Regional Headquarters, Mona, Jamaica: A revised Grade Point Average (GPA) scheme will be introduced by The University of the West Indies (UWI) from the beginning of the 2014/2015 academic year. Changes to the GPA were approved by the Board for Undergraduate Studies in 2011 and The UWI had announced in September 2013 that these changes would take effect in the academic year 2014/2015.

Under the revised GPA scheme, both the overall manner in which assessment of student performance is described and how the grades are represented on the transcripts of undergraduates have been revised. These are changes to the way in which student performance is reported at The University of the West Indies; they are not changes in the standard of The UWI degree. All new and continuing students across The UWI will be assessed and graded in a manner which is more transparent and in line with international GPA standards.

There are three significant changes. First, letter grade bands will be adjusted along with the quality points associated with them. Quality points are used to calculate GPA and, ultimately, the class of the degree awarded. For instance, a passing grade in the current scheme is represented as a ‘D’, with a quality point of 1.00. In the revised scheme, a passing grade will be represented by a ‘C’, with a quality point of 2.00.
Second, ‘grade descriptors’ will be introduced to explain the level of skills and knowledge represented by each letter grade. This method of assessment will guide percentage scores in an approach that is more transparent and objective, while giving a clearer picture of the level of competencies achieved by each student.

Finally, an adjustment in the percentage bands associated with letter grades will bring The UWI in line with international best practice. This will mean that the former passing mark of 40% will be re-set at 50%. The upper and lower bands of each grade will also move, so that, for example, the band from A- to A+ will have a percentage range from 75% to 100%. The new scheme includes three failing bands, two of which have assigned Quality Points: F1 (49-45%), QP of 1.70; F2 (40-44%), QP of 1.30; F3 (0-39%), QP of 0.00. Quality Points were assigned to the top two marginal fail bands to ensure that UWI rules on student progression can be applied equitably under the revised scheme.

Consequently, there will be changes to the GPA bands used to determine the class of degree earned (except for the Bachelor of Medical Sciences): a GPA of 3.60 and above will be equivalent to a First Class Honours; 3.00 – 3.59 will be equivalent to an Upper Second Class Honours; 2.50 – 2.99 will be equivalent to a Lower Second Class Honours; and 2.00 – 2.49 will be equivalent to a Pass degree. For the Bachelor of Medical Sciences, the GPA bands to determine the class of degree will remain as currently: ‘Distinction’ requires a GPA of 3.70 or above; Honours, a GPA of 3.30 -3.69; and a Pass degree, a GPA of 2.00- 3.29.

The transcripts of continuing students will show the grades achieved under the current scheme prior to the August 1, 2014 date when the revised scheme will be implemented. However, the degree GPA carried forward by continuing students will be converted to show the equivalent degree GPA under the revised scheme.

From Semester I 2014/2015 all students will graduate according to the revised scheme except for continuing students in the Faculty of Engineering, who will
graduate according to the current GPA Regulations until the end of academic year 2015/2016. This exception has been made due to the weighted degree GPA used to determine the class of degree in the Faculty of Engineering.

University Administration has given an undertaking that no student will be disadvantaged by the announced changes and measures will be put in place to ensure that commitment is met.

Further information on the revised Grade Point Average Scheme, including the revised grade bands and the new grade descriptors, can be obtained from Campus Examination Sections or found at: http://uwi.edu/undergraduatestudies/gpascheme.aspx

Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies
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