proposal changes the process in two important ways. First, a student’s progress is graded each term by the faculty advisor. Either a student makes acceptable progress or they do not. The assigned grade will reflect the advisor’s evaluation of the work. Second, when a student receives a grade of UP = unsatisfactory progress, they will be told why and how to improve progress in the next term. The UP will not trigger an additional sanction.



Current catalog copy: Grade of IP (In Progress)

The grade of IP is based on coursework for courses that extend over more than one semester. For example, a course that requires enrollment for two consecutive semesters would be eligible for an IP grade in the first term (i.e., Certificate Project, Master's Thesis, Master's Project, Doctoral Dissertation, etc.). The grade in the second term is also awarded for the course in the first semester. A grade of IP should not be given for coursework to be completed in one given term. It cannot be substituted for a grade of I. For a student in good standing in a certificate program, an IP grade expires after four years, and if no final grade has been awarded by that time, the IP grade will default to a grade of N (no credit). For a student in good standing in a master's degree program, an IP grade expires after six years, and if no final grade has been awarded by that time, the IP grade will default to a grade of N (no credit). For a student in good standing in a doctoral program, an IP grade expires after eight years, and if no final grade has been awarded by that time, the IP grade will default to a grade of N (no credit).

Proposed catalog copy: SP/UP (Satisfactory Progress/ Unsatisfactory Progress) Option

Certain graduate courses, such as thesis, dissertation and multi-semester research are graded based on the progress a student makes in a given term. SP (Satisfactory Progress) indicates the student has made acceptable progress on their research or progressed as expected. A grade of UP (Unsatisfactory Progress) indicates the student did not make agreed upon progress. These grades do not factor into a student's GPA. However, a grade of UP means the course will be excluded from the student's plan of study, although the credit would apply to the total number of hours completed. A student earning a UP should expect written feedback from the faculty advisor detailing what "satisfactory" progress entails.

A second grade of UP should trigger a discussion about lack of progress in the program. Any recommendation to terminate a student for lack of progress should be discussed with the Program Director prior to forwarding such a request to the Graduate School for consideration.

Graduate students may not take the Satisfactory Progress/Unsatisfactory Progress option for a standard graded course.