



**To:** Faculty Senate  
**From:** Committee on the Implications of the Elimination of the N Grade  
**Date:** April 14, 2005

The committee was charged with ascertaining possible implications of the elimination of the N grade from the grading options beginning in the fall 2004 semester at Leeward Community College.

## FINDINGS

1. A survey (see attached) was distributed to 240 instructional faculty. Forty-four (18%) responded about the effects of no N grade on the courses they taught in fall 2004.
  - The majority of the responses (77%) stated that there was no “significant effect on grading practices.”
  - The majority of the responses (79%) stated that there was no “significant effect on other aspects of the course (e.g., instructional objectives, student success or achievement, retention, etc.)”
  - There was no significant difference in the opinions of faculty teaching 100-level and above courses or below-100 level courses.

**Faculty Responses on the Impact of the Elimination of the "N" Grade\***

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>NR</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>Q1: 100 and above</i>	10	38	2	50
<i>Q1: Below 100</i>	2	10		12
<i>Subtotal</i>	12	48	2	62
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<i>Q2: 100 and above</i>	10	39	2	51
<i>Q2: Below 100</i>	2	8		10
<i>Subtotal</i>	12	47	2	61

**\*Survey Questions:**

Q1. Has the elimination of the “N” grade significantly affected your grading practices in this course?

Q2. Has the elimination of the N grade significantly affected other aspects of this course (e.g., instructional objectives, student success or achievement, retention, etc.)?

2. Data pertaining to the awarding of the N grade for the fall 2002 and fall 2003 semesters were extracted from the Banner Student Information System.
  - The majority of N grades were awarded in ENG, MATH and PSY courses.
  - In ENG courses, there was a consistent pattern in both fall 2002 and fall 2003 semesters: twice the number of N grades were awarded in courses numbered below 100 as compared to those courses numbered 100 and above. In MATH courses, however, no such pattern existed.
  - It should be noted that all PSY (Psychology) courses are numbered 100 and above.
  - The distribution of N grades was not primarily limited to those courses numbered below 100.

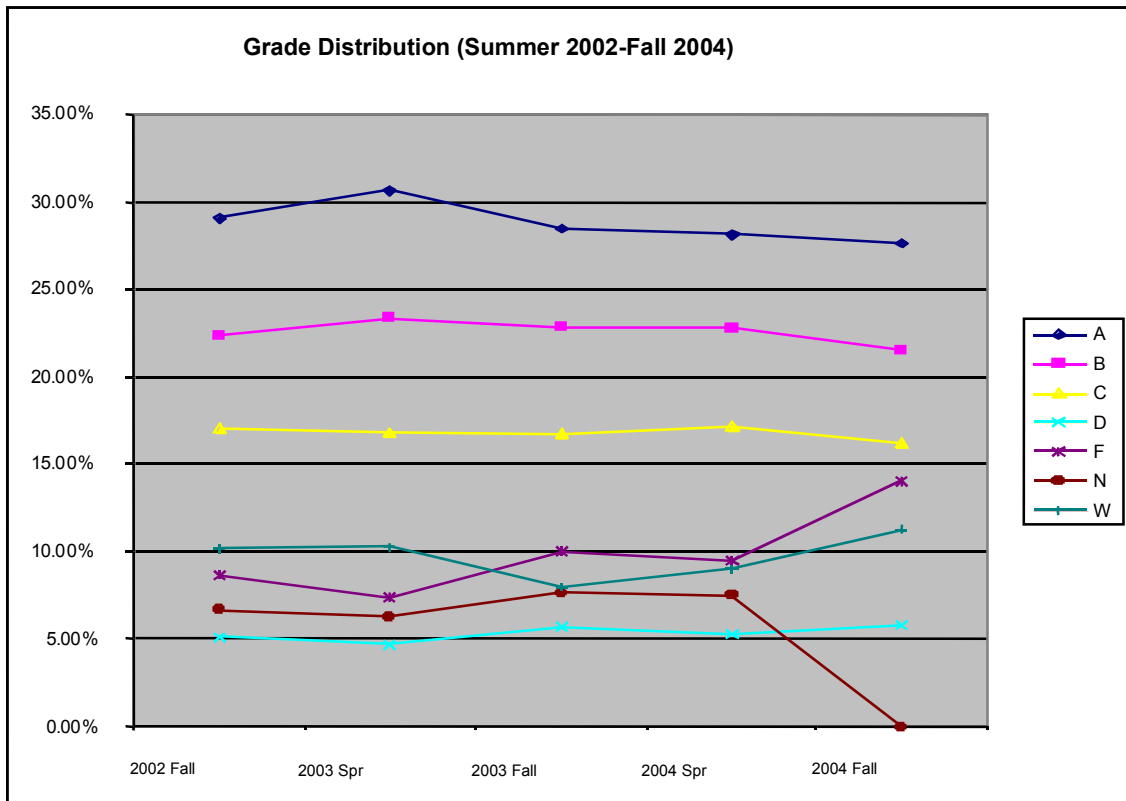
**Courses in which the Largest Numbers of "N" Grades Given**

<b>2002 Fall</b>		<b>2003 Fall</b>	
Total Number of N Grades =1,206		Total Number of N Grades =1,403	
<b>ENGLISH</b>	17.32%	<b>ENGLISH</b>	12.69%
ENG (below 100)	11.69%	ENG (below 100)	8.27%
ENG (100 & above)	5.63%	ENG (100 & above)	4.42%
<b>MATH</b>	10.20%	<b>MATH</b>	12.69%
MATH (below 100)	7.88%	MATH (below 100)	3.28%
MATH (100 & above)	2.32%	MATH (100 & above)	9.41%
<b>PSY</b>	6.05%	<b>PSY</b>	11.19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.57%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>36.57%</b>

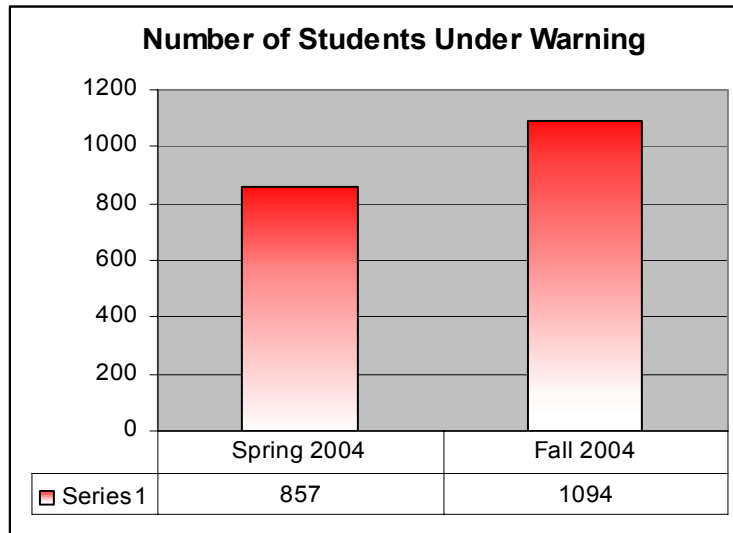
3. Data pertaining to the distribution of grades awarded for the fall 2002, spring and fall 2003, and fall 2004 semesters were extracted from the Banner Student Information System.
  - N grades accounted for about 7% of the grades awarded during 2002 and 2003.
  - After the elimination of the N grade, there was an increase in the numbers of W, I, F, and D grades awarded.
  - There was no increase in the numbers of A, B, and C grades awarded.

**Grade Distribution (2002 Summer-2004 Fall)\***

	2002 Sum	2002 Fall	2003 Spr	2003 Sum	2003 Fall	2004 Spr	2004 Sum	2004 Fall
<b>A</b>	45.32%	29.02%	30.60%	41.04%	28.43%	28.13%	42.23%	27.63%
<b>B</b>	28.20%	22.35%	23.35%	30.50%	22.84%	22.75%	27.88%	21.53%
<b>C</b>	14.02%	17.07%	16.75%	15.10%	16.74%	17.12%	14.25%	16.22%
<b>CE</b>	0	0.01%	0.02%	0	0	0.02%	0	0.04%
<b>CR</b>	0.49%	0.63%	0.35%	0.82%	0.34%	0.37%	0.33%	0.07%
<b>D</b>	2.49%	5.10%	4.74%	2.34%	5.74%	5.33%	2.27%	5.79%
<b>F</b>	2.08%	8.68%	7.41%	2.60%	9.98%	9.49%	3.19%	14.06%
<b>I</b>	0	0.01%	0.01%	0	0	0	0	0
<b>IA</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.02%
<b>IB</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.06%
<b>IC</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.28%
<b>ID</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.52%
<b>IF</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.19%
<b>INC</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.22%
<b>L</b>	0.16%	0.02%	0.02%	0.74%	0.04%	0.01%	0.07%	0.02%
<b>N</b>	3.72%	6.66%	6.27%	3.41%	7.63%	7.48%	4.80%	0
<b>NC</b>	0.25%	0.30%	0.22%	1.04%	0.28%	0.35%	1.10%	0.01%
<b>NCE</b>	0	0	0.01%	0	0	0	0	0
<b>RD</b>	0	0	0	0	0.01%	0	0	1.13%
<b>W</b>	3.27%	10.15%	10.26%	2.41%	7.97%	8.96%	3.88%	11.21%
<b>Total %age</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Number of grades issued	<b>2,447</b>	<b>18,097</b>	<b>16,169</b>	<b>2,695</b>	<b>18,385</b>	<b>16,091</b>	<b>2,730</b>	<b>17,932</b>



4. Data regarding the number of students placed on warning status were extracted from the Banner Student Information System.
  - The number of students on warning status increased after the elimination of the N grade from 857 to 1094 students from the spring 2004 to the fall 2004 semesters. There were no comparable data on the changes during previous years, making it difficult to discern any pattern correlating with the elimination of the N grade.



5. The committee analyzed the qualitative statements provided by the respondents to the faculty survey.
  - Some faculty (15 out of 44, or 34%) believed that there may be situations or student groups (e.g., death in the family, cultural values, personal crisis, pregnancy, military situations, ESL and learning disabled students) that are not currently addressed by the present grading options.

**Representative faculty comments:**

- \* Military and special cases need the N grade.
- \* Support N grade for course like ESL where it impacts struggling students in unwanted ways.
- \* Can not assign a grade for progress.
- \* Special circumstances.
- \* Used N for disappeared students.
- \* Students on roster who never show up used to get N.
- \* F implies inadequacy rather than a message to come back and try again.
- \* No longer have freedom or authority to issue a grade for progress and effort without penalizing the student.
- \* Once the student stops attending because of withdrawal to avoid the F grade, then they stop learning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The committee recommends that instructional faculty continue using the present grading options. These grading options do not include the N grade.
2. The committee recommends that the administration and divisions inform faculty of the meanings/purposes of and deadlines for the existing grading options, including any related appeal processes for special circumstances (e.g., death of students during the semester, military exceptions, pregnancy, health problems, etc.). In turn, instructors and administrators will relay this information to students.
3. The committee recommends that in fall 2005, the Faculty Senate appoint a committee to identify the student groups/special circumstances not well served by the present grading options and to develop alternate grading options, if appropriate.

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### **Committee Members:**

Faculty: Nancy Buchanan, Joseph Chernisky, Candace Hochstein, Gail Levy, Raymund Liongson, Michael Reese, and Ed Wiggers ● Students: Christina Hunt, J. Kyle Espinosa, and Teancum Satot