



MEMORANDUM

To: Donna E. Shalala, President

From: Richard L. Williamson
Chair, Faculty Senate

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Williamson'.

Date: April 19, 2013

Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #2012-34(D) – Faculty Senate Academic Standards
Committee Undergraduate Grading Report for Fall 2010 – 2013 and
Recommendations

At its April 17, 2013 meeting, the Faculty Senate unanimously accepted the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee Undergraduate Grading Report for fall 2010 – 2013 and endorses the recommendations stated within the report.

The report and recommendations are enclosed.

This legislation is now forwarded to you for your information.

RW/rh

Enclosure

cc: Thomas LeBlanc, Executive Vice President and Provost
William Green, Senior Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education
Don Stacks, Chair, Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee

April 2013
Undergraduate Grading Report Fall 2010 – Fall 2013

Annual Report on Undergraduate Grading
Prepared by the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Standards¹

Purpose of this Report: To provide a Faculty Senate sponsored assessment of grades earned by full-time students by teaching school.

Summary: The average grade point average (GPA) earned by undergraduates and new freshmen continues to remain steady. The range of undergraduate GPA is 0.57, with Special & Joint Programs the highest (3.78) and the Rosenstiel School the lowest (3.21). A similar range of highest and lowest schools was observed for new freshmen. The retention rate for new freshmen is steady, while the retention rate for new transfers dropped by 5%.

GPA Statistics for Fall 2012 Freshmen and All Undergraduates

An assessment of the GPA statistics shows little variability over the previous years. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, the overall fall 2012 undergraduate average was 3.30 and the new freshman GPA was 3.35. Figure 1 shows the results for new freshmen over the past 10 years, which demonstrates little variability in mean GPA over time.

Table 1 Average Semester Grades Earned by Full-time Degree Undergraduates by Teaching School Fall 2010										
	ARCH	A & S	BUS	COMM	EDU	ENG	MUSIC	NUR	ROSEN	Sp/Joint.
GPA	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.2	3.2	--
Fall 2011										
	ARCH	A & S	BUS	COMM	EDU	ENG	MUSIC	NUR	ROSEN	Sp/Joint.
GPA	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.2	3.7
Fall 2012										
	ARCH	A & S	BUS	COMM	EDU	ENG	MUSIC	NUR	ROSEN	Sp/Joint.
GPA	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.2	3.8

Table 2 Average Semester Grades Earned by Full-time Degree New Freshman by Teaching School Fall 2010										
	ARCH	A & S	BUS	COMM	EDU	ENG	MUSIC	NUR	ROSEN	Sp/Joint.
GPA	3.6	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.3	
Fall 2011										
	ARCH	A & S	BUS	COMM	EDU	ENG	MUSIC	NUR	ROSEN	Sp/Joint.
GPA	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.7
Fall 2012										
	ARCH	A & S	BUS	COMM	EDU	ENG	MUSIC	NUR	ROSEN	Sp/Joint.
GPA	3.6	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.2	3.8

¹ Senate members of the Academic Standards Committee are: George Gonzalez, Rosemary Fedrigo Hall, Carol Hays, Jean-Francois Lejeune, Linda Neider, Don W. Stacks (Chair), and Stephen Zdzinski. Data for this report was provided by Mary Sapp, Peter Liu, and the Office of Planning and Institutional Research.

Figure 1: Average Fall Semester Grades Earned by Full-Time New Freshmen

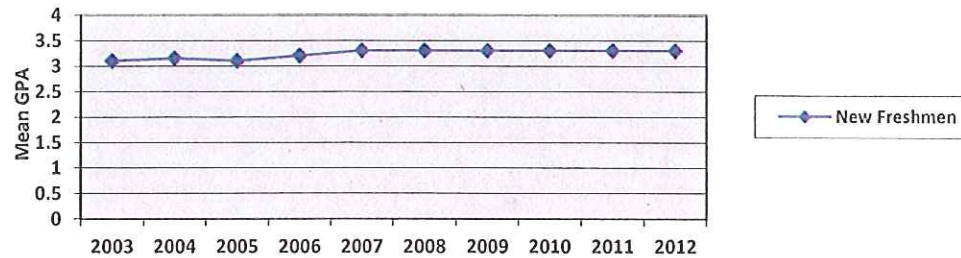


Table 3 displays the mean cumulative UM GPA for new transfers versus new freshman. As can be seen from this table, UM GPA for new transfer students continues to lag below the GPA for new (fall) freshman.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
New Freshman Mean GPA	3.27	3.27	3.25	3.27	3.30	3.33
New Transfers Mean GPA	2.97	2.90	2.98	2.98	3.00	3.04

Further, as can be seen in Table 4, the retention of new transfers is also lower than for new freshmen (82.5% vs. 91.4%) and represents almost a 5% reduction in new transfer retention from 2010-2011.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
New Freshman	90.4%	90.4%	89.6%	89.7%	90.9%	91.4%
New Transfers	87.5%	83.1%	86.0%	81.6%	87.1%	82.5%

Grade Inflation

The Academic Standards Committee was asked by the General Welfare Committee to examine the case of grade inflation at the University of Miami. Based on data provided by the Office of Planning and Institutional Advancement, the Committee found no grounds for concern regarding grade inflation. Figure 2 shows the trend over a 10-year period for GPA has been relatively flat. Indeed, if there is one driver to grade inflation it is small class size as shown in Table 5, something the University offers as an advantage in recruiting students. Interestingly, when GPA of new freshman entering in fall 2011 was correlated with SAT Combined and ACT Composite scores and then compared with the end of first year GPA the correlations were significant but accounted for less than 16% of the variance in GPA (see Table 6).

Table 5
Course Size Taken by Undergraduate Students
by Class Size and % Grade Awarded
Fall 2011

Class Size	A	B	C	D	F	I
Indep. Studies	83%	5%	0%	0%	1%	1%
1-24	62%	26%	6%	1%	1%	1%
25-49	47%	34%	11%	2%	2%	1%
59-99	43%	36%	13%	2%	2%	1%
> 100	36%	32%	20%	4%	3%	1%
Total	52%	30%	10%	2%	2%	1%

Figure 2²

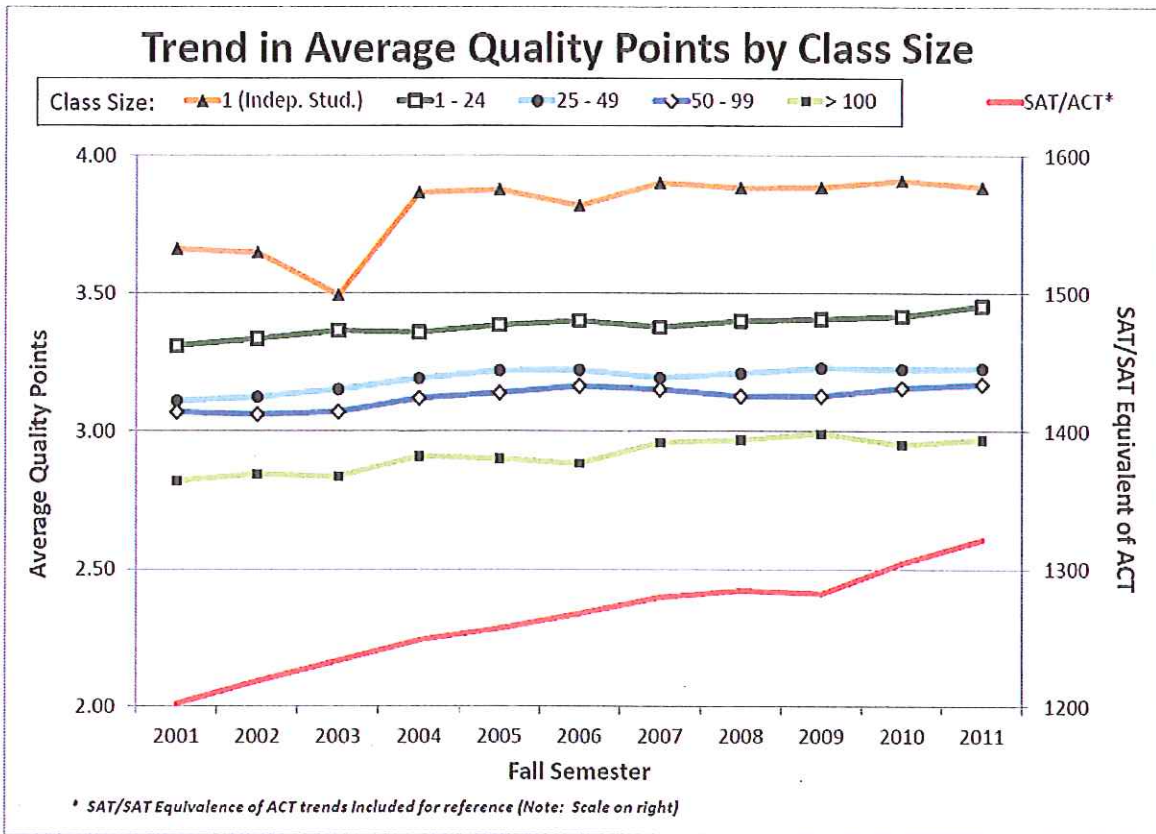


Table 6
Correlation of GPA and Admission Test Scores
Fall 2011

	SAT Combined			ACT Composite		
	# Students	Correlation	Variance Explained	# Students	Correlation	Variance Explained
GPA End of 1 st Semester	1119	0.24	6%	838	0.36	13%
GPA End of 1 st year or latest	1120	0.28	8%	838	0.34	12%

² Courtesy of Planning, Institutional Research, and Assessment

Conclusion and Recommendations

Grading patterns have not changed much over the years and new freshmen retention holds at 90+%. Of concern, however, is the drop in new transfer retention rate, offsetting gains made over the previous years. Grade inflation does not appear to be a problem, but data clearly suggest that class size is highly related to grades earned in a course. The Committee therefore recommends that more attention be paid to new transfer student retention to ensure that this is not just a blip in the trend line. Finally, we suggest that grade inflation is not such that it should be a major concern; continued monitoring may be useful but does not appear to be needed at this time.