

The problem of grade inflation



In the article “ School Penalizes Profs for Grade Inflation” by Brittany Risher, she informs the readers of grade inflation in schools across the US, and the many points of views of professors related to the reality of grade inflation. Although it has become an issue in many universities, only a few schools have taken action to decrease grade inflation. For example, Point Park University in Pittsburg decided to penalize professors for giving an above average number of A’s to students.

By penalizing a professor, Point Park University is expressing to the educators that grade inflation has become a big concern for the university and they want students to receive the correct letter grade value for their work. In Northwestern University an investigation was done in 2009, revealing a 20% increase on the number of A’s that were awarded in 1999.

According to Richard Weimer an assistant dean for undergraduate academic affairs for Northwestern University, students are graded on the performance of their work and nobody outside of the class will understand why a student received an above average grade because they are not reviewing the student’s work. While Economics lecturer, Eric Schulz, suggests that schools want to eliminate this problem, they should develop a set of grading guidelines. I disagree with the penalizations of professors by Point Park University because even though grade inflation is a problem, their actions will not resolve grade inflation in the long run.

Grade inflation is the term used when professors give their students above average grades when in reality their work is mediocre, which means that the work completed has less value than the high letter grade given to them in

the assignment. Grade inflation began in the 1960's during the Vietnam War. The reason why is because teachers and professors began to award more A's than usual, as a way to prevent students from being drafted into the military, because of the high numbers of death for the young troops. Although the war has been over for a long period of time, it has been statistically proven that grade inflation is still on the rise.

In recent years, the increase of A's has been more noticeable in private schools, than in public schools, which has lead people to believe that private schools have been doing a better job of educating their students. However, many universities believe that grade inflation does exist so they have begun to take actions to remove it. The penalization of professors by Point Park University is the wrong tactic to solve grade inflation for many reasons. Schools don't have the right to punish professors for their criteria of grading because schools have never handed them a standardized guideline on how to grade student's work.

This means, that all grades will be inflated when compared to each other because all professors grade differently. In the article " Grade Inflation Seen Rising" By Scott Jaschik, Kay McClenney the director of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, makes an example of grades not having the same value for all educators by saying that an A in an English 301 class doesn't have the same meaning in an English 301 down the hall, which would be more unlikely to find a class across the nation that gives it's A's similar value.

Therefore, Universities shouldn't put the responsibility on professors to bring grade inflation to a halt because standardizing one school will not standardize the whole system, which means that in the long run grade inflation will reappear in schools once again. A solution to eliminate grade inflation is to get rid of letter grades. Which will result, in professors evaluating their students individually and explaining to them what they need to improve to pass the course.

By doing so, schools will not have to worry about professors rewarding students with inflated grades. They will only have to worry about students meeting the course requirements. Grade inflation is an issue that has been affecting schools for many years, which has led to the decrease of student's motivation to work. The reason for the decrease of their incentive to work hard in school is because students are taking advantage of their professor's methods of grading, which leads to students decreasing their strive to become the most hardworking student in the class.

In the article "A History of College Grade Inflation" by Catherine Rampell, gives an explanation of the problem, when students notice that average work will earn them an A, students will tend to stop trying to excel. As a result, students will not be able to differentiate themselves from other classmates. When students are able to surpass their classmates in grade rankings, their motivation to be the most productive student will increase studying and learning time.

In the end, there will be an increase in hardworking students. On the other side, there are many people who claim that grade inflation does not exist

because they believe that in the last years, parents and educators have done a better job in preparing students for school. However, in the article “College Board Chief Rips Grade Inflation” by Elain Woo, mentions that since 1987, there has been an increase in the number of A’s by 37% but the contrary SAT scores have decreased on the verbal and math exams.

In other words grade inflation is present and can be seen on the number of above average grades being given to students when compared to SAT scores. If students were truly getting a better education their SAT and GPA should both be increased, not just one score. Grade inflation is a problem that people should not ignore because it is present. In the final analysis, Grade inflation is a problem, but schools shouldn’t punish educators as an initiative to solving grade inflation because it will be unsuccessful. They will be more successful by innovating and standardizing their grading methods.