

MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY
MEMO

14 February 1995

TO: Senate

FROM: Sheila A. Brown, Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, CAPP



RE: Evaluation and Grading

CAPP unanimously recommends to Senate that:

Mount Saint Vincent adopt an alphabetic/gpa scale to report student grades

CAPP believed it was timely to revisit the topic of student evaluation and grading, which has periodically been considered by the Committee, in the context of improving student mobility among various university partners. By September 1994 only four universities in the Maritime region retained numeric grading scales. Mount Allison then changed to an alphabetic/gpa scale, leaving only the Mount, UCCB and St. Francis Xavier using numerics.

The Registrar apprised CAPP that, within the Metro area, our marking scale has long been a source of various "accommodations" by other institutions, especially when they were attempting to assess our numeric scale against their alphabetic scales. Both St. Mary's and Dalhousie have "interpretation formulae" for our numeric grades but we have neither control nor influence over these formulae. This has caused some difficulties for students, particularly since, despite the formulae, it appears that different departments at other universities were not assessing our students' grades consistently.

In the course of developing basic principles for the transfer of credits for first and second year courses among Nova Scotia universities at the request of the NSCHE, the Council as well as several universities cited different grading scales as significant obstacles to the portability of credits. The Registrar advises that, although a workable agreement was reached which we recently extended to cover Atlantic and not just Nova Scotia transfers, and is working well in practice, the idea remains that our numeric expression of our institutional standards for achievement require "external adjustment".

CAPP has examined the practice of several other universities with respect to descriptors of each letter grade and its GPA equivalent. While the Committee sees advantages in some systems over others, it believes that a final determination should not be made by the Mount in isolation but rather in consultation with our partners.

This change could go into effect in 1996, coinciding with the introduction of the new student information system.