The Graduate Policy Committee supports the Law School’s request to adjust the points associated with letter grades for Law School majors. Three arguments were critical in our decision.

1) An evenly spaced point distribution is disciplinary practice in Law.
2) The Law School has a mandatory curve that determines how many students can earn a “B,” “B-,” etc.
3) Students who are taking law courses but are not law majors are not graded on the Law grading scale but on the typical grading scale used by all majors (other than Law and Medicine).

Detailed arguments are available in Dean Bayern’s letter below.
We are informed that a similar college-specific adjustment has been made by the College of Law at FAMU, even though FAMU’s university-wide assignments of grade points matches that of FSU.

The change will have another positive effect, which is that it will more clearly mark College of Law grades as different from other university grades because of our mandatory curve. Thus, for example, the table above can appear in a separate table within the Graduate Bulletin which will make it clearer that the A+ grade is reserved only for the College of Law. The difference will also serve as a convenient indication, in the relatively rare case where students from other departments enroll in College of Law courses, that grades should not translate unmodified between a mandatory curve and another system without modification; for example, it suggests what we generally regard as a best practice anyway, which is that graduate students in other departments should have College of Law grades translated to an S/U grading basis. (The College of Law similarly converts grades taken for LAW credit in other colleges to an S/U basis.)

This change will not complicate grading for joint-degree students. The university’s back-end registration and reporting system already calculates and exposes separate GPAs by “career” (e.g., graduate vs. law), so no changes would be needed to isolate College of Law grades. For example, a joint-pathway student selected as an example to demonstrate this point had a “GRAD” GPA of 4.000 but a “LAW” GPA of 3.371 as reported by Student Central. The College of Law uses only the law GPA for College of Law purposes (e.g., retention, ranking, honors, incoming GPAs for curved classes). To put it differently, while this change would be difficult to implement for a single department within (say) the College of Arts and Sciences, the system and human processes already do what we need to separate College of Law grades from other grades. Of course, it wasn’t too long ago that the College of Law was on an entirely different grading basis from graduate departments, using a numeric scale from 60 to 100.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I’m more than happy to answer any questions that you have.

Sincerely,

Shawn Bayern