

More Stats Learning Woes over the Horizon? Loose Grading Scale Enters the CoB

The recent hiring of Alabama PhD student, Razvan Pascalau, to fill "scheduling holes" in the EFIB brings with it a new matter related to learning deficiencies in statistics for CoB faculty and students to ponder -- a looser grading scale. The shaded area below contains grading details from Pascalau's BA 301 syllabus:

Grading: In this course evaluation will be determined based on two within-term examinations and a final exam. The weights on each of these components are as follows:

<u>Grade Component</u>	<u>% of Final Grade</u>
Midterm Exams	60%
Final Exam	40%

For within-term exams the weights will be applied as follows:

<u>Midterm Exams</u>	<u>% of Final Grade</u>
Highest Exam Grade	40%
Lowest Exam Grade	20%

Grading Scale:

A	90-100 points
B	80-89
C	65-79
D	50-64
F	0-50

I will be using the +/- scale in assigning final grades. Note that the list above details a guaranteed range, but grading ranges are likely to be flexible downward.

Pascalau's grading policy provides students with the opportunity to take two midterm exams and a final exam. The students are also able to count their highest midterm exam grade as 40% of their final grade, while the lowest midterm exam score contributes only 20% of the student's final grade.

The bigger element of Pascalau's grading policy is the "grading scale" shown above. Students with course averages ranging from 65 to 69 are guaranteed (by Pascalau's grading scale) to receive a C for the course. Not only that, students completing Pascalau's BA 301 course with averages ranging from 50-59 are guaranteed a passing grade (of D). Only students with averages of 49 and below will fail Pascalau's BA 301 course. Or, will they?

They probably will not. As Pascalau's syllabus (above) states, ". . . the list above details a guaranteed range, but grading ranges are likely to be flexible downward." Let's assume that Pascalau's grading scale flexes downward by 5 points. If so, here is the way it will work:

Grading Scale:

A	85-100 points
B	75-84
C	60-75
D	45-59
F	0-45

As the scale above indicates, it would take an average of 44 (or below) to fail Pascalau's BA 301 course. Not only that, students with averages from 85 to 90 would receive As, those with averages as low as 75 would receive Bs, and, finally, students completing the course with averages ranging from 60 to 69 would receive Cs. And, these scores are the result of a formula that counts one's lowest midterm exam score only half as much as one's highest midterm exam score.

As reported on numerous occasions by USMNEWS.NET reporters, there is a reported learning deficiency across the CoB student body when it comes to managerial statistics. That deficiency has been admitted by CoB administrators and AACSB teams, and it has existed for quite some time. Based on the grading policies in the the Pascalau syllabus above, those deficiencies may continue, or grow worse. And, they will do so without any warning, as USM's business majors will be able to earn Cs in stats based on course averages as low as 65, and probably lower.