

Adopted: April 29, 1997

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

**AS-479-97/CC  
RESOLUTION ON  
CREDIT/NO CREDIT GRADING**

WHEREAS, This resolution pertains to courses that are normally graded, not to CR/NC-only courses; and

WHEREAS, This resolution refers to undergraduate students only, not to graduate students; and

WHEREAS, The number of courses a student may elect to take CR/NC should be kept to a minimum; and

WHEREAS, Students should have the option of taking a limited number of courses CR/NC; and

WHEREAS, Some balance must be found between limiting the number of courses that may be taken CR/NC and allowing students to enroll in a small number of such courses for the reasons outlined above; and

WHEREAS, Some departments (or equivalent unit) may approve of their majors taking a major or support course CR/NC, or a GEB course CR/NC, while some departments would not approve, and individual departments should properly have the right, and be allowed to retain the flexibility, to make this decision; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That students be permitted to take a maximum of 16 units of courses CR/NC in accord with the following specifications:

- \* no more than 4 units CR/NC in major or support courses, subject to approval by the student's major department or equivalent unit; and
- \* no more than 4 units CR/NC in GEB courses.

***Rationale:*** *The number of courses a student may elect to take CR/NC should be kept to a minimum, for reasons that include the following: It is generally recognized, as evidenced in testimony from recipients of Cal Poly's Distinguished Teaching Award (e.g., memo from Dr. Snetsinger dated 10 Nov. 1996), that students who enroll in a course CR/NC often do not take such courses as seriously as their graded courses, working toward a lower standard and consequently learning less in CR/NC courses; as Drs. Greenwald and Hampsey have stated, "Those involved in teaching GEB courses have complained that the students who take GEB classes CR/NC are often working for a C-. The data from Tom Zuur supports this contention. There were 40 percent more*

*A's and B's among all students than among CR/NC students. There were 40 percent fewer D's and F's among all students than among [CR/NC] students. The result is a pronounced downward shift of grades among CR/NC classes" (memo dated 10 Oct. 1996);*

*Senate Resolution AS-464-96 abolishing the option of taking GEB classes CR/NC was passed in a near-unanimous vote by the Academic Senate in Spring 1996 and approved by President Baker in Fall 1996;*

*Students at Cal Poly cannot elect to take major or support courses CR/NC because these courses are considered vital to their education, and GEB courses cannot be taken CR/NC because they are considered equally vital to students' education; as President Baker has stated, this resolution 'particularly underscores the status of GEB as a partner with the major programs at the University' (memo dated 9 Dec. 1996); as Dr. Zingg has stated, General Education should not be seen as a "second class citizen" in the curriculum (ASI Board of Directors minutes dated 6 Nov. 1996); as Drs. Greenwald and Hampsey have stated, "The implied message that GEB classes are somehow less important is one that teachers of GEB classes find objectionable. If we want to consider Cal Poly a premier institution, then GEB must be taken seriously" (memo dated 10 Oct. 1996);*

*Prospective employers have been known to disapprove of CR/NC courses on transcripts, which may adversely affect students' ability to obtain jobs;*

*Graduate school admissions boards have been known to disapprove of CR/NC courses on transcripts, with some graduate schools refusing to accept CR/NC courses for credit, and other schools automatically converting CR's to C's or F's.*

***Students should have the option of taking a limited number of courses CR/NC, for reasons that include the following:*** *Students may explore unfamiliar areas of the curriculum or enroll in challenging courses without undue risk to their grade point average; President Baker has encouraged the Senate "to protect both the exploratory purpose of Cr/NCr grading and the principle of curricular choice through free electives" (memo dated 25 Sept. 1996);*

*Students may take a higher course load during certain quarters in order to move more quickly toward graduation;*

*Transfer students who have taken some courses CR/NC elsewhere may have an easier time making the transition to Cal Poly and thus move more quickly toward graduation.*

**Proposed by the Academic Senate Curriculum**

**Committee**

**February 27, 1997**

**Revised April 8, 1997**

**Revised April 22, 1997**

**Revised April 29, 1997**

**Memorandum**

**To:** Anny Morrobel-Sosa, Chair  
Academic Senate

**Date:** July 21, 1997

**From:** Warren J. Baker  
President

**Copies:** Paul J. Zingg  
Glenn Irvin  
Harvey Greenwald  
Euel Kennedy  
Tom Zuur

**Subject: Response to Academic Senate Resolution AS-479-97/CC, Resolution on Credit/No Credit Grading**

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This will acknowledge receipt of the above subject Senate Resolution and the additional work accomplished by the Academic Senate in response to my initial approval of Senate Resolution AS 464-96 which requested that the Senate explore the establishment of limited Credit/No Credit grading options for major and GE&B courses.

I am pleased to approve this new Resolution, recognizing that it establishes a maximum of 16 units of CR/NC grading in courses that are normally graded. In addition, this Resolution allows up to 4 units of CR/NC grading in major or support courses (subject to the approval by the student's major department and up to 4 units of CR/NC grading in GE&B courses.

I recognize that Credit/No Credit grading in GE&B courses continues to be an extremely important issue for students as well as faculty, and that this Resolution represents a compromise. The restriction to a maximum of 4 units CR/NC grading in GE&B courses is offset by the reduction from 79 to 72 units that are included in the newly approved GE&B model. It is my understanding that the Registrar's Office has indicated that most students take between 8 and 12 units of courses by CR/NC, and therefore, the 16-unit limitation would not represent a significant problem for most students.

With my approval of this new Resolution, I am establishing an effective date of Fall Quarter 1998, with the following two conditions:

1. That the academic departments/units create and publish an up-to-date list of major and support courses that also include those courses that could be taken CR/NC by their majors.
2. That the Registrar's Office work with the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee to develop procedures for implementing the new CR/NC grading policy. These procedures should clarify the responsibilities of the department, the faculty advisor, the college advisement centers, the Academic Records Office, etc.

Please extend my appreciation to those members of the Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee for the excellent work they have accomplished in developing this new CRfNC grading policy.