RESOLUTION 30-11
CHANGES IN THE UIS CAMPUS GRADING SYSTEM

The campus senate at the University of Illinois at Springfield hereby adopts the following changes in grading policy:

The grade of F will be awarded for unsatisfactory performance or unofficial withdrawal, replacing the existing grade of U.

Deferred grades will be denoted by the symbol DFR, replacing the existing symbol of R. The grade of DFR is used only for courses of a continuing nature, and will continue to appear on a student’s grade report until the course work has been completed and a grade has been assigned.

Under current UIS policy students may repeat courses. The first time a course is repeated, the later grade earned appears on the end-of-term grade report and transcript. The first grade entry is deleted from the transcript and will not count in determining a grade-point average. Subsequent repeats appear on the transcript and are used in calculating the grade-point average. This grading policy will be changed as follows: The first time a course is repeated, the later grade earned appears on the end-of-term grade report and transcript. The first grade entry is replaced by the grade of R, indicating that the course has been repeated. This grade will not count in determining a grade-point average. Subsequent repeats appear on the transcript and are used in calculating the grade-point average.
History:

The UI-Integrate project involves the development of standardized information systems which will improve the capacity of each campus to share information and to obtain more accurate reports more quickly. As part of this project the UI-Integrate Faculty Advisory Committee was formed in Fall, 2000 to address issues that affect faculty or are of interest to them. Both the Undergraduate Council and the Graduate Council are represented on the FAC. As the UI-Integrate FAC discussions move forward various issues will be reported to the campus senate for information and input or for the consideration of policy changes. The ways in which grades are defined and noted on transcripts across the University of Illinois is one of those questions.

The UI-Integrate project provided the opportunity to review our current grading systems at each campus, and there was agreement that the symbols used as part of the U of I grading system should mean the same thing on each campus. This will produce transcripts that are more readily understandable, and should also help students who are enrolled at UIS and wish to take a course at one of the other campuses.

Both the Undergraduate Council and the Graduate Council have discussed the changes proposed in Resolution 30-11, and both Councils recommend that they be adopted. The Councils believe that these changes will make UIS transcripts more readily understandable to students and to other institutions.

Rationale for Proposed Changes:

Change from U to F. The grade of F is widely recognized as an indicator of unsatisfactory performance, and is in common use for this purpose. The grade of U is stands for a variety of levels of accomplishment, many of which represent work which is unsatisfactory in some way but may still be used as degree credit. Many UIS students are initially confused about the meaning of the U grade. The Councils believe that the grade of F communicates more clearly to students and to other institutions. These same reasons are leading UIC to change their grade for unsatisfactory or failing work from E to F.

Change from R to DFR. The grade of R is frequently used to represent a course that has been repeated. Since courses in which grades are deferred may continue over two or more grading periods, the use of R for a deferred grade may be confusing. Since the proposed grade of DFR does not look like a regular grade, it is also less likely to be confusing.

Change in the way a course that is repeated for a second time is reported. Under current UIS policy students may repeat courses multiple times. The repeat policy is presented on pages 32, 46, and 52 of the 2000-2001 (white) catalog (and on pages 44, 59, and 64 of the 2001-2002 [gray] catalog). The first time a course is repeated, the later grade earned appears on the end-of-term grade report and transcript. The first
grade entry is deleted from the transcript and does not count in determining a grade-point average. There is no indication on the transcript that the course has been taken before. Subsequent repeats appear on the transcript and are used in calculating the grade-point average.

Even before the FAC consideration of grade notation systems, there have been discussions about whether the current policy provides accurate information on student activities and accomplishments at UIS. Some faculty believe that every course and grade taken should appear on the transcript; others believe that the transcript should report only what the student finally succeeds in achieving. The BANNER system does not currently contain programming that would allow a course that has been taken to be completely eliminated from a student’s transcript. The policy recommended by the Councils retains the spirit of our existing policy, but implements it in a way that is compatible with the new BANNER program for student information and grades.

The recommended change retains the UIS policy of allowing students to replace the grade earned the first time a course was taken with the grade earned the second time it is taken. The first course will remain on the transcript, but the original grade will be replaced with the grade of R, indicating that the course was repeated. This kind of information is now commonly available on most college and university transcripts. The grade of R is not considered as part of the GPA calculation.

This change affects only the first repeat of a course. Subsequent repeats will appear on the transcript with the grade earned, and will be used in calculating the grade-point average, as is currently the case.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION
FOR RESOLUTION 30-11
PROPOSAL TO THE UIS GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE COUNCILS
REVISION OF GRADE NOTATION

Sponsor: UI-Integrate Faculty Advisory Committee, David N. Ruzic, Chair, Barbara Hayler, Chair of the Graduate Council and member of the UI-Integrate Faculty Advisory Committee, and Calvin Mouw, Member of the Undergraduate Council and of the UI-Integrate Faculty Advisory Committee, March 26, 2001.

Section I. Overview
The proposed change in grade notation brings the University of Illinois into closer alignment with the “best practices” of other peer institutions and benefits our students. Implementation of the UI-Integrate project has provided the impetus to make the proposed changes and drives the timing of such decisions. A uniform set of grades, as shown below, would be the only official grades at the University of Illinois. Within this set, each campus (UIUC, UIC and UIS) could determine which grades to use. A given campus could also specify that only certain grades are available for specific types of courses. The grades are:
- A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-
- F = failing
- W = authorized withdrawal
- DFR = deferred
- CR = credit or pass in credit/no-credit or pass/fail classes
- NC = no credit or fail in credit/no-credit or pass/fail classes
- PS = pass for proficiency and special exams
- NR = not recorded for missing grades or in-progress courses
- AU = audited
- R = repeated
- I = incomplete grade that changes to F after a period of time to be set by an individual campus. The grade is not factored into GPA in the meantime.
- ABS = absent from final exam without an excuse, or fails to complete the class --- counts as a “F” for GPA calculation and reverts to a F after a period of time to be set by an individual campus. The grade is factored into GPA in the meantime.
- S = satisfactory
- U = unsatisfactory
- NG = non-graded experience
- O = outstanding
- HON = honors
- ADV = advanced
- PR = proficient
- AA = above average
- AVG = average
- BA = below average
Rationale:
The transcript of an institution of higher learning should be easy to understand. Employers, admission committees, etc. expect a certain degree of uniformity. Since the BANNER program is easiest to implement if a uniform set of possible grades across the three campuses exist, there is an opportunity to make University of Illinois transcripts more easily understood and conforming. Note that BANNER only allows three characters in a grade and that it does not distinguish between upper and lower case. The following changes would be made at UIS:

Changes to UIS’s current grading system:
- F replaces U = unsatisfactory (failing) or unofficially withdrawn
- DFR replaces R = deferred
- R replaces Y = repeated. A repeated course would show up on a transcript though if the grade was changed to an “R” it would not be calculated in the GPA.

For informational purposes, the changes at the other two campuses are listed below.

Changes to UIC’s current grading system:
- F replaces E = failing
- F replaces ER = failure by rule
- CR replaces P = pass (in pass/fail option)
- NC replaces F = fail (in pass/fail option)
- PS replaces Pass = pass for proficiency and special exams
- F replaces Fail = fail for special examinations
- DFR replaces Df = deferred

Changes to UIUC’s current grading system:
- I replaces EX = excused
- NR replaces Miss = missing grade
- PS replaces Pass = passing grade (C- or better) from proficiency exam
- F replaces Fail = used only in classes attempted but not passed
- F replaces **F = grade of F has replaced Ex or DF due to time limitations
- DFR replaces Df = deferred
- ABS replaces Ab = Absent from final without an excuse
- AU replaces “Visitor”
- CR replaces SA = graduate transfer credit on transcripts (though internal notation will still be kept on the origin of the credit)
- CR replaces ** = UG transfer credit (though internal notation will still be kept on the origin of the credit)

Note that there are two additional items under discussion at UIUC to enable more uniformity across the three campuses. The elimination of using “units” for graduate credit vs. “credit hours” for undergraduate credit is proposed. Second, it is recommended that the course numbering system at UIUC (100-499) be changed to the one in use at UIC (000-699).

Having a repeated course show up on the transcript is a policy change from the current UIS system. This proposed policy adopts the view that a transcript should reflect the record of the student, period. On the other hand, if a student finally mastered a subject, why stigmatize them
in the eyes of society by keeping the record of the first failed or repeated attempt? Showing that a class is repeated could influence a potential employer or admission committee, but that influence could be positive or negative. A student who had to take a math course until he or she mastered it could be viewed as a very determined person who doesn’t give up, or viewed as not very good at math. More importantly, if that student transfers to another campus or institution, their new advisor should be able to see if some courses had to be repeated. The appropriate next math course might be quite different for a student who failed a class and then retook it and got a C vs. the person who earned a C the first time through.

There is a great deal of administrative relief built into the current system. Courses dropped before the drop date do not show up on a transcript and are not averaged into the GPA. Courses dropped after the drop date show up as “Withdrawn” and are not calculated into the GPA. Illness, deaths in the family, and other catastrophic occurrences are legitimate reasons to drop a class even after the drop date. These cases can be evaluated by a Dean in a particular College. That Dean then has the authority to withdraw the student from that course and therefore from the student’s GPA, even retroactively. Not having a course show up on a transcript if it is dropped after the drop date also can be decided on a case-by-case basis by a Dean. Since the administrative relief is present, adopting the more-widely-accepted practice of including repeated courses on a transcript may have more benefits than costs to a given student.

**Budgetary and Staff Implications:** The changes described here in the record keeping programs can be done as a matter of course in the UI-Integrate project and are already paid for. Others, such as the reprinting cost of handouts etc. will have to be born by the individual Colleges and Departments. If care is taken in the timing of such changes, these costs can be minimized.

**Effective Date:** The effective date of these changes should coincide with their implementation in the UI-Integrate project. BANNER is scheduled to be fully implemented and in use by May 2004. Curriculum data must therefore be finished by March 2004, ready for Summer and Fall 2004 registration. Though this sounds distant, policy implications such as the ones discussed here need to be largely completed by March 2002 so that the “Design Phase” can begin and run through March 2003. Then the “Implementation Phase” begins and is finished in time for its March 2004 deadline.