

**COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES  
COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STANDARDS AND POLICY  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY**

March 23, 2009

To: Karen Cook, Chair  
XLI Senate of the Academic Council

From: Philip Lavori, Chair, Committee on Graduate Studies  
Philippe Buc, Chair, Committee on Undergraduate Standards and Policy

Re: Institution of “NGR” as Administrative Grading Notation

Both the Committee on Graduate Studies, at its meeting of February 18, 2009, and the Committee on Undergraduate Standards and Policy, at its meeting of February 20, 2009, held extensive discussions on the proposal from University Registrar and Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs Thomas C. Black to institute the “NGR” (No Grade Reported) as an administrative option that will automatically go on a student’s record after the 96-hour grading deadline in the event that an instructor has not reported any grade for student/s enrolled in his or her course.

Faculty will be able to change an “NGR” to a grade on Axess for one year after that quarter; after the first year, it can be done manually. Grading is the province of the faculty, and the Registrar does not want to interfere with that process. But if the “NGR” is instituted, he can approach the faculty with offers of assistance to get a student’s true grade entered on the record in a timely manner.

The “NGR” will not be a grading option available to faculty; but current grading options that will remain open for faculty include the “I” (mutually agreed-upon by the student and instructor), and the “L” ( indicates that a passing grade will be forthcoming). The “NGR” will signify that the student has been properly enrolled; currently, “the blank” has no definition and often leads to a student coming up before the Academic Standing Review Board for possible probation, provisional registration, or suspension.

Transcripts are requested and mailed out constantly; blank grades leave the student in an untenable position of having to explain faculty actions. This also has a detrimental effect on varsity athletes, who make up 12% of the undergraduate population. There are very specific rules about eligibility, and a blank grade can make a student ineligible to compete or practice. Currently, this happens at least once every quarter.

The Committee on Graduate Studies and the Committee on Undergraduate Standards and Policy voted unanimously to approve the following four-part proposal, to become effective at the grading deadline of Spring Quarter 2008-2009 – June 16, 2009, for a period of two years through the end of the Academic Year 2010-2111 (August 31, 2011), at which time it will be re-evaluated by C-GS and C-USP with a

view to making this policy permanent. If the two committees recommend continuing this policy, it will be brought to the Senate at that time.

The full proposal is:

- 1) Enforce current policy requiring submission of grades by the 96-hour reporting deadline.
- 2) Automatically convert blank grades after the deadline to a default: “NGR” (no grade reported). The “NGR” will remain on the transcript indefinitely if there is no grade reported by the faculty.
- 3) Authorize the University Registrar to communicate directly with faculty who have not reported grades as of the 96-hour deadline (to determine if there are problems, offer assistance, etc.), and to follow up on a quarterly basis as needed where “NGR” notations remain on transcripts.
- 4) Create and install the “NGR” for a two-year period, with evaluation by C-GS and C-USP at the end of this time, to determine whether the “NGR” should be continued on a permanent basis. [Effective dates: June 16, 2009 through August 31, 2011.]

**The Committee on Graduate Studies and the Committee on Undergraduate Standards and Policy therefore recommend approval of the above proposal, to become effective at the grading deadline of Spring Quarter 2008-2009 (June 16, 2009), for a period of two years through the end of the Academic Year 2010-2111 (August 31, 2011), at which time it will be brought back to the Senate if C-GS and C-USP agree that this policy should be made permanent.**

**COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES  
COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STANDARDS AND POLICY  
INSTITUTION OF “NGR” AS ADMINISTRATIVE GRADING NOTATION**

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## SenD#6190: ATTACHMENT II

February 17, 2009

**To: Committee on Graduate Studies  
Committee on Undergraduate Standards and Policy**

**From: Thomas C. Black, University Registrar**

**RE: Change to Grade Reporting**

This recommendation is the final piece of the proposals originally brought before C-GS and C-USP earlier to change and simplify the many deadlines in the current Academic Calendar. There are two components to this item:

- 1) *Enforce current policy requiring submission of grades by the 96-hour reporting deadline.* The Office of the University Registrar will step up communication/follow-up with faculty and department administrators regarding reporting.
- 2) *Convert blank grades after the deadline to a default: NGR (no grade reported).* The "NGR" would automatically convert to "NP" after one year if there has been no report of completion from the instructor, as happens with the Incomplete ("I"). "NGR" is proposed rather than the asterisk ("\*"), as the latter can have many definitions.

These changes will help the review of students' degree progress and improve the accuracy of students' transcripts, both of which will aid in ending current unfairness to students. As it stands, when no grade is reported, a blank spot in the grade notation area may cause a student to come up for Academic Review through no fault of his or her own. This proposal narrows instructor grading options by eliminating the possibility of leaving a grade unreported beyond the 96-hour reporting deadline.

Any change in a grading system must be reviewed by C-GS and C-USP and be approved by the Faculty Senate. The Office of the University Registrar believes that the comparatively minor change of adding "NGR" to the grading options available to instructors will end a major imbalance and inequity in the current grading system.

NOTES FOLLOWING C-GS MEETING OF FEBRUARY 18.

C-GS approved #1 above, with specific endorsement for the Registrar to take an active role to encourage (1) the use of the NGR when a letter grade will be forthcoming, and (2) to follow up with instructors and departments on a quarterly basis to encourage the replacement of the NGR with an actual letter grade.

C-GS amended #2 to eliminate the sentence requiring conversion of the NGR to an NP grade after one year. With that change, C-GS then approved "Convert blank grades after the deadline to a default: NGR (no grade reported), which can remain on the transcript indefinitely."

The Registrar would like to have formal endorsement from C-GS and C-USP to evaluate the use of the NGR after two years, to bring quantitative data back to the two Committees, and work with C-GS and C-USP to decide if the NGR should be kept as part of the grading system.

C-USP is therefore asked to look at the C-GS decisions as well as the original proposal. This will only go forward to the Senate if both Committees agree on the recommendations. Should it be necessary, a joint meeting (or an ad hoc Subcommittee of members from both C-GS and C-USP) can work on the final wording of the proposal.