



Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	11/29/18
Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

S.A. Resolution #18 Reinstating the Publication of Median Grades

ABSTRACT: This resolution seeks to reinstate the semesterly publication of median grade reports.

Sponsored by: Osai Egharevba '21

Whereas, from 1998 until 2011, the university published median grade reports at the end of each semester for all courses whose enrollment was greater than 10; and

Whereas, in May 2011, the Faculty Senate voted to cease the publication of median grades out of concerns regarding grade inflation; and

Whereas, median grades are recorded on student transcripts for graduate schools and employers to view, but students are not allowed to view this data until after they have completed the course; and

Whereas, at other universities, such as Dartmouth College and University of Michigan, median grades are published *in addition* to being recorded on transcripts, establishing a concept known as “Truth in Grading.”; and

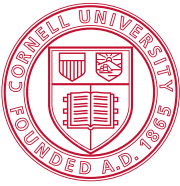
Whereas, median grades for many courses have largely stayed the same (and in some cases have increased) since the last time they were published, contradicting the argument that the publication of median grades contributes to grade inflation; and

Whereas, a student’s course grade can easily be compared to the median grade for that course by looking at their transcript¹, contradicting the argument that one can “shop” for supposedly easy courses based on a median grade report; and

Whereas, various courses inherently have different grading bases and different faculty members may have different grading standards for the same course, contributing to the difference in median grades; and

Whereas, faculty often announce the expected median grade before the drop date for their courses at the beginning of the semester, having the same effect as publishing a median grade report; and

¹ For instance, a student who earns a B+ in a course whose median grade is a B would indicate stronger performance than one who recieved an A- in a class whose median grade is an A.



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Whereas, academic transparency can be significantly improved by reinstating the publication of median grades, in addition to maintaining them on student transcripts; and

Whereas, the Faculty Senate has the authority to reinstate the publication of median grades, reintroducing the Truth in Grading concept; and

Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly recommends that the Faculty Senate reinstate the semesterly publication of median grade reports.

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College of Engineering Representative, Student Assembly
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(Reviewed by: Academic Policy Committee, 12-0-1, 11/8/2018)