

Adopted: May 28, 1996

**ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, California**

**AS-464-96
RESOLUTION ON
CREDIT/NO CREDIT GRADING FOR
GENERAL EDUCATION AND BREADTH COURSES**

WHEREAS, Current policy generally disallows the use of coursework taken on a credit/no credit basis to fulfill graduation requirements, the sole exception being coursework taken to satisfy General Education and Breadth requirements; and

WHEREAS, No coursework required for graduation ought to be taken on a credit/no credit basis (unless it is only offered on such a basis); therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That beginning fall quarter, 1997, no course taken on a credit/no credit basis will count as having satisfied any General Education and Breadth requirement (unless that course is only offered on a credit/no credit basis); and, be it further

RESOLVED: That this policy will have no effect on any credit given for coursework done before fall quarter, 1997; and, be it further

RESOLVED: That incomplete grades will be handled according to the policy in force whenever the grade of "I" was assigned.

Proposed May 28, 1996

Memorandum

To: Harvey Greenwald
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: December 9, 1996

From: Warren J. Baker
President

Copies: P. Zingg, J. Gonzalez,
G Irvin, L. Freberg,
S. McShane

Subject: Academic Senate Resolution AS-464-96
Resolution on Credit/No Credit Grading for General Education and Breadth Courses

In my memorandum of October 13, 1996, to you regarding Academic Senate Resolution AS-464-96, I indicated my conceptual agreement with the resolution but encouraged "consultation with the students and attention to the concerns of curricular exploration" before it would be approved. Through ASI Resolution #97-04, your memorandum of November 19, 1996, and ASI sessions on the Credit/No Credit grading issue which you and the provost attended, I acknowledge that this consultation has occurred.

Important issues have been raised throughout the process that has brought the Senate resolution to this point. I would like to offer some comments on a few of them.

At the heart of the Senate resolution is the recognition of GE&B as a coherent and unified academic program, not just a random sampling of courses from several disciplines and ways of knowing. This recognition particularly underscores the status of GE&B as a partner with the major programs at the University. A strong GE&B program not only provides a foundation for study in the major but also represents the University's statement about the factual and conceptual background and habits of mind that are critical to the intellectual adaptability and success of all of our students. There is no professional curricular substitute for the minimum basic exposure to human experience that is a central aim of a strong GE&B program, and I encourage both the Senate's recognition of this and ongoing efforts to develop a distinctive GE&B program for Cal Poly that matches our institutional strengths with the learning needs of our students.

In my earlier correspondence with you on the Senate resolution, I expressed concern with any curtailing of the students' ability to explore the University curriculum in the lower risk context of Credit/No Credit grading. Although some students equate lower risk with less work and are opposed to the resolution because they do not see GE&B courses meriting the same effort as courses in their majors, the exploratory character of Credit/No Credit grading should not be lost. The Senate resolution, however, would restrict this grading option to free electives, but, as we know, free electives are very limited in many of our unit major programs. This is a dilemma that must be solved.

The Senate resolution, the student response to it and the work of the Senate's Ad Hoc GE&B Committee provide an opportunity to address the principle of curricular exploration, the necessary place and role of free electives in the University's curriculum and the issue of addressing student views in such matters. Accordingly, my decision on the Senate resolution addresses each of these elements.

First, Academic Senate Resolution AS-464-96 is approved.

Second, the implementation date for this resolution will be delayed until Fall quarter, 1998.

Third, I ask that the appropriate bodies of the Senate undertake a thorough review of the issue of free electives. This review should focus not only on ensuring that free electives are a viable curricular option for all undergraduates, but also in exploring the establishment of a limited Credit/No Credit grading option for major and GE&B courses, as well as free electives. I expect that the Senate will have addressed these issues and developed appropriate recommendations prior to the implementation of AS-464-96.

Fourth, students should be involved in these discussions to be sure their views are considered.

Thank you for the efforts that you and your Senate colleagues have already undertaken to strengthen GE&B and to acknowledge the concerns of our students in curricular matters. I look forward to continued progress on these accounts.