From Jery Stedinger: https://cornell.zoom.us/j/608828672
From Carl Franck: 608828672
From Jill Short: thank you
From Evan Cooch: I can tell you the URL for this 'discussion' is already circulating widely among undergrads.
From Marcus Smolka: Voice is breaking
From David Zax: at my end the audio is horrible
From Richard Bensel: Charlie...I cannot understand what you are saying...
From Jim DelRosso: same here
From David Pizarro: Likewise
From Bryce Corrigan: same problem, it may be Charlie’s audio
From Malte Ziewitz: Same here
From Lauren Monroe: Same here
From Courtney Roby: Same here
From Buz Barstow: Same here!
From Ravi Ramakrishna: same here
From Carl Franck: good now
From Courtney Roby: Better!
From David Lee: terrible audio
From Buz Barstow: Thanks Charlie! Much better
From Ravi Ramakrishna: better
From Joanie Mackowski: audio quality was bad but just improved
From Ken Birman: Issue for many of us, seems to have cleared up just now
From David Pizarro: better!
From Beth Milles: the video is better
From David Lee: OK, much better
From Malte Ziewitz: Better, but missed the introduction
From Thomas P. Golden: The number of participants are tracked in Zoom so do not understand why we cannot do quorum
From Carl Franck: audio bad
From Carl Franck: ok now
From Ken Birman: I think we should live with it. A glimpse of what our students will experience next week
From Beth Milles: can you please be patient in terms of timing for the raising hands function? I am on my phone and have a delay
From Bryce Corrigan: “members of the teaching team”?
From Neema Kudva: Thomas, thanks for the comment. We are working with CIT/CTE to create authenticated entry into the meeting
From David Lee: I agree; "members of the teaching team". That does the trick. Just delete 1 word.
From Neema Kudva: Thanks, noted and will do --
From David Zax: Charlie is cutting out again
From Buz Barstow: Charlie =: your audio is breaking up again
From Beth Milles: sound bad
From Chris Schaffer: I think it is also important to consider the impact on students who are doing well in a course and would be disappointed to settle for “just an S” as an evaluation of their work.
From Ken Birman: I'm troubled that we are being asked to consider a resolution signed only by people from one unit (I see no names from Engineering, CIS, Law School, Hotel School, CALS...). Moreover, we were not given time to discuss this within our departments, hence we have no basis to learn the views of our colleagues. I appreciate the urgency but this should not be viewed as a resolution today.

I have no issue with discussing the ideas, but I am very opposed to any form of vote (even offline)
From Chris Schaffer: For the op-in S/U after grades are completed, should we consider allowing students to convert any grade they would like to a W? Seems like this would be consistent with giving students agency to tell us whether their educational environment was reasonable.
From Harold Hodes: I gather that Harvard Med has said that it will recognize P/F grades only from universities that have mandated P/F grades. I don't know how this bears on S/U grades. But this information makes me worry about opt-in for S/U.
From Ken Birman: We are inadequately informed because we are being given this information in a hurry and without vetting the quality of the claimed policies elsewhere.
From J Zinda: What is the voting procedure for choosing among this many options? It seems likely that there will be a non-majority decision. Will we have a ranked-choice vote?
15:49:04 From Buz Barstow: Harold: Definitely agree that for S/U. It seems likely that it will only have value if everyone gets an S/U.

15:49:31 From Ken Birman: Buz, Lisa
15:49:39 From Ken Birman: Lisa's comment contradicts you
15:49:53 From Buz Barstow: Good point! Glad that’s raised!

15:50:34 From Neema Kudva: Please note that we will NOT be voting today — the vote will follow in a day or two. We are trying to get a vote on this before April 6

15:50:55 From Neema Kudva: This meeting is to give everyone a chance to ask questions
15:50:59 From Neema Kudva: And raise issues
15:51:14 From Beth Milles: thank

15:51:23 From Hakim Weatherspoon: two questions: 1) what is the difference between options 3 and 4? (2) for options 3 (and 4) do instructors only enter letter grades, then "the system" seperately allows the student to choose S/U vs letter grade.

15:51:31 From Beth Milles: Thank you Neema

15:52:38 From Thomas Björkman: The purpose of optional S/U is that different student’s different circumstances will determine if that is an appropriate choice. This semester those circumstances are more common, so it will be used more frequently. The principle does not really seem to be altered by the current situation.

15:52:42 From Evan Cooch: How can 'non-authorized' faculty access (listen in) to this discussion? I've had several from my department ask...

15:52:54 From Bruce Lewenstein: @Harold Hodes: Some faculty I've talked with have asked about philosophical meanings of "fairness" or "equity." Just wondering if there's Philosophy Dept perspective that would be useful?

15:53:11 From Thomas P. Golden: Thank you, Lisa

15:53:42 From Richard Bensel: Given the complexity and differences in situations that apply in this situation, I think the decision on grading policy should be left up to departments, programs, and individual instructors.

15:54:15 From Neema Kudva: Evan — anyone can chime in and join the conversation, please send them the link and tell them to come in via their Zoom page by using the meeting IUD number

15:54:30 From Neema Kudva: Only Senators can VOTE

15:54:35 From Joanie Mackowski: the argument that mandatory s/u may cause difficulty for students who were doing well, working their ways up with grades....it's the coronavirus situation that is causing difficulty.
There are student concerns on what happens to their GPA — which matters for some merit based scholarships and admissions to grad school. That answer was for Joani's question. Neema: have to second this. Also, some international students need to report grades. And some fellowships/scholarships may require reporting of grades.

The counter argument is that professional schools are putting out directives that they will accept S/U if it is a University mandated policy. I have found the student responses to be most compelling. Which student responses? They have covered the gamut of reactions.

One move is to apply pressure on those professional schools to be more understanding. Totally agree! I've heard compelling arguments from students for all options.

Law Schools and Med Schools are already putting out information about this. Taking away student grades disadvantages students who are working to improve their GPA after, for example, struggles in their freshman year because of less optimal high school preparation. I have received a number of e-mails from students about this. I am strongly opposed to taking away the possibility of grades. While it may unstress some students, it adds stress to other students' lives. Students should be allowed to make their own decisions.

"Update in Light of COVID-19 Impact on Premedical Education"

The Admissions Committee at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons has voted to accept Pass/Fail grades for prerequisite courses taken at schools who have decided to go Pass/Fail for this semester.

In CIS, many students have been emailing to me and our other senators. My emails have been about 4 to 1: 4 favor opt-in for every 1 that favors mandatory s/u. Some feels very stressed by the idea that a mandatory choice would be imposed on them this way.

The DGS and grad school discussion is that any organization that uses holistic admission will easily interpret effectively the impact of the health emergency on grades. Some of the student fears are not going to be borne out.

I agree, Ken that has been my experience.
From David Delchamps: Exactly, Thomas!

From David Delchamps: Policies of professional/grad schools are in flux, as Lisa noted.

From Neema Kudva: Yes, major flux as with everything.

From Joanie Mackowski: from Princeton: "As of March 26, 2020, there is no consensus among health professions schools regarding whether P/F grades will be accepted in place of letter grades, but most schools are being flexible and open minded in these unprecedented times. Most who have set policies are willing to accept PDF grades for courses where the PDF is mandatory. Many are willing to accept PDF for any course."

From Evan Cooch: The basic 'demographics' are -- for students who are (or believe they) in trajectories where the actual grade matters (in fact, or 'mythology') are fully in one camp, whereas those who aren't, see things differently.

From Chelsea Specht: How does a grade this semester compare with a grade any other semester anyway....? And even if a student is doing well now who is to say they won't get sick or be placed into a very different situation in the next few weeks? What does a GPA actually mean this semester? It is basically a combination of privilege and luck more than any other single factor, especially as evaluations and assessments cannot be held to the same standards as they are in previous semesters.

From Jonathan Russell-Anelli: Why not option 5,... universal s/u with an opt out for grades.

From David Zax: I don't see how "choosing S/U" is stigmatizing; in this environment I think everyone can figure out that this semester is peculiar....why should that constrain someone else's choice?

From David Lee: Agree w/Thomas Bjorkman. Our students will not be disadvantaged vs others in future admissions. Everyone is in the same boat. This is a unique year and will henceforth be recognized as such. Students can only gain by electing a grade option (others will just take a "S").

From Melissa Hines: GPA is calculated across the entire Cornell experience, not just this semester.

From Bruce Lewenstein: @Neema: I'm not expressing a preference for any option yet. But since we only have a resolution for option 1, is there a method of expressing (in vote) a preference for other options?

From Buz Barstow: Students are hyper competitive, and hyper worried about grades.

From Buz Barstow: Taking a S just isn't an option that some can comprehend.

From Peter Wolczanski: My audio just blissfully cut out....

From Joanie Mackowski: Student assembly voted 16 to 7 in favor of universal s/u.

From Adrian Lewis: Simply put, allowing the choice of a letter grade seems to obligate transcript readers to judge the situation of every student opting for an S, to decide what that choice indicates: how should the reader distinguish students disinclined versus unable to work for an A?
From Marcus Smolka: Under the current situation, it is hard to teach, hard for students to learn properly and also hard for us to properly assess and give fair grades.

From Neema Kudva: Thanks Bruce — that’s something we need to discuss.

From Chris Schaffer: Ken, I also support “option 3,” but I would be very cautious about interpreting the number of emails you get from students supporting one other the other position. It is very unlikely that you have a representative sample of student views from these unsolicited emails...

From Buz Barstow: Hi Chris, I purposely canvassed my class, and there is a slight majority for opt-in s/u.

From J Zinda: @Neema, Bruce: is ranked-choice voting a possibility?

From Chris Schaffer: Thx, Buz!

From Ken Birman: Chris, I agree with you on that. I think it only points to a non-uniform view on this whole thing.

From Buz Barstow: Although the unsolicited emails seem to show a large majority for s/u opt-in.

From Bruce Lewenstein: @JohnZinda, @Neema: Yes, I think that makes the most sense.

From Mark Wysocki: I believe opt 3 (opt/in) is the best way to go and lets students decide their fate.

From Suman Seth: What would count as a “necessity” for that fourth case?

From Joanie Mackowski: It is variable who chooses to email us.

From Suman Seth: From the students or another body?

From Ken Birman: @Suman: Software would need to be created between now and the end of the semester. It could be impractical (in fact if PeopleSoft lacks this it will be hard to imagine them being able to do it in such a short amount of time).

From Rhonda Gilmore: Isn’t this an opportunity for the faculty of Cornell to make a humanitarian and educational statement that moving to a mandatory S/U is our support of more than our faculty and students? Aren’t we facing a global situation that requires a global perspective vs “I want to be able to go to grad school” or “I need a specific GPA” to get into med school…” Let’s stand up for the world and vote for a mandatory S/U.

From Joanie Mackowski: David, look at policies issued by different medical and law schools.

From Suman Seth: @Ken. Yeah, I get that. But even were it possible, I don’t get the process. Would the student ask for the unmasking, or another body?

From Ken Birman: @Suman: Yes, apparently that is the concept for option 4.
From Richard Bensel: Charlie is right that the Faculty Senate can only advise on education policy. However, under University Bylaws, the individual instructor's decision to assign grades is absolute. Under our rules, no one can override that decision (with very rare exceptions). We should be working with that in mind.

From Thomas Björkman: @Andrian Lewis re interpreting grades. In grad admissions, we already do just that already in my Field. With holistic admission, you pretty much have to.

From Buz Barstow: Also: something raised by my students: is there a way to financially help out students with poor internet connectivity?

From Lisa Nishii: @Chris: Students would still have the opportunity to withdraw without a W

From Buz Barstow: @Chris: thanks for your comment!

From Bruno Xavier: Lisa - at any time?

From Bruce Lewenstein: @Lisa, but isn't that only until 21 April, after that a W would appear?

From Neema Kudva: There is an acmes fund for students — they can apply for help with technology related costs — but if the bandwidth issue is an infrastructure issue (i.e., they live in a place that has low connectivity, we have to think of how we teach differently.

From Neema Kudva: access not ACMES

From Lisa Nishii: @Buz: We have reached out to all students multiple times and have provided an enormous amount of financial and technical support. We continue to do so this week. We are also calling those students who haven't responded to these tech surveys to make sure they are ready.

From Chris Schaffer: @Lisa: I'm proposing that AFTER grades are known, students be able to opt to just have a W, even if they did not decide to withdraw by April 21. Or, are you suggesting a withdraw without a W even after grades are issued?

From Buz Barstow: Thanks Neil!

From Lisa Nishii: @Chris: From what I understand, that may not be possible, but I will verify. A later deadline than the current 4/21 could really help, though

From Allison Weiner Heinemann: We should keep in mind that access barriers are not just related to technology. I have students who will be serving in full-time roles as caretakers. Students who are now forced to learn in impossibly difficult, toxic home environments. It’s not just a matter of bandwidth capability.

From Buz Barstow: Thanks Allison! Well said!

From Rhonda Gilmore: Appreciate this strategy for incompletes: should be considered more than a “U” for a course...
16:18:45  From Chris Schaffer: @Lisa: At a minimum, allow S/W options for students, instead of S/U.

16:19:20  From Suman Seth: @Chris: S/W is a great idea.

16:19:24  From Ken Birman: Chris, I like that proposal! This is a semester in which "U" shouldn't ever be used.

16:19:24  From Bruno Xavier: @Chris - I like your suggestion, if possible. Won't help seniors, correct? How could we address that?

16:19:57  From Chris Schaffer: @Bruno - A U would not count for a senior any more than a W, right?

16:20:04  From Buz Barstow: @Chris, could we letter or withdraw?

16:20:23  From Ken Birman: @Buz, that would be "opt in, S/W"

16:20:30  From Elizabeth Bunting: I've spent 5 years on vet school admissions. Unless we know that every university will sign on to this policy, we are creating a severe disadvantage for those students who need letter grades for prerequisites or for GPA calculations. I think we need to give them as much flexibility and choice as possible until we know more- opt in or out.

16:20:38  From Evan Cooch: Beyond the college <-> college variation, I'm surprised no one has talked about 'seniors' vs junior and below. Senior considerations are likely somewhat orthogonal to underclass folks...

16:20:53  From Buz Barstow: @Ken good point!

16:21:14  From Chris Schaffer: @Buz: No, we need letter/S/W. Some students would have a satisfactory grade, but poorer performance. They should be able to put for a S.


16:22:29  From Buz Barstow: @Risa, I think you got to the heart of the moral question.

16:23:27  From Chelsea Specht: On “students might not work as hard for an S” - this could be true, but students might also cheat for an A. and we can’t promise to be able to determine that with the type of on-demand distance learning most of us are able to accomplish this semester. The thing is our ability to evaluate an A v. a C this semester is really sketchy, and it doesn’t relate to an A or a C in the same course from last year. Typically an A means something for any given course, but this semester it just doesn’t have a comparable meaning. So it might not be a responsible choice to give it, or encourage students to try to get one under what might be impossible circumstances.

16:23:42  From Courtney Roby: Agree with Risa re: incompletes being a burden rather than a gift to students in these circumstances - we don't even know what Fall will look like.

16:24:02  From Richard Bensel: But, if we went to a letter/S/W policy, it should be the instructor who decides, after a student has explained their situation, which option is chosen.
We should protect our students. WE have also to think in their mental health and not add more worries.

Sarah Murray: @chelsea great points

Buz Barstow: Thanks @Joanie!

Bruno Xavier: @Chelsea - great point... I’m not sure what an “A” means in this situation.

Carl Franck: Respectfully, I believe we are working extremely hard to provide good continuation of our courses. In my case for a lab course.

Lisa Nishii: Berkeley medical school’s statement (posted today) is reflective of what I’m starting to see more: Recognizing the challenges to teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Provost and Deans of the University of California, Berkeley adopted the following principle:

UC Berkeley evaluates applicants for admission to its graduate and professional schools holistically, meaning that we consider an applicant’s combination of personal accomplishments, letters of recommendation, personal statements, academic record, and test scores in making our admissions decisions. Such a review will take into account the significant disruptions of COVID-19 when reviewing students’ transcripts and other admissions materials from Spring 2020. We understand that many institutions across the country instituted P/NP grading policies during that semester. Thus, we will not penalize students for the adoption of P/NP and other grading options during this unprecedented period, whether the choices were made by institutions or

Rhonda Gilmore: An incomplete would provide a more meaningful option vs a W: providing a student with the opportunity to submit their work over time vs having to take the course again to remove the W seems like a better option. I’ve had great success with incompletes...

Chelsea Specht: @Carl - i agree, and am doing the same and pouring heart and soul into it. But i can’t control the environment my students have around them which may or may not allow them to take advantage of my efforts. And i really can’t say that I’m willing to force students to be as focused as i normally do given everything going on around them. Its not really fair to ask them to perform to the standards we normally expect. But i do hear you...

Ken Birman: @Rhonda, some students may not really be able to discharge the incomplete in finite time given the situation this spring and early summer. It might just cause extra stress.... Normally an incomplete is for a small amount of extra work that can be finished in a few days or weeks

Lisa Nishii: @Rhonda: I agree that an INC might be a better option than a W for some students, but perhaps not for all. Students would be able to choose.

Joanie Mackowski: good, david!

Carl Franck: Good

Carl Franck: very good
From Cynthia Robinson: yes!

From Rhonda Gilmore: Ken, the protocols for an incomplete provide for a year to make-up the work. Even seniors can “walk through commencement” with an incomplete.

From Joanie Mackowski: David, then let's encourage them not to focus on grades.

From Buz Barstow: @Joanie: I’m not sure that we can de-program 20 years of conditioning in 2 weeks.

From David Lee: Sorry my mic didn't seem to be working right; it was for all my other Zoom conversations the last few days.

From Chris Schaffer: I strongly agree with Buz’s point: Removing student choice for grades vs. S/W does, indeed, take away yet another choice in an environment when these students (and all of us) are having our near-term options severely curtailed.

From Chris Schaffer: Also agree with Bruce!

From Thomas Overton: Well said Bruce.

From Carl Franck: I agree.

From Buz Barstow: @Joanie and @Risa, when I received emails last night from students opposing universal s/u I was so angry!

From Neil Saccamano: Yes. The agency issue is way too complicated now.

From Buz Barstow: But then, I thought back, how would I have felt when I was an undergraduate.

From Thomas Björkman: Thanks Bruce.

From Ken Birman: @Buz: To your point, an email I got moments ago (kind of long... sorry):

From Buz Barstow: In all honesty, I don’t think I would backed universal s/u.

From Buz Barstow: Bruce thank you!

From Ken Birman: @Buz, the individual feels that being deprived of choice would be deeply unfair, self-identifies as being in a disadvantaged group, yet wants to preserve control.

From Beth Milles: thank you all for such thoughtful considered debate.

From Suman Seth: Right on, Robert.

From Buz Barstow: Thanks @Ken!!

From Rhonda Gilmore: Wonderful points, David.

From Beth Milles: great point.

From Buz Barstow: @Robert Travers thanks so much for that!
From Buz Barstow: @Robert I really appreciate you bringing up that point!

From Chelsea Specht: @Robert - Thank you so much.

From Carl Franck: Thanks Robert

From Edwin Kan: One of the functions for grading is evaluation of the student achievement level, like an engineering certificate. Grade A means good understanding, and Grade C means understanding with some deficiency. A universal S/U will take that evaluation away.

From Lauren Monroe: I completely agree with Robert, regarding risk aversion and grading. I think this semester could end up being an opportunity to demonstrate to students how much more they can learn when grades are taken out the picture. Assignments and modes of assessment can be more creative. Students can be more exploratory and willing to engage in trial and error, and their engagement in this process can be part of how we assess their success. This seems like a life-lesson that could be of real benefit to our students. I have not made a decision about this - it is exceedingly complicated, but Robert's comments really resonate with me.

From Buz Barstow: Thanks @Lauren!

From Chelsea Specht: i've also heard from students who consider themselves disadvantage asking for choice, however they are doing so because they are concerned about GPA. What if GPA wasn't the most important metric, especially this semester. COVID is altering our views on many things, and perhaps this is the time to recognize the need to look at individuals holistically and not by GPA. @ Lauren very well stated.

From Buz Barstow: Thanks @Chelsea!

From Lauren Monroe: Thanks, Chelsea.

From Joanie Mackowski: The coronavirus deprives our students of control-- students who don't currently have access to internet and can't as readily make their views known. If the admissions committees are going to be flexible, then let's go mandatory s/u

From Maria Gandolfo Nixon: Well said Joanie!

From Ken Birman: To read the letter I mentioned. look at http://www.cs.cornell.edu/ken/StudentCommentOnSU.txt

From Chelsea Specht: Students want control, but they can get that by learning as much as possible regardless of the type of score they receive; not by being tied to a score.

From Lisa Nishii: They would also be able to drop with a W after 5/12 up until the end of term (and also petition to change to S/U).

From Rhonda Gilmore: Agree: this pandemic removes control from every system in the world. Isn't it a lesson in ethics to join the world condition by offering an S/U option so that our students can shift their focus from a grade to their peers, their families, those in need?

From Joanie Mackowski: if you don't see students being penalized, then let's go mandatory s/u!
16:52:23  From  Buz Barstow : Thanks @Chris!
16:52:30  From  Maria Fernandez : I agree.
16:52:34  From  Chelsea Specht : @rhonda well stated.
16:53:27  From  Neil Saccamano : The reason students want “choice” is precisely because they see themselves being penalized by an S or P.
16:53:50  From  Maria Fernandez : Thank you, Joani
16:54:25  From  Ken Birman : @Neil, not the student who wrote http://www.cs.cornell.edu/ken/StudentCommentOnSU.txt
16:54:33  From  Joanie Mackowski : thanks Neil: yes
16:56:05  From  Beth Milles : thank you so much
16:56:08  From  Chris Schaffer : That was fun. The most number of people on a Zoom meeting for me so far!
16:56:12  From  Neil Saccamano : I’ll read it, Ken, but practically every email I received i favor of opt in S/U implied they would be penalized by a P or S.
16:56:15  From  Lisa Nishii : Thank you everyone!
16:56:16  From  David Lee : Thank you, Charlie!
16:56:17  From  Bruce Lewenstein : Thanks everyone for good discussion
16:56:17  From  Joanie Mackowski : Thanks so much!
16:56:21  From  Courtney Roby : Thanks everyone!