

# Cornell University Student Assembly

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Type of Action:	Sense-of-the-Body
Status/Result:	New Business

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

ABSTRACT: This resolution seeks to encourage the Faculty Senate to investigate the possibility of publishing 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

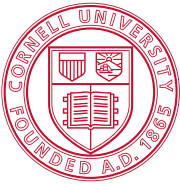
**Whereas**, a student’s course grade can easily be compared to the median grade for that course by looking at their transcript<sup>1</sup>, contradicting the argument that one can “shop” for supposedly easy courses based on a median grade report; and

**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

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<sup>1</sup>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.



## Cornell University Student Assembly

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

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

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45 **Be it therefore resolved**, that the Student Assembly calls on the Faculty Senate to investigate the  
46 possibility of reinstating the semesterly reporting of median grades.

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48 **Be it further resolved**, that such investigation shall include, but is not limited to the following:  
49 median grade reports since 2011 and feedback from faculty, undergraduate and  
50 graduate/professional students.

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52 **Be it finally resolved**, that said investigation include the following: how enrollment would be  
53 impacted, correlation between student satisfaction and median grades, how overall median  
54 grade trends have shifted since the cease of publication of median grades in 2011, and how  
55 other schools have been impacted by public median grades

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57 Osai Egharevba '21  
58 *College of Engineering Representative, Student Assembly*  
59 *Member, Academic Policy Committee*

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61 Moriah Adeghe '21  
62 *Chair, Academic Policy Committee*

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64 Robert Sanchez '21  
65 *Member, Academic Policy Committee*

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67 Jojo Cheng '21  
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70 TJ Hunt '21  
71 *Member, Academic Policy Committee*

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73 Rachel Marciano '20  
74 *Member, Academic Policy Committee*

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76 *(Reviewed by: Academic Policy Committee, 12-0-1, 11/8/2018)*