

# Trends in Letter Grades Assigned

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This report summarizes the trends in letter grades assigned by faculty to students in CSUSB courses. For the first 25 years of the institution, letter grades for all courses were included in the grade average reporting except for "600" level graduate courses and those of less than 1.5 student credit units. These essentially undergraduate grade average definitions are incorporated in the following chart titled *Trends in Undergraduate Grade Averages*. There is a clear upward trend over the past 35 years. For comparison purposes, I have included the Spring Term Grade Averages for CSUSB and the CSU System from the now defunct *CSU Academic Grade Report* covering the years 1971 to 1991. Spring grades tended to be higher than the annual average and CSUSB's grade increases in the last several years covered seemed to parallel that of the CSU System.

Another approach is based on the course level detail grade distribution files currently available from Fall of 1990. The percentage distribution of letter grades A-F and Unauthorized Withdrawal is charted in the pages that follow for each academic year by course level: "000" Pre-College through "600" Graduate. Finally, grade averages by course level, alternative level groupings, and the number of grades upon which the grade averages were based are listed on the last page.

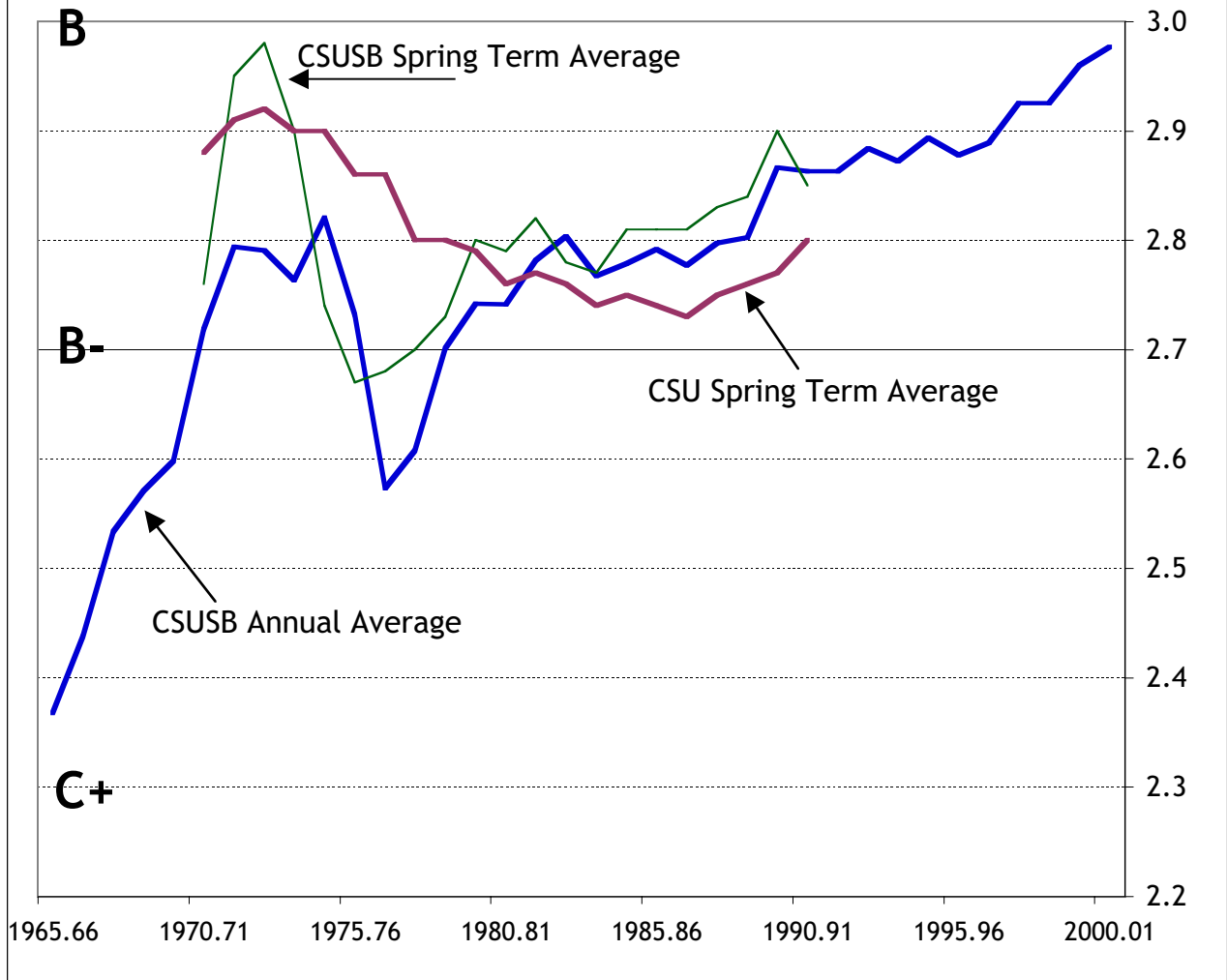
"Letter Grade Inflation" is evident at all but the "Pre-College" level. For example, the percentage of "A" grades over the last decade has changed as follows:

Level	Percent "A" Grades		
	1990.91	2000.01	Change
000-099	26.1	15.0	-11.1
100-199	14.9	29.9	+15.0
200-299	15.2	24.3	+ 9.1
300-399	22.8	26.8	+ 4.0
400-499	21.3	36.7	+15.4
500-599	50.7	57.0	+ 6.4
600-999	56.4	62.8	+ 6.4

Incidentally, use of Credit/No Credit grading has increased in Pre-College courses. In 1990.91, credit was awarded in 26.1% of Cr/NC courses while in 2000.01 this percentage of credit awarded increased to 45.1%.

It is beyond the scope of this brief statistical summary to speculate on the practical significance of this long-term "inflation" or its causes. It is, however, a topic worthy of discussion, especially when demand by students who meet the CSU entrance criteria may be greater than funding allows.

## Trends in Undergraduate Grade Averages (Excludes 600 level and 1 unit courses)

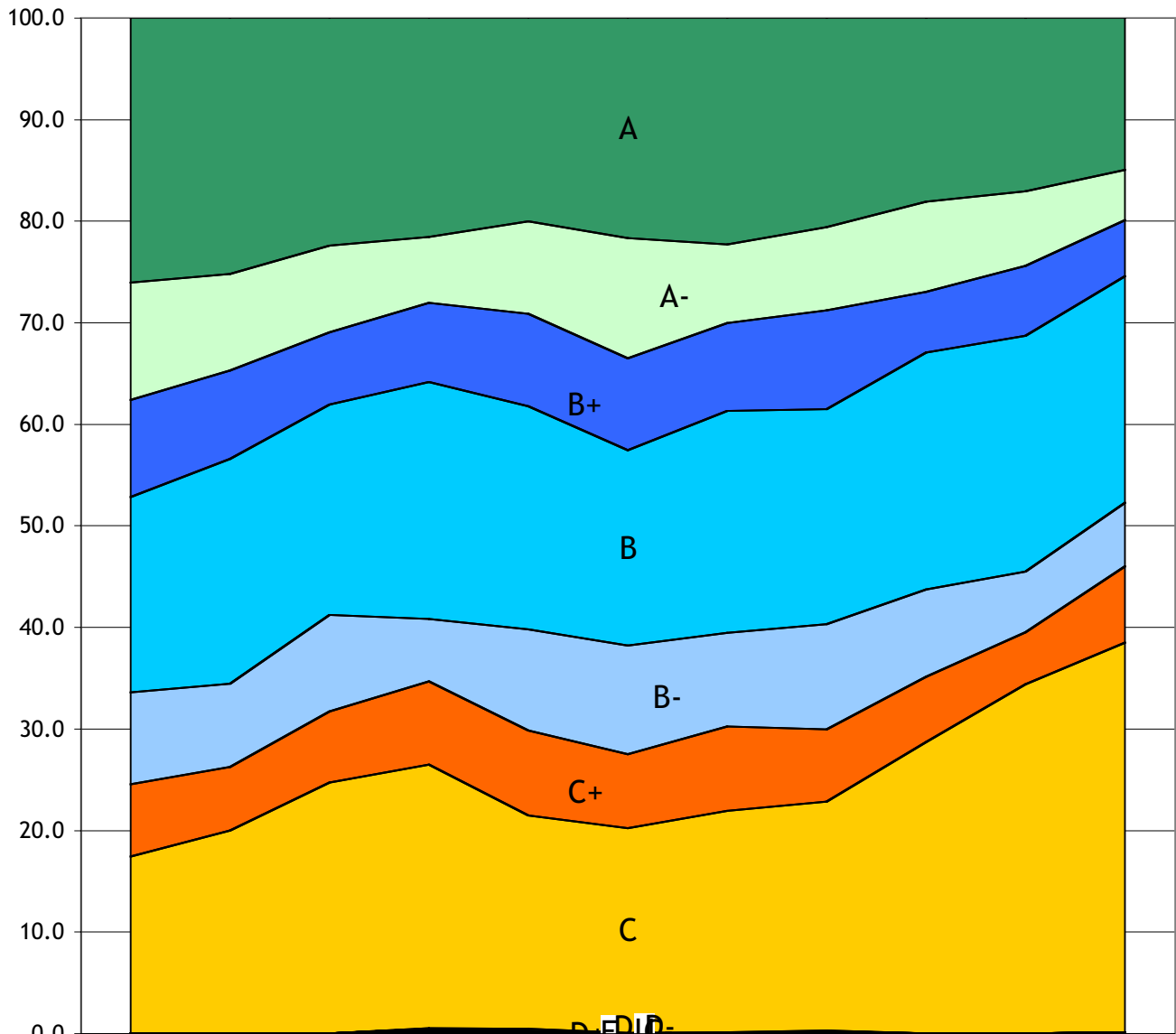


Year	Grade Ave.
1965.66	2.37
1966.67	2.44
1967.68	2.53
1968.69	2.57
1969.70	2.60
1970.71	2.72
1971.72	2.79
1972.71	2.79
1973.74	2.76
1974.75	2.82
1975.76	2.73
1976.77	2.57

Year	Grade Ave.
1977.78	2.61
1978.79	2.70
1979.80	2.74
1980.81	2.74
1981.82	2.78
1982.83	2.80
1983.84	2.77
1984.85	2.78
1985.86	2.79
1986.87	2.78
1987.88	2.80
1988.89	2.80

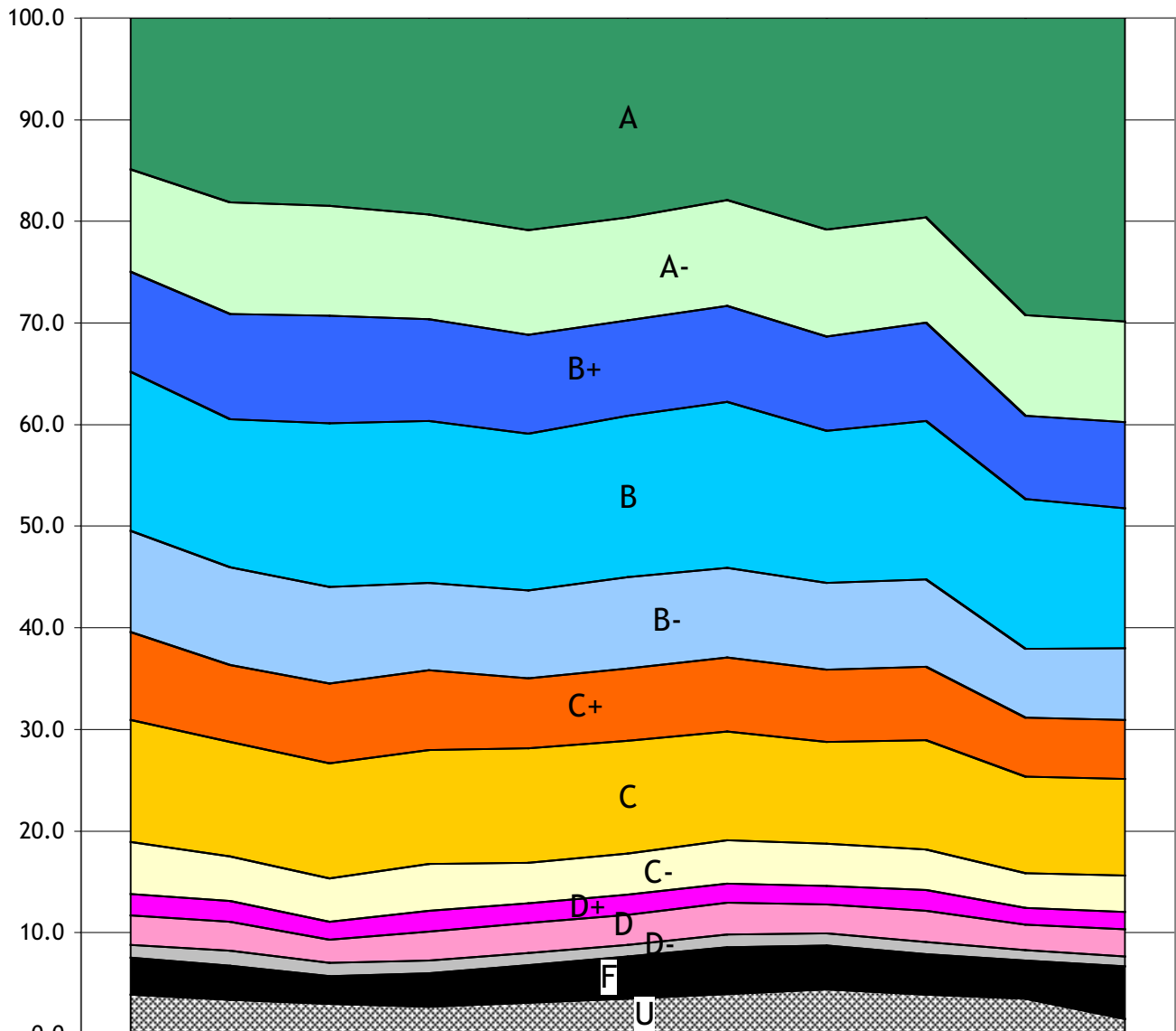
Year	Grade Ave.
1989.90	2.87
1990.91	2.86
1991.92	2.86
1992.93	2.88
1993.94	2.87
1994.95	2.89
1995.96	2.88
1996.97	2.89
1997.98	2.93
1998.99	2.93
1999.00	2.96
2000.01	2.98

## "000" Level Course Grade Distribution Trends



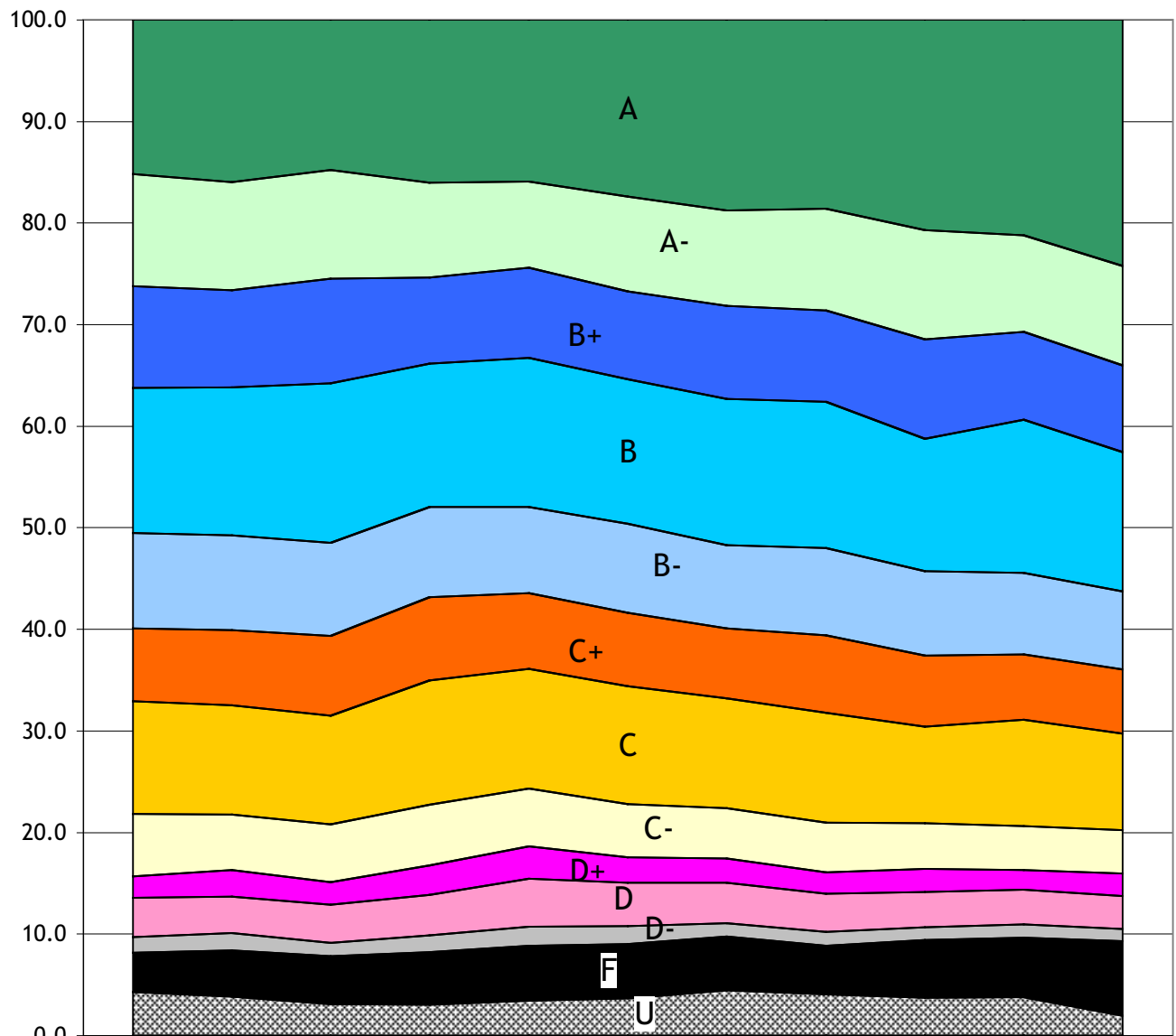
	1990.91	1991.92	1992.93	1993.94	1994.95	1995.96	1996.97	1997.98	1998.99	1999.00	2000.01
A	26.1	25.2	22.4	21.6	20.0	21.7	22.3	20.6	18.1	17.1	15.0
A-	11.5	9.5	8.6	6.5	9.1	11.8	7.7	8.2	8.9	7.4	5.0
B+	9.6	8.7	7.1	7.8	9.1	9.1	8.7	9.7	6.0	6.9	5.5
B	19.2	22.1	20.7	23.3	22.0	19.2	21.9	21.2	23.3	23.2	22.3
B-	9.1	8.2	9.5	6.1	9.9	10.7	9.2	10.4	8.6	6.0	6.2
C+	7.1	6.2	7.0	8.2	8.3	7.3	8.3	7.1	6.5	5.1	7.6
C	17.4	20.0	24.7	25.9	21.0	20.2	21.8	22.5	28.7	34.4	38.4
C-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
D+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
D	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
D-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
F	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
U	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1

## "100" Level Course Grade Distribution Trends



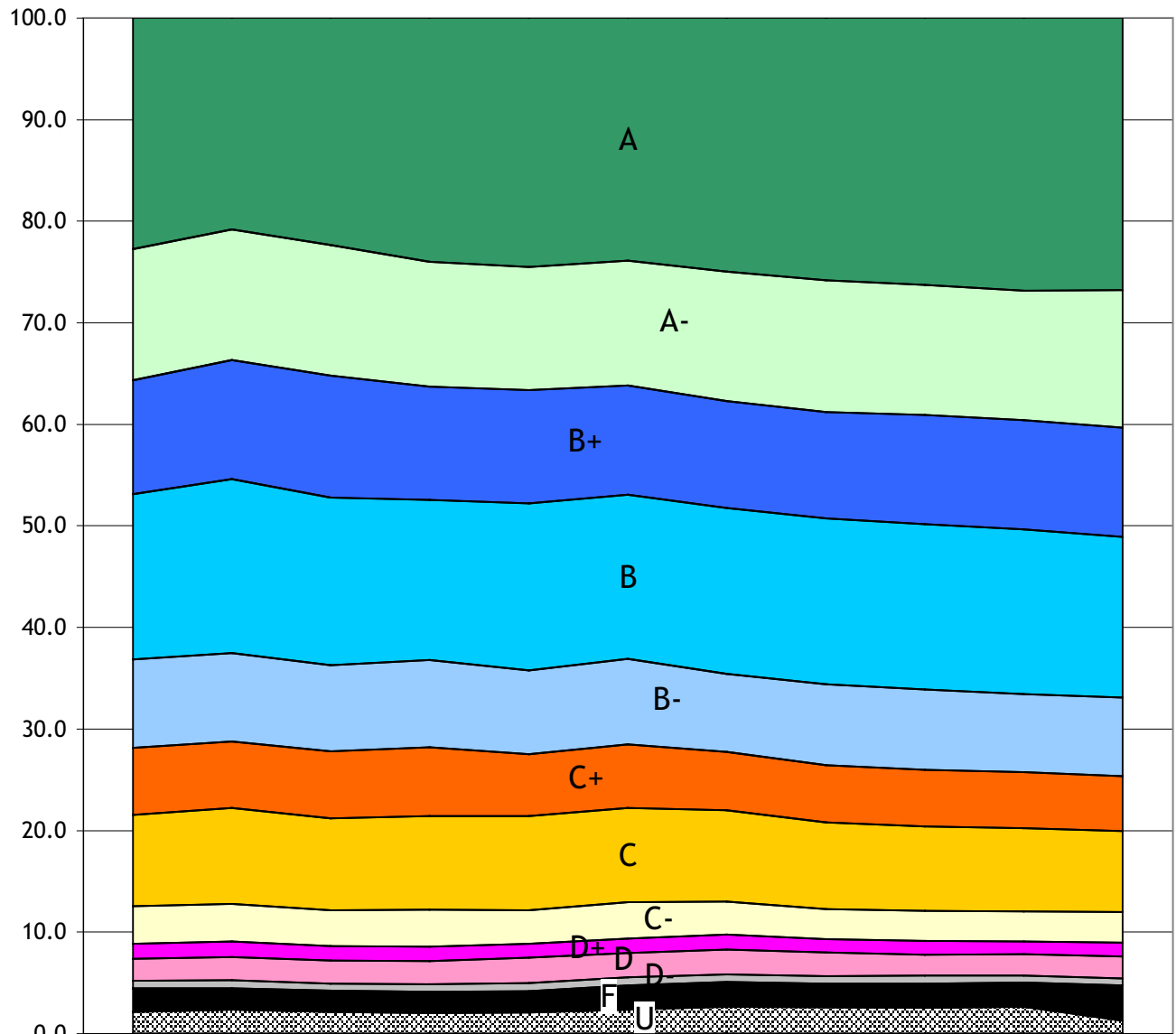
	1990.91	1991.92	1992.93	1993.94	1994.95	1995.96	1996.97	1997.98	1998.99	1999.00	2000.01
■ A	14.9	18.2	18.5	19.4	20.9	19.7	17.9	20.8	19.6	29.3	29.9
■ A-	10.1	11.0	10.9	10.3	10.3	10.1	10.4	10.5	10.4	9.9	9.9
■ B+	9.8	10.4	10.5	10.0	9.8	9.4	9.4	9.3	9.6	8.2	8.5
■ B	15.6	14.6	16.2	15.9	15.4	15.9	16.3	14.9	15.6	14.8	13.8
■ B-	9.9	9.6	9.5	8.6	8.6	9.0	8.8	8.6	8.6	6.8	7.0
■ C+	8.7	7.6	7.9	7.8	6.9	7.1	7.3	7.1	7.2	5.8	5.8
■ C	12.0	11.3	11.3	11.2	11.3	11.1	10.7	10.0	10.8	9.5	9.5
■ C-	5.1	4.4	4.3	4.6	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.0	3.4	3.6
■ D+	2.1	2.0	1.8	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.6	1.7
■ D	2.9	2.8	2.3	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.8	3.1	2.5	2.6
■ D-	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.0
■ F	3.6	3.4	2.7	3.3	3.7	4.2	4.6	4.3	4.0	3.8	5.2
■ U	3.9	3.4	3.0	2.7	3.1	3.5	3.9	4.4	3.9	3.4	1.5

## "200" Level Course Grade Distribution Trends



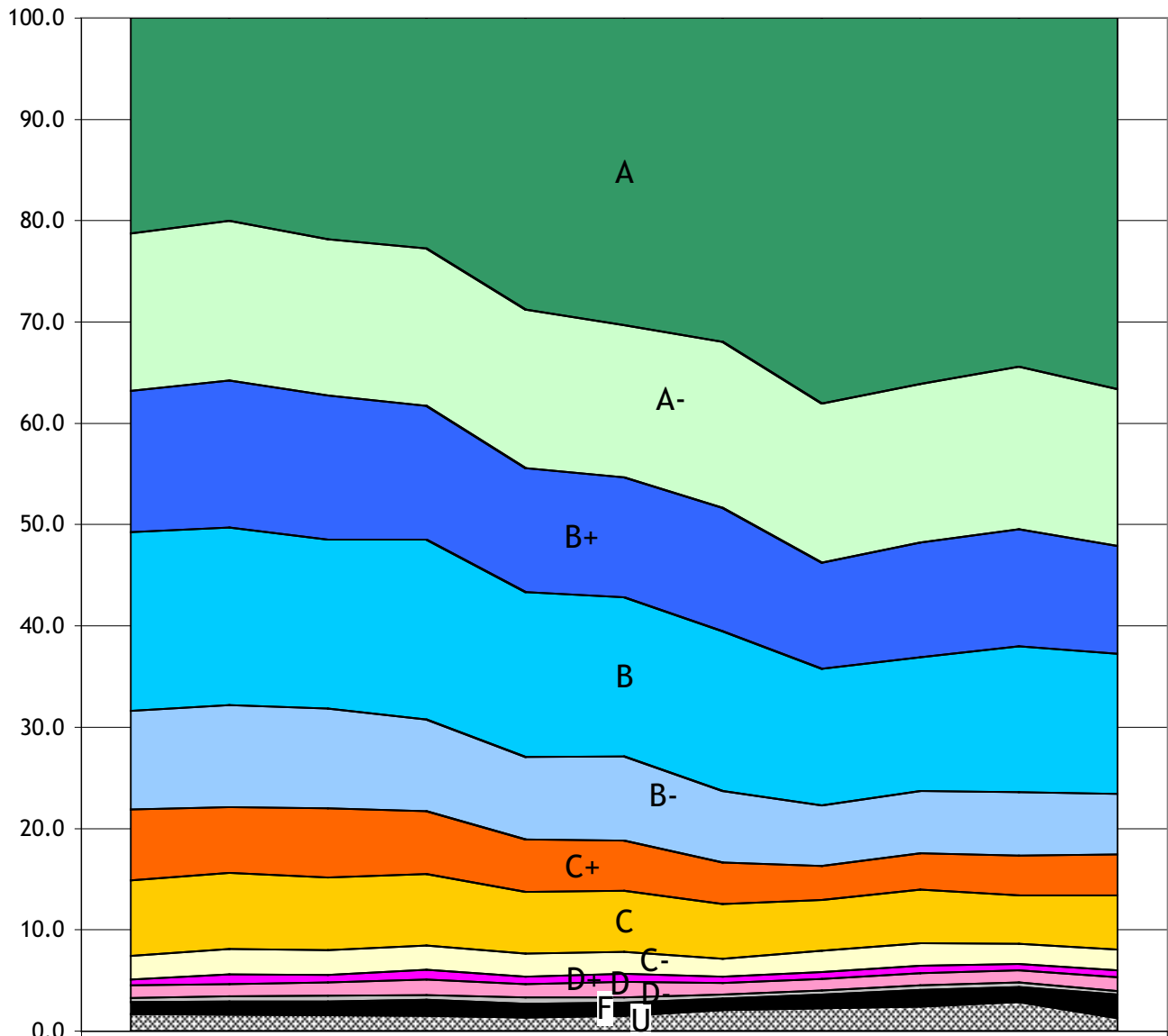
	1990.91	1991.92	1992.93	1993.94	1994.95	1995.96	1996.97	1997.98	1998.99	1999.00	2000.01
■ A	15.2	16.0	14.8	16.1	16.0	17.4	18.8	18.6	20.7	21.2	24.3
■ A-	11.0	10.6	10.7	9.3	8.5	9.3	9.4	10.0	10.7	9.6	9.8
■ B+	10.0	9.6	10.3	8.4	8.9	8.7	9.2	9.0	9.8	8.6	8.5
■ B	14.3	14.5	15.7	14.1	14.7	14.2	14.4	14.4	13.0	15.1	13.7
■ B-	9.4	9.3	9.2	8.9	8.5	8.7	8.2	8.6	8.3	8.0	7.7
■ C+	7.2	7.4	7.9	8.2	7.4	7.2	6.9	7.7	7.0	6.5	6.3
■ C	11.1	10.8	10.7	12.3	11.8	11.6	10.8	10.8	9.5	10.4	9.5
■ C-	6.1	5.5	5.7	5.9	5.7	5.2	5.0	4.9	4.5	4.3	4.2
■ D+	2.1	2.6	2.2	2.9	3.1	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.2
■ D	3.9	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.7	4.3	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.4	3.3
■ D-	1.6	1.7	1.3	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2
■ F	3.8	4.6	4.7	5.2	5.4	5.3	5.3	4.8	5.7	5.9	7.3
■ U	4.3	3.8	3.1	3.0	3.4	3.6	4.4	4.1	3.7	3.7	2.0

### "300" Level Course Grade Distribution Trends



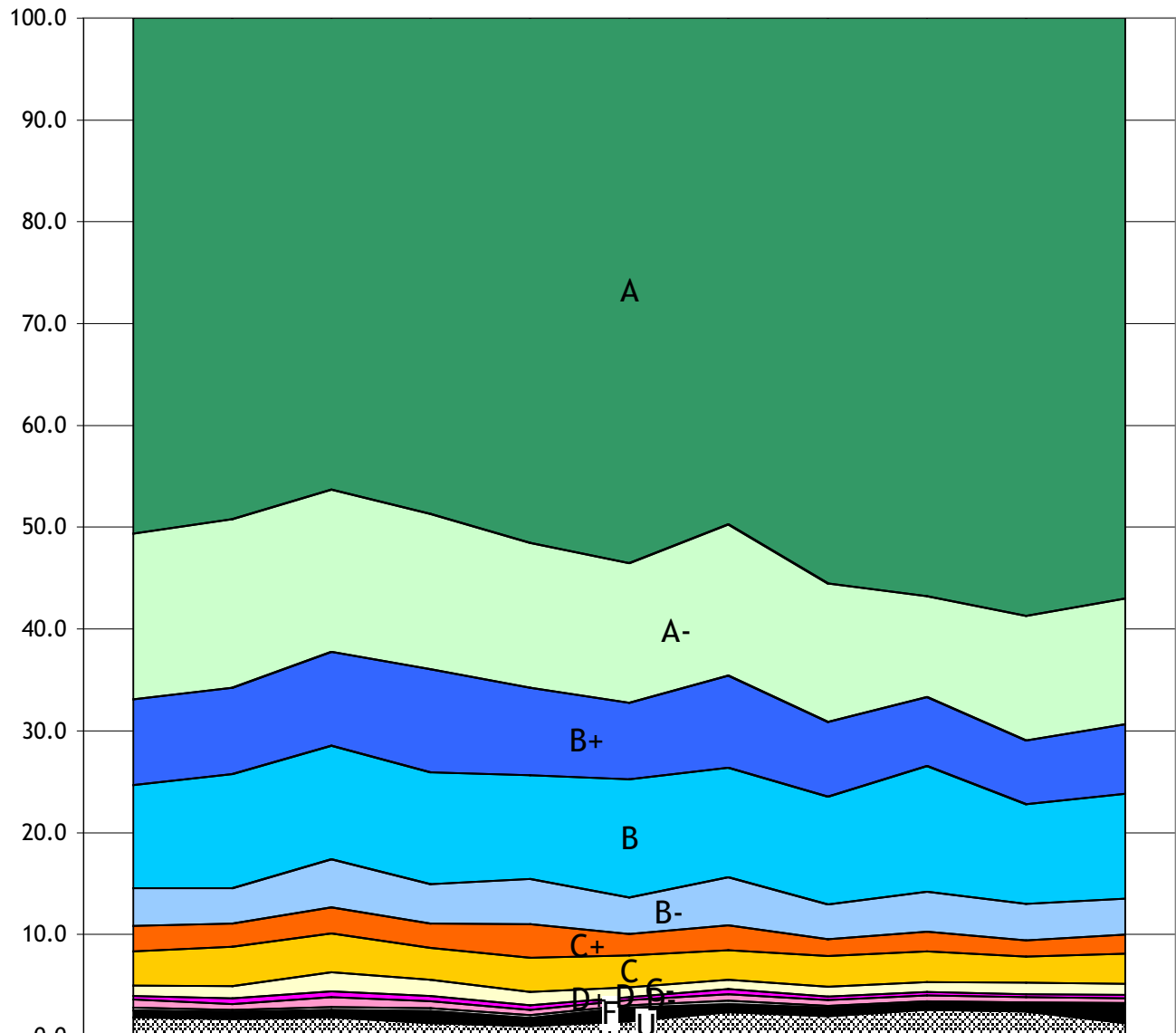
	1990.91	1991.92	1992.93	1993.94	1994.95	1995.96	1996.97	1997.98	1998.99	1999.00	2000.01
A	22.8	20.8	22.4	24.0	24.6	23.9	25.0	25.8	26.3	26.8	26.8
A-	12.9	12.9	12.9	12.3	12.1	12.3	12.8	13.0	12.8	12.7	13.5
B+	11.2	11.7	12.0	11.2	11.2	10.8	10.5	10.5	10.8	10.8	10.8
B	16.3	17.1	16.5	15.8	16.4	16.2	16.3	16.4	16.3	16.2	15.8
B-	8.7	8.7	8.5	8.6	8.3	8.4	7.7	8.0	7.9	7.7	7.7
C+	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.8	6.1	6.2	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.4
C	9.0	9.5	9.0	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.0	8.5	8.3	8.1	8.0
C-	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0
D+	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.4
D	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.0	2.1	2.2
D-	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7
F	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.4	3.4
U	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6	1.3

## "400" Level Course Grade Distribution Trends



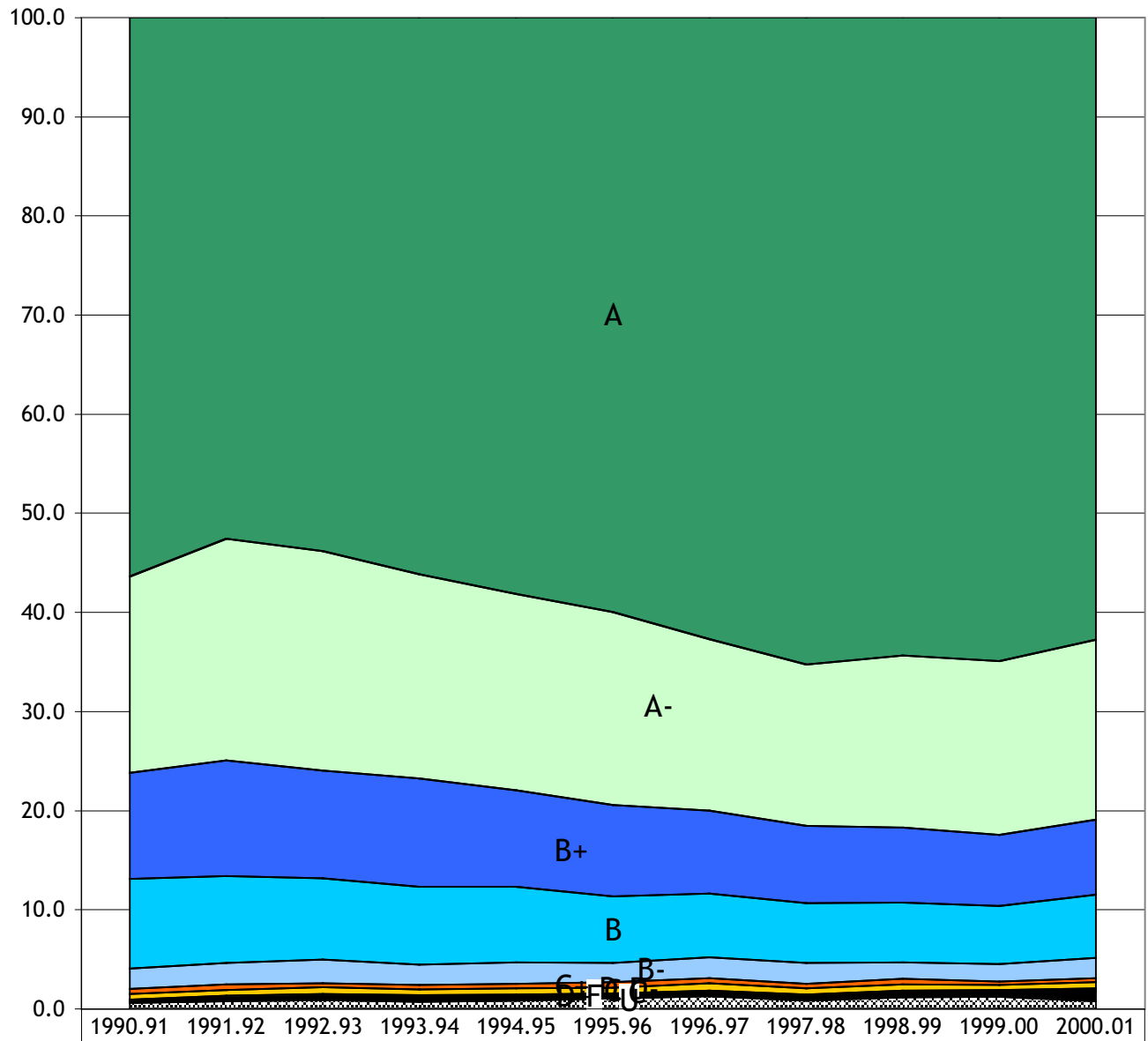
	1990.91	1991.92	1992.93	1993.94	1994.95	1995.96	1996.97	1997.98	1998.99	1999.00	2000.01
■ A	21.3	20.0	21.9	22.7	28.8	30.3	32.0	38.1	36.1	34.4	36.7
■ A-	15.5	15.8	15.4	15.5	15.6	15.0	16.4	15.7	15.7	16.0	15.4
■ B+	13.9	14.5	14.3	13.2	12.2	11.9	12.2	10.5	11.3	11.6	10.7
■ B	17.7	17.5	16.7	17.7	16.3	15.7	15.7	13.5	13.2	14.3	13.8
■ B-	9.7	10.1	9.8	9.1	8.1	8.3	7.1	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.0
■ C+	7.0	6.5	6.9	6.2	5.2	4.9	4.1	3.3	3.6	3.9	4.0
■ C	7.5	7.5	7.1	7.1	6.1	6.0	5.4	5.0	5.3	4.8	5.4
■ C-	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.1	1.8	2.1	2.2	2.0	2.1
■ D+	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7
■ D	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3
■ D-	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
■ F	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.5	2.3
■ U	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.5	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.8	1.3

## "500" Level Course Grade Distribution Trends



	1990.91	1991.92	1992.93	1993.94	1994.95	1995.96	1996.97	1997.98	1998.99	1999.00	2000.01
■ A	50.7	49.2	46.3	48.7	51.6	53.6	49.7	55.5	56.8	58.7	57.0
■ A-	16.3	16.6	16.0	15.3	14.2	13.7	14.8	13.6	9.9	12.2	12.4
■ B+	8.4	8.5	9.2	10.1	8.6	7.5	9.1	7.3	6.8	6.3	6.8
■ B	10.1	11.2	11.2	10.9	10.2	11.6	10.8	10.6	12.4	9.8	10.3
■ B-	3.7	3.4	4.7	3.9	4.4	3.6	4.7	3.4	3.9	3.5	3.5
■ C+	2.5	2.3	2.6	2.4	3.3	2.1	2.4	1.7	2.0	1.6	1.9
■ C	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.1	3.4	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.6	3.0
■ C-	1.1	1.2	1.9	1.6	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.2	1.1
■ D+	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4
■ D	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4
■ D-	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
■ F	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.2	0.8	1.3	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.9
■ U	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.2	1.0	1.4	2.3	1.9	2.5	2.4	1.3

## "600" Level Course Grade Distribution Trends



	1990.91	1991.92	1992.93	1993.94	1994.95	1995.96	1996.97	1997.98	1998.99	1999.00	2000.01
■ A	56.4	52.6	53.8	56.2	58.2	60.0	62.7	65.3	64.4	65.0	62.8
■ A-	19.8	22.4	22.2	20.6	19.8	19.5	17.3	16.3	17.3	17.5	18.1
■ B+	10.7	11.6	10.9	10.9	9.7	9.2	8.4	7.8	7.6	7.2	7.6
■ B	9.1	8.8	8.2	7.9	7.6	6.7	6.4	6.1	6.0	5.9	6.4
■ B-	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.2	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.6	1.7	2.1
■ C+	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.4
■ C	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6
■ C-	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
■ D+	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
■ D	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
■ D-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
■ F	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	1.0
■ U	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.2	0.8	1.2	1.2	0.8

## Grade Average Trends by Course Level

	1990.91	1991.92	1992.93	1993.94	1994.95	1995.96	1996.97	1997.98	1998.99	1999.00	2000.01
<b>Grade Averages</b>											
PreCollege	3.12	3.08	2.98	2.93	2.98	3.04	3.00	2.98	2.90	2.85	2.74
100 Level	2.62	2.71	2.76	2.74	2.75	2.71	2.66	2.70	2.70	2.87	2.89
200 Level	2.60	2.60	2.61	2.55	2.52	2.57	2.59	2.63	2.67	2.65	2.71
300 Level	2.92	2.90	2.93	2.94	2.94	2.92	2.93	2.96	2.97	2.98	2.99
400 Level	3.05	3.03	3.05	3.05	3.15	3.16	3.21	3.25	3.21	3.20	3.23
500 Level	3.47	3.46	3.40	3.44	3.48	3.48	3.43	3.50	3.47	3.52	3.50
600 Level	3.69	3.67	3.67	3.69	3.69	3.71	3.70	3.73	3.72	3.73	3.70
<b>Lower Division</b>											
000-299	2.63	2.68	2.71	2.67	2.67	2.67	2.65	2.69	2.70	2.79	2.81
100-299	2.61	2.66	2.70	2.66	2.65	2.65	2.63	2.67	2.69	2.79	2.82
<b>Upper Division</b>											
300-499	2.95	2.93	2.96	2.97	3.01	2.99	3.01	3.04	3.03	3.04	3.05
300-599	3.02	2.99	3.00	3.01	3.04	3.03	3.05	3.08	3.07	3.09	3.10
<b>Undergraduate</b>											
000-499	2.82	2.82	2.85	2.84	2.87	2.85	2.86	2.89	2.90	2.93	2.95
000-599	2.86	2.86	2.88	2.88	2.90	2.88	2.90	2.93	2.93	2.97	2.98
<b>Graduate</b>											
500-999	3.60	3.58	3.56	3.59	3.61	3.62	3.60	3.65	3.63	3.65	3.62
600-999	3.69	3.67	3.67	3.69	3.69	3.71	3.70	3.73	3.72	3.73	3.70
<b>Number of Grades</b>											
PreCollege	1,265	1,460	1,705	1,534	1,318	1,597	1,502	1,971	2,076	1,917	1,932
100 Level	15,841	17,332	18,306	18,838	18,278	19,424	19,750	19,700	20,536	24,964	26,561
200 Level	13,759	14,000	14,609	14,600	13,357	13,354	13,158	14,306	14,639	15,699	16,919
300 Level	30,846	32,705	33,746	34,936	33,807	33,308	34,494	39,066	40,955	41,324	44,081
400 Level	10,238	11,239	11,976	12,458	14,289	13,830	14,885	13,599	13,969	14,684	14,061
500 Level	5,531	5,288	4,881	4,813	4,351	4,211	4,762	5,596	5,618	6,596	7,309
600 Level	8,128	7,718	7,755	7,546	7,373	7,509	7,814	9,173	9,519	10,916	11,592