Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

I’m pleased to announce that the university will again be offering more flexibility for academic grades this semester — and that our academic leaders have developed a new system to respond more quickly and consistently when exceptional circumstances affect teaching and learning.

Today, the University Senate approved a change to the faculty rules creating the Emergency Pass grading system (PE), which will alter the traditional A-E system during situations that may adversely affect students' academic performance. In a second vote, the Senate decided to invoke this option for spring semester 2021. The Senate actions are subject to approval by the Board of Trustees, which meets Feb. 25.

PE is a new mark in the list of possible grades. When exceptional circumstances are declared by the Senate or the provost in coordination with Senate leaders, a PE grade will be applied when:

- Undergraduate students earn what would normally be a D+ or D grade.
- Graduate students earn what would normally be graded C+, C, C-, D+, or D.

Students will receive a normal letter grade above these marks and an NP if they fail the course.

This system does not affect instances in which certain grades are required for progression in a sequence or admission to a program, or policies that determine academic standing. Accommodations to allow use of PE grades in these cases will remain at the discretion of
the individual program or college.

Please join me in thanking the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress, Dean Beth Hume and Dean Alicia Bertone for their leadership in developing this grading system, which will offer a fairer, more flexible solution during times that disrupt students’ academic work. The change effectively eliminates the need for the Senate to introduce temporary pass/non-pass policies in the future.

We recognize the burden caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and are confident that the Emergency Pass grading system will augment our efforts to support the mental, physical and overall well-being of the university community. To learn more about PE system, see the [Grading Policies for Spring 2021 webpage](#).

Sincerely,

**Bruce A. McPheron, PhD**
Executive Vice President and Provost