

# OPINION PACES

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**VIEW**

## Grade idea

*Three-grade system will resolve inflation*

**Indiana Daily Student**  
Indiana University

Bloomington, Ind. (U-Wire) — Recently, all students received an updated semester grade report for the fall semester, revised to include the new three-grade context information.

While many students might be confused by this new format, it represents a strong move by the administration to combat the effects of grade inflation.

Grade inflation has plagued Indiana University, just as it has plagued most other educational institutions for decades.

Most often, it manifests itself by way of a heavily skewed average grade point average. While official transcripts state a grade of C is average, the average GPA at Indiana tends to be closer to a B, a tendency caused by teachers who do not use the entire grading spectrum, A through F.

It is nearly impossible to distinguish between good students and those who are truly outstanding.

The ultimate victims of grade inflation are graduate schools and employers who cannot adequately evaluate the abilities of a student relative to his or her peers. This hurts all students, regardless of where they might be relative to the mathematical average.

In addition to a student's grade, the new context grading system provides the average grade given in the section of the class in which the student was enrolled, as well as a breakdown of all grades awarded in the section.

With this information, every graduate school will be able to know just what every instructor's grades are worth and just how well the student performed relative to his or her peers — to the extent teachers make their grades meaningful by making their A's, B's, C's, D's and F's mean what they were intended to mean.

Every other university will know IU's grades carry real meaning and will have to adopt a similar system in self-defense. In this way, IU will make history.

No longer will inflated grades fool anyone — teacher, student or graduate school — with respect to the quality of an individual student's work.

Inflated grades will no longer make students look good; rather, they will make instructors and departments look bad.

*Haney's*  
**VIEW**



**DN LETTERS**

**Confronting the enemy**

After all the pain he and his family have endured this past week, my friend Steve Cockson is to be commended for having the courage to confront the enemy that took his sister Laura.

Steve and his family have stayed strong in a time of tragedy that would have broken most.

The truth is drunken driving and those who do it will never again be seen in the same light by those of us who knew and adored Laura. No longer will we shrug at the inebriated driver fumbling for his car keys; no longer will we roll our eyes at the social leaders who demand tougher penalties for intoxicated drivers.

Laura was one of my sister's dearest friends. So, candidly, it is difficult to say which hurts the heart more: the image of Laura's mangled car or the fact that Jeffery Ireland — a repeat offender, evader of the law and the man responsible for Laura's death — could very well walk away from his deed having served only a few years behind bars.

In the days and months to follow, there will undoubtedly be calls for Ireland to pay the ultimate price for his deed, at the cost of his own life. I will not argue with those calls.

Perhaps the only way to reduce the number of drunken drivers is to send the strongest of possible messages: If you take a life while driving intoxicated, you automatically forfeit your own, with the assistance of the state.

As of now, our Legislature is quick to go after cigarette smokers and the tobacco companies. Yet Nebraska lawmakers, with the state's lax punishment for drunken drivers — even repeat offenders — show little desire to deter inebriated drivers from getting behind the wheel or make them suffer severely after they do.

How many more like Laura Cockson must die at the hands of characters like Jeffery Ireland before state leaders show a true commitment to protecting Nebraska's sons and daughters from drunken drivers? The bottom line is Nebraska law doesn't treat drunken driving like the violent crime it is.

Let Laura's death serve as the final wake-up call to Nebraska and its leaders. The time has come to take seriously the obligation we have to protect the innocent from those who drink and then drive.

What a tribute it would be to Laura Cockson if Nebraska was to take the lead in imposing the nation's harshest penalties against intoxicated drivers. She and the hundreds of other innocent Nebraskans who have lost their lives to drunken drivers deserve nothing less.

In the meantime, I pray that my fellow Nebraskans and friends from Saline County will come together to console Steve Cockson and his family, and keep the memory of Laura Cockson alive forever.

**Specialist Jamie Karl,**  
U.S. Army  
Fort Benning, Georgia

**Thanks for the memories**

I would just like to say thank you to Shannon (Heffelfinger) for publishing her tribute to Laura. In my opinion it was one of the nicest, most well-written tributes that I have ever read.

It truly described Laura as who she was. I think those who attended the funeral on Wednesday and read the tribute can associate with it as much as I can.

Laura was carefree, but, at the same time, she was focused on her future. She made everyone around her laugh. This is a tribute that I can read years down the road and remember exactly who she was.

I hope justice will be served and that those who were closer to her than I was will recover from the loss of such a wonderful person.

**Clark Otte**  
junior  
mechanical engineering

**Park this!**

Now let me see if I have this straight:

During the past several years, we have torn up a number of parking lots on campus and in the area immediately surrounding campus. (I count five, but I might be low.)

That means you and I have been paying the same amount of money for a greatly reduced number of parking spots.

Now we learn we are going to start paying even more for those fewer spots.

And the justification is that they will use our money to (guess what?) build more parking lots.

Could this be a conspiracy put together by parking lot contractors? Or is it just one more example of someone's "brilliant" solution to what has become a serious problem? (I can almost hear it now: "I know! Let's raise the parking rates so that we can just keep perpetrating this cycle of tearing up parking lots and building new ones for the next 30 years!")

Has anyone considered building on-campus bike trails so that we don't have to live in mortal fear of being run down every time we use a sidewalk?

Trails would encourage more people to bring their bikes to campus, thereby reducing the number of cars.

Another solution: Require freshmen to leave their cars at home or park them off campus. Many large universities have done this for years. Why not UNL? Tearing up old and then building new parking lots cannot and will not solve the parking problem. Period.

**Jan Kauffman**  
associate director  
Nebraska Human Resources  
Institute

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