

To: Senior Staff

From: Lisa Ly, Senior Research Analyst

Date: August 10, 2023

Subject: Grade Distribution Analysis, 2018-19 to 2022-23

Overview and Methodology

De Anza College has experienced relatively high course success rates over the past five years, at or around 80%. There are sentiments that grade inflation is taking place due to particular state mandates that focus on improving completion outcomes as well as the pandemic shifting the majority of enrollments to an online modality. This report examines the letter grade distribution to determine which letter grades have increased or decreased and the impact on cumulative GPA. The data reflects credit and non-credit enrollments between 2018-19 and 2022-23. Non-credit enrollments were included since instructors provide the letter grades for students to assess their progress even though non-credit courses are not recorded on students' transcripts. Additionally, non-credit enrollments account for less than 1% of De Anza's total enrollments for the five-year period being examined; and therefore, including them does not alter the findings. In this report, course outcomes is the sum of the following grades divided by all letter grades: Success = A, B, C and P; Non-Success = D, F, FW, NP, I and RD; Withdrew = EW, MW and W. Corresponding +/- grades are grouped with their letter grade accordingly.

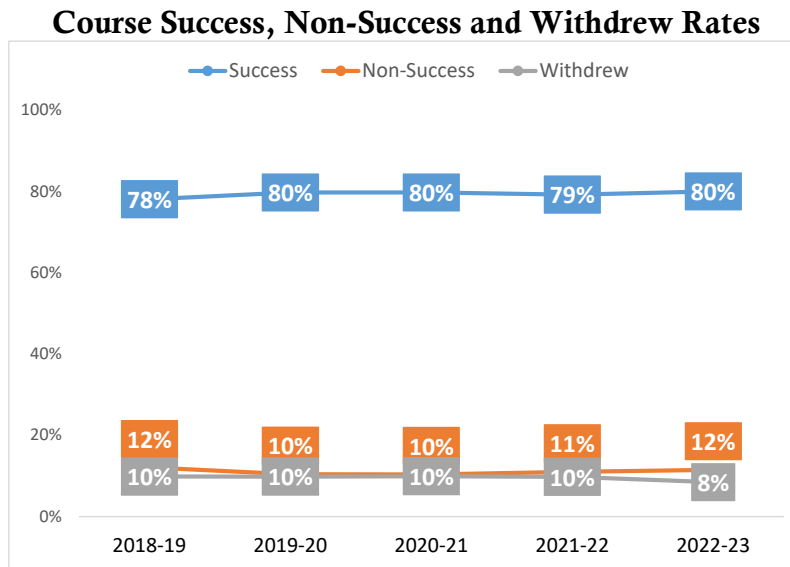
Summary

- Among the three categories of success, non-success and withdrew, any shifts observed in one category will affect another category. Course success increased by 2 percentage points from 78% (2018-19) to 80% (2022-23) and course withdrawal decreased by 2 percentage points, from 10 to 8% over the same time period. Non-success was unchanged.
- Within the success category, there were more A grades awarded than B or C grades. The proportion of A grades increased by 8 percentage points, from 42% to 50%. The proportion of B and C grades decreased by 2 percentage points each. P grades was unchanged.
- Within the non-success category, D, F, NP, I grades remained relatively unchanged.
- Within the withdrawal category, W grades decreased by 2 percentage points. EW and MW grades was relatively unchanged.
- The increase observed for course success was also reflected in cumulative GPA. The median GPA of students enrolled in 2018-19 and 2022-23 increased from 3.30 to 3.51, respectively.

Course Outcomes

- Course success increased by two percentage points, from 78% (2018-19) to 80% (2022-23).
- Non-success rates remained at 12% over the same time period.
- Withdrew rates decreased by two percentage points, from 10% to 8%.

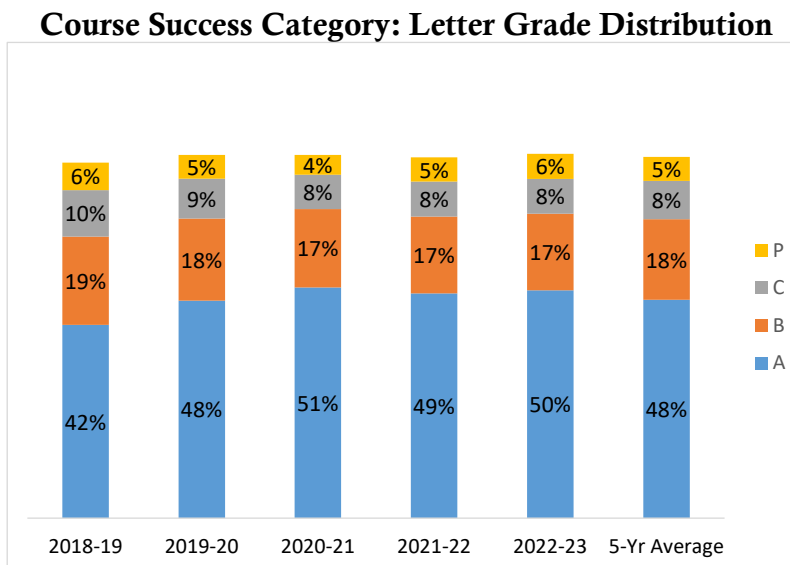
Figure 1



Letter Grade Distribution

- **Course success category** increased because of an increase in A grades awarded.
- A grades had an eight-percentage point increase, from 42% (AY19) to 50% (AY23).
- B grades had a two-percentage point decrease, from 19% (AY19) to 17% (AY23).
- C grades had a two-percentage point decrease, from 10% (AY19) to 8% (AY23).
- P grades was flat at 6%.

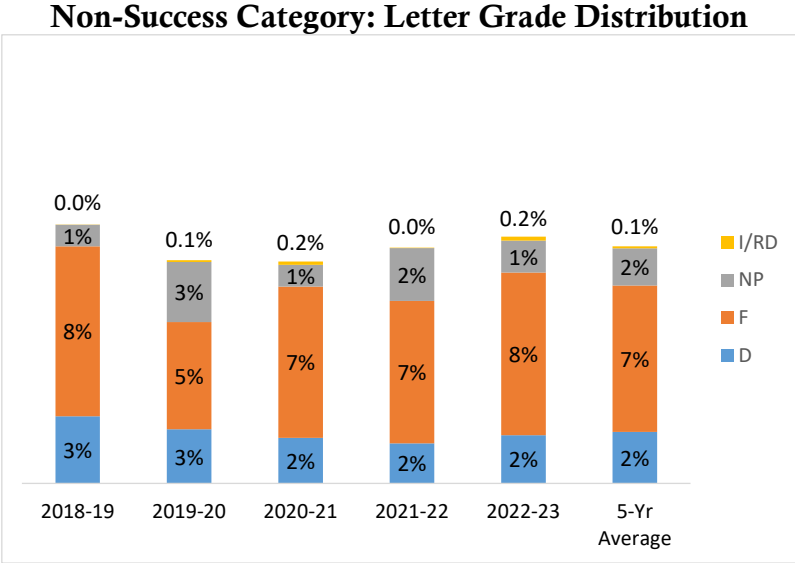
Figure 2



- **Non-success rates** was relatively unchanged as the proportion of F grades, which comprised the majority of the non-success category, remained stable.
- F grades accounted for 8% of all grades in AY19 and AY23.

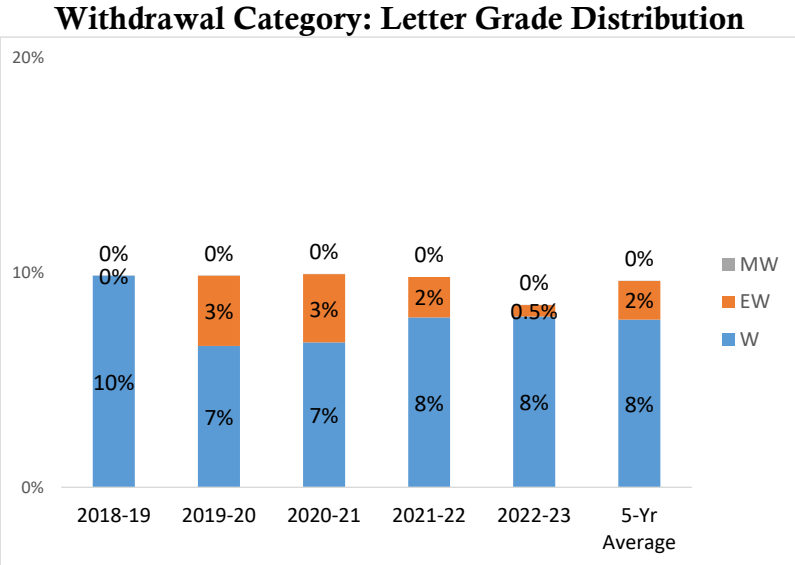
- D grades had a one-percentage point decrease, from 3% (AY19) to 2% (AY23).
- NP grades was flat at 1%.
- I/RD grades was flat, from 0.0% (AY19) to 0.2% (AY23).

Figure 3



- **Withdrawn rates** declined because of a reduction in W grades.
- W grades had a two-percentage point decrease, from 10% (AY19) to 8% (AY23)
- EW grades had a half-percentage point increase, from 0% (AY19) to 0.5% (AY23).¹
- MW grades was flat at less than 0.5%.

Figure 4



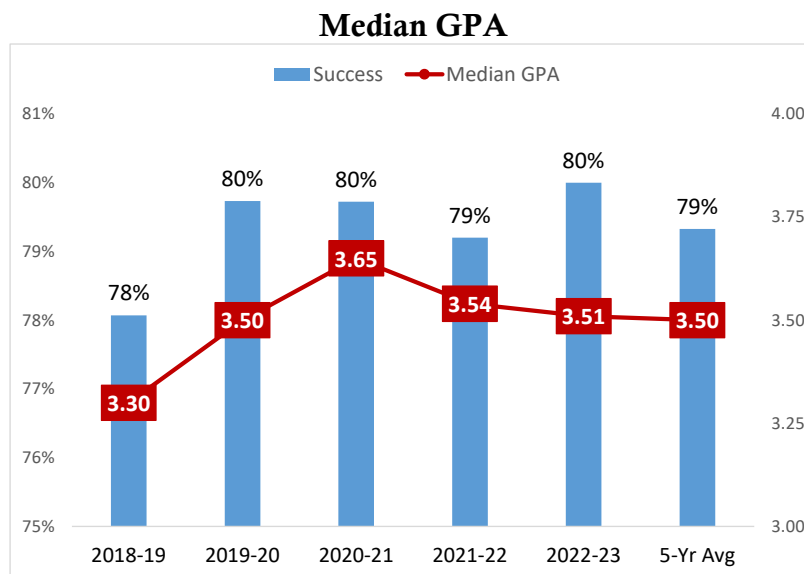
¹ EW grades were first issued in summer 2019 and it wasn't until spring 2020 when the pandemic hit that there was an uptick in EW grades being issued. Annualized though, EW grades accounted for 2% to 3% of the total withdrawal grades issued during the pandemic.

Median GPA

This section of the report examines the cumulative GPA of the students who enrolled between 2018-19 and 2022-23 to determine whether median GPAs increased. Non-credit grades are not used in GPA calculations, nor are P, NP, I, RD, W, EW, and MW grades. Additionally, a temporary policy was in effect during winter, spring, summer and fall 2020 due to the pandemic, and D and F grades were not factored into GPA calculations. For more details, see [grade policies](#).

- The median GPA of students enrolled between 2018-19 and 2022-23 increased slightly, and its fluctuations mirror the rise and dips seen in course success rates.
- The median GPA was 3.30 in 2018-19 and increased to 3.51 in 2022-23, when course success rates were 78% and 80%, respectively.

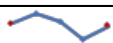
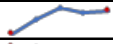







Figure 5



Appendix

- Table 1 lists the divisions with the most enrollments in descending order. The increase in course success rates was not isolated to select divisions, but rather seven of the nine instructional divisions saw their success rates increased.
- More specifically, Physical Sciences/Math/Engineering (2PS), Business/Computer Systems (2CB), Creative Arts (2CA), Intercultural/International Studies (2IC) and Applied Technologies (2AT) course success rates improved by three to seven percentage points between 2018-19 and 2022-23.

Table 1

Course Success Rate by Division						
Division	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Trend
2SS	81%	81%	81%	80%	81%	
2PS	70%	74%	78%	76%	77%	
2LA	81%	80%	78%	77%	76%	
2CB	75%	78%	79%	79%	79%	
2BH	81%	82%	82%	82%	82%	
2CA	80%	82%	81%	81%	85%	
2IC	74%	77%	77%	76%	78%	
2PE	84%	85%	83%	85%	86%	
2AT	79%	82%	78%	84%	86%	
College	78%	80%	80%	79%	80%	