



Students at the UConn Storrs campus enjoy the sun on March 24, 2026. The beginning of spring has brought warmer temperatures, allowing students to do more activities outside. PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

‘Good Enough’ Is Even Better:
Why gen-eds should be pass/fail

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This week marks the beginning of course selection for the upcoming semester, and with it comes the (often begrudging) search for a gen-ed class to fill out your schedule.

Now, the University of Connecticut claims that their general education requirements boast benefits, like exposing students to diverse ideas and allowing them to discover new interests. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case.

In most college students’ minds, the word “gen-ed” is synonymous with waste-of-time. While that’s not necessarily right, it’s not entirely wrong either. There are many underappreciated virtues of general education classes, not the least of which is encountering new modes of thinking and perspectives you’d never considered before, yet the typical general education program still leaves much to be desired. One thing that could greatly improve it would be the option for students to place gen-eds on pass/fail.

Pass/fail is a grading method where a student either receives a “pass,” meaning their performance was satisfactory, or a “fail” which speaks for itself. However, unlike typical courses, grades for these classes don’t count towards your GPA, so a “pass” won’t bring you down the way a “C” could. Currently, the majority of schools only allow students to request courses to be taken pass/fail under limited circumstances. Yet at certain schools, the policies are much more open. Brown Uni-

versity, for example, allows undergraduate students to take any course pass/fail — even courses that count toward their major.

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Meanwhile, many students certainly have genuine interests that they would love the chance to pursue. Some might even elect to challenge themselves with upper-level classes that require more advanced coursework if only the burden of aiming for perfect performance were lifted. If students could take general education courses as pass/fail, it would substantially reduce the pressure they’re under.

Furthermore, contrary to the common fear in academia, this

and harder for teachers and administration to prevent. The truth is that those who are determined to slack off will find ways to do so no matter what. Instead, what we must focus on is how modifying the grading system will enable students who actually want to challenge themselves intellectually to escape the looming fear of grades and focus on learning.

It is just as silly to fear that students’ performance wouldn’t be as impressive with this grading scheme. Although a poor grade in a gen-ed clearly looks bad, it’s not as though the specific gen-eds themselves are what impresses employers or admissions counselors. Rather, it is the breadth of knowledge and skills that students gain through these classes, which is impressive. Empowering students to take more liberties with their plan of study would only enhance these repertoires.

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Students busy studying in the Homer D. Babbidge Library at the UConn Storrs campus. This week marks the start of class selection for the fall semester.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SCARLETT DOYLE, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

so-called easy-A’s even if they find no meaning in these classes. When they find no meaning, learning ceases: their focus shifts towards getting the work done, getting an A and getting the class far out of their sight at the end of the semester. Few could blame them when grades are exceedingly (and perhaps excessively) influential in job placement, and even more so, in applying to graduate school.

policy would not encourage students to slack off their work or abuse its leniency — at least not any more than the current one does. After all, the term “easy-A” is not a new one. It is not a new trend for students to choose the classes that are easiest to pass, and when that’s not possible, to find ways to cheat. With the advent of AI, offloading tasks has only become easier, more widespread,