

MAKE DRAKE'S GRADING SYSTEM GREAT AGAIN

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Is the +/- system ruining your life? Do you find yourself wondering what can be done to make Drake's new grading system (and your GPA) great again? You've come to the right place. Students for GPA Equity here, or SGE for short.

Meeting commenced.

Upperclassman: It's really not fair that they sprang this on us midway through our Drake careers. Couldn't they have grandfathered in the new system to incoming first-years, like they did with freezing tuition hikes? The new first-years will pay the same rate all four years while current students' rates continue to climb. Are we happy about that? No.

First-Year: Maybe a flat grading system was someone's pull to go to Drake. Incoming students can choose not to come here. Current students just get jilted.

Student Senator: I heard when they first proposed the new policy several years ago, every student opposed it, so they waited for all of them to graduate so they could pass it in peace. They knew we'd never see it coming.

SGE Vice President: Way to put one over on us.

"B" Student: I mean, the new system is meant to make you try harder—work harder to earn better grades.

"A" Student: If by "try harder," you mean kill yourself for grades you used to get by giving 110% of yourself, then sure.

Student in a Million Clubs: Yeah, we don't need the extra stress of obsessing over every single point. Nowadays, losing a handful of points on a single test or paper can be the difference between an A and A-.

Upperclassman: Some professors don't even post grades until the end of the year. They like to keep it a mystery, I guess. How, then, are you supposed to count all your points and make sure you're maintaining a good enough buffer throughout the year?

"A" Student: This isn't going to make students try harder. It's going to make them *kill themselves* over grades.

"B" Student: I mean, sure, but it's not like it's required campus-wide. It's optional, on a class-by-class basis.

English Major: Optional? Ha. In name only. Every single one of my classes uses it. Professors feel compelled to embrace the option. Did any of them ask us what we wanted? No.

Upperclassman: Haha, right? One of my professors said he implemented +/- because he thought we would be upset if he didn't. How does he not know? I've not met a single person who *likes* the new system! Does he not realize how achievement-focused Drake students are???

SGE Treasurer: Think about it. The true issue is that it only benefits "B" and "C" students, while hurting "A" students. If you're a "B" student, your high-B's turn into B+'s, boosting your GPA from the old 3.0 to 3.3. So of course you love it. But if you're an "A" student, your low-A's turn into A-'s, lowering your 4.0 to a 3.7. And your high-A's, well, they sit and look pretty on your transcript, I guess.

Triple Major: Don't even get me started on the A+. It's a traitor. If it's gonna be equal to a regular old "A," then what's the point?

"A" Student: Right. The only way that would be okay is if the A+ acted the same way as a B+. You know, give us a 4.3 ability on the 4-point scale. That would be a true incentive for students to try harder, rather than tossing learning aside and focusing solely on grades instead. Don't you understand, Drake? You're turning us all into monsters! Point-obsessed, non-learning monsters!

Student-Athlete: I agree. That would give us some buffer. No one's perfect. If you get an A+ in one class, but an A- in another, you won't have to fret as much over the A- because the 4.3 and 3.7 will average out to 4.0. If anything, it will be incentive to try harder for those A+'s, to buffer the classes where 100% simply isn't possible no matter how much of a perfect student you are.

Overachiever: And high-achieving students are already working extremely hard. They're burning the candle at both ends to consistently earn 4.0's in every class, while maintaining leadership positions in a million clubs. What they *don't* need is the added stress of an *unfair* +/- system.

First-Year: Exactly. My high school used a 4.0 scale but had weighted GPAs for honors

and AP classes, so you could potentially graduate with a 4.5, *way* above 100%

SGE President: Why should 100% be the limit? Why max out at 4.0? Give us the 4.3, and we'll thank you for it by working harder. Traditionally, putting a cap like that makes students less willing to go outside their comfort zones, take challenging classes, or try new subjects that interest them simply because of the GPA reduction threat. Things like weighted GPAs reverse the issue by discouraging "easy-A" classes and encouraging challenging ones. Instituting a *true* A+ would do the same thing.

Upperclassman: Most professors have their own grading scales anyway, where any percentage they want translates into a letter grade, making it as easy or hard as they desire. When the latter happens, the old grading scale was our recourse. So just give us the old grading system to fall back on!

Meeting adjourned.

There you have it, folks, straight from Drake's chapter of SGE. President Marty administration: You don't need to abandon your lovingly adopted +/- system. It just needs some . . . tweaking. Give the A+ some clout. Your students deserve it! Together, we can finally make Drake's grading system (and GPAs) great again.

