

## Is Grade Inflation Limited to Elite Institutions?

Amir Karimi  
College of Engineering  
The University of Texas at San Antonio  
San Antonio, Texas 78249-0665  
[akarimi@utsa.edu](mailto:akarimi@utsa.edu)

### **Abstract**

Periodically the media reports on grade inflation in elite institutions of higher education. It is reported that now in some Ivy League schools nearly half of the grades given to students are A's or A-minuses, while twenty years ago only one third of student grades were in this range. Question has been raised if grade inflation is a myth or reality. Some argue that the higher grades is due to the fact that these elite schools have become highly selective and admit only well qualified, highly motivated students. Few suggest that higher grades are the results of better teaching methods and availability of modern learning resources. Others disagree and argue that grade inflation is the result of lower expectation or lax evaluation of student work by faculty. As a result some institutions have decided to limit the number of A's given in each department. This paper provides a summary of pro and con arguments regarding grade inflation. It will analyze the grades distribution for the engineering courses at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) in the last ten years. It will attempt to find answers to following questions regarding grade inflations: Are inflated grades limited to elite schools or is it a global phenomenon including open access institutions? Is there a correlation between the student grades and teaching evaluation? Does easy grading yield higher teaching evaluation? Is placing limits on grade distributions a proper way to address grade inflation?