



February 9, 2009

Charissa Reimer Ph.D.
820 N Fayette Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-1614

Dear Dr. Reimer:

You know about inflation in the money supply. But what about grade inflation?

Grade inflation is the widespread phenomenon whereby students receive higher and higher marks without doing better work. It has been one of the biggest problems in academia for the last half century, one about which I have been very outspoken. At Harvard, where I teach, my opposition to grade inflation has even earned me the nickname Harvey “C-Minus” Mansfield. That is all in good fun, but grade inflation is a serious problem—and one you can combat.

Grade inflation hurts students by giving them a distorted picture of their academic progress, and it punishes those students who have made serious efforts by giving them grades indistinguishable from their less diligent classmates. It hurts universities because it lowers academic standards and impedes the teaching process. And it even hurts businesses, by making it difficult to tell which would-be employees really were high achievers in college.

Fortunately, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni—an independent non-profit that counsels boards on this issue and others—has published the enclosed guide, *Measuring Up: The Problem of Grade Inflation and What Trustees Can Do*, to help you address this issue. This guide contains examples of universities that have successfully fought grade inflation—often with their boards leading the way. I hope you will read it and, with ACTA’s help, take responsible steps to restore integrity to grading at your institution.

Sincerely,

Harvey C. Mansfield
William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Government
Harvard University

Enclosure

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