

# Did Lane's Course Success Rate Increase due to Grade Inflation?

In TIPSS #33 we said, "Lane's course success rate increased from 72% to 80%."

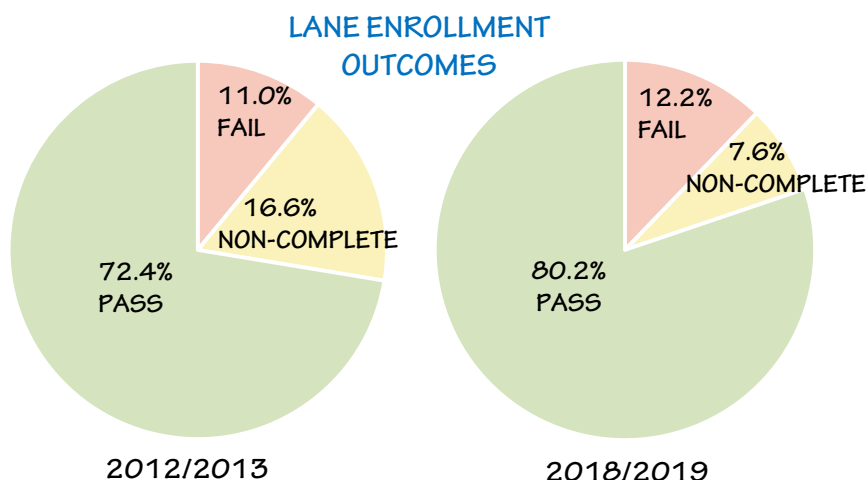
## Is there evidence of grade inflation?

- During this period, the proportion of enrollments resulting in an A, A-, or A+ grade increased from 35.5% to 41.8%.
- But enrollments resulting in B's, C's, and F's also increased.
- **The fail rate (F, D, NP) actually grew along with the pass rate (A, B, C, P) and by the same factor—an 11% increase.**  
(See pie charts:  $80.2 \div 72.4 = 1.11$ ;  $12.2 \div 11.0 = 1.11$ .)

## How can this be? NON-COMPLETIONS decreased sharply.

- **No credit (NC) grades fell from 6.7% to 1.0% (85% fewer NC's).** NC's were eliminated in winter 2019; more than half had been phased out in the prior 5 years as their value was reconsidered.
- **Withdrawals (W) fell from 8.1% to 5.4% (33% fewer W's).** The college implemented Academic Progress Standards in summer 2013 and strengthened No Show Drop policies in fall 2014.
- **Incompletes (I) fell from 0.7% to 0.5% (30% fewer I's).**
- **Audits (U) fell from 1.0% to 0.6% (40% fewer U's).**
- Both P and NP grades declined, mainly because **use of the pass/no pass grade option decreased by 44%.**

LANE GRADE DISTRIBUTIONS							
Populations are all credit enrollments excluding College Now and limited to traditional, online, and hybrid formats. Letter grades include +/-.							
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
A	35.5%	36.4%	38.1%	39.0%	39.1%	40.8%	41.8%
B	22.2%	22.9%	23.8%	24.4%	24.8%	24.8%	24.0%
C	11.9%	12.2%	12.7%	12.9%	13.0%	12.3%	12.3%
P	2.8%	2.7%	2.5%	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%
D	3.3%	3.2%	3.3%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.0%
F	5.5%	5.7%	5.9%	5.5%	5.6%	5.8%	7.3%
NP	2.2%	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	2.0%
NC	6.7%	6.0%	4.2%	3.5%	3.2%	2.9%	1.0%
W	8.1%	7.2%	6.3%	6.3%	5.9%	5.2%	5.4%
I	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%
U	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
success rate	72.4%	74.3%	77.1%	78.5%	79.1%	80.1%	80.2%



It is possible that grade inflation contributed somewhat to rising success rates, but the main finding from grade evidence is that **success increased as completion increased.**

**Now faculty assign more passing and failing grades while students experience fewer than half as many non-completions and more often persist to succeed in Lane courses.**