August 26, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

I write to provide information on Princeton’s grading practices, which will enable you to better evaluate our students’ credentials by placing their academic records in context. Princeton University is committed to fairness and transparency in the assessment of students’ work and in our cross-campus grading practices. This approach emphasizes well-defined evaluation criteria and meaningful feedback as the most important pedagogical components of our grading system.

From fall term 2004-05 through spring term 2013-14, Princeton required a common grading standard for every department and program: A-range grades (A+, A, A-) were to comprise less than 35% of grades given in undergraduate courses and less than 55% of grades given in junior and senior independent work. Each department or program determined how best to meet these expectations. In the fall term 2014-15, however, the faculty reaffirmed rigorous and transparent assessment measures but removed the strict target for the percentage of A grades in all undergraduate courses and independent work.

When you evaluate our students’ credentials, I encourage you to consider their full profile of accomplishments. To the extent that you consider grades in your deliberations, please note that Princeton’s stand out against a national backdrop of grade inflation.

If you have any questions about our grading procedures, past or present, feel free to contact me at the above address or by e-mail at jsdolan@Princeton.edu.

Best wishes,

[Signature]

Jill S. Dolan
Dean of the College