Proposed CEP resolution on minimum grades in prerequisite undergraduate courses

CEP recognizes at least the following functions of course grades:

1. Meeting minimum requirements for graduation from UT-Dallas
2. Fulfilling a need for a certain degree of exposure to a field
3. Certifying the minimum level of achievement in a prerequisite course for progression to a subsequent course
4. Certifying a level of professional skill

Accordingly, we recognize that a course grade may be adequate to indicate a degree of exposure to a field or meet the minimum requirements for a degree at UT-Dallas without fulfilling either of the other functions for which the course grade may be used.

We recognize, too, that in some Schools or degree programs, some prerequisites listed in the catalog’s course descriptions may not be strictly required for success in subsequent courses.

In accordance with the reality that prerequisites may serve different purposes in different degree programs and the principle of faculty ownership of academic programs, the members of CEP agree that the academic judgment as to the minimum prerequisite grade that must be achieved in order to progress to a subsequent course should rest with the faculty of the degree program that is responsible for the content of the subsequent course. The conflict between centralized, University-wide policies and decentralized, program-specific policies should be resolved in favor of decentralization in this case.

We recommend, therefore, that the faculty who are responsible for the various undergraduate degree programs establish minimum prerequisite grades for courses in each degree program. A grade of D- will be the minimum grade allowed in the prerequisites for each degree program’s courses unless the faculty who are responsible for the content of the degree program decide differently. The faculty should also be empowered to decide on criteria other than, or in addition to, grades for progression in a degree program. Such additional criteria could include performance on tests of knowledge in a specific area.

We urge the faculty who are responsible for our University’s various degree programs to base their decisions with respect to prerequisite grade requirements on quantitative data whenever possible. Such data could include, for example, the percent of students who are able to achieve a certain grade in a subsequent course after achieving a specific grade in a prerequisite course.