

MEMORANDUM

As amended by
Senate
14/09/87

DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDIES

TO: [REDACTED], Registrar

FROM: B.P. Clayman

SUBJECT: GRADE DEFERRALS

DATE: 23 June 1987

Action taken at the meeting of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee on 22 June 1987 leads to the following motion:

MOTION: The Graduate Regulation 1.5.1, paragraph four, be changed from:

Old: In exceptional circumstances, the grade for a course may be deferred. This shall be entered as DE in the student's record. If the grade is not received by the Supervisor of Graduate Studies by the last day for submitting grades in the next semester, the DE grade will automatically be converted to an F. When the grade for a course is not deferred and no grade is received by the Supervisor-Graduate Studies, the notation N will be placed in the student's record. For the purposes of calculating the CGPA, N counts for 0 points.

New: In exceptional circumstances, the grade for a course may be deferred. This shall be entered as DE in the student's record. If the grade is not received by the Supervisor of Graduate Studies by the end of the third week of the next semester, the DE grade will automatically be converted to an F. When the grade for a course is not deferred and no grade is received by the Supervisor-Graduate Studies, the notation N will be placed in the student's record. For the purposes of calculating the CGPA, N counts for 0 points.

That the revised regulation include provision for grades to be extended beyond the three-week period with the concurrence of the Dean of Grad. Studies.

Rationale:

This motion, which stemmed from discussions at the Faculty of Arts G.S.C., removes what a large majority of the S.G.S.C. see as major inequities in the present grading system. The S.G.S.C. considered, but ultimately rejected arguments, that differences among disciplines required departmental autonomy in permitting grade deferrals of up to one full semester. A lengthy

Motion
As Amended
Failed

discussion focussed on equity in evaluating students' performance in coursework. It was felt that comparing the work that one student produces over the normal 13 week semester with that produced by another over the possible 32 weeks of a full semester and a full semester of extension is simply not fair. In addition, evaluation of the work that one student turns in many weeks after the other students was argued to be difficult, if not impossible, to do equitably.

The committee recognized and accommodated the need for more flexibility in this area for graduate students than for undergraduates by allowing grade deferral up to 3 weeks into the next semester, rather than the one week allowed for undergraduates. In fact, a range from one to six weeks was considered.

The objection that the amount of work that some course instructors required of their students was more than could be accomplished in one semester was rejected. It was argued that instructors should have reasonable expectations of their students, and that, if more work than can be done in one semester is required, the course should be split into two. It was also seen as unfair to expect students to carry forward work into a new semester where it competed for their time with work from courses taken in the new semester.

Although I did not initiate this change in the regulations, it is fully consistent with my goals as Dean in that it promotes greater equity in grading and encourages more expeditious completion of graduate degrees; I give it my strongest support.



B.P. Clayman

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cc: N. Witheford