



HARVARD | BUSINESS | SCHOOL

JAY O. LIGHT |
ACTING DEAN
DWIGHT P. ROBINSON, JR. PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

14 December 2005

Dear Students,

I am writing to let you know that, beginning with the Class of 2008, Harvard Business School will no longer prohibit students from disclosing the grades they earn in the MBA program. I recognize that this decision will not be welcome news, for I understand most of you would prefer to continue with our current policy.

In making this decision, I have listened carefully to concerns voiced by current students, and sought the views of faculty, staff, former students, recruiters, and other key constituencies who also care deeply about this issue and its effect upon HBS. I have consulted extensively with Rick Ruback, the MBA Program Chair, and sought advice from the Senior Associate Deans who comprise the faculty leadership. After carefully weighing the arguments on both sides of the issue, and in light of our long-standing mission and reputation, I believe this is the right decision for the School.

Fundamentally, I believe it is inappropriate for HBS to dictate to students what they can and cannot say about their grades during the recruiting process. I believe you and your classmates earn your grades and should be accountable for them, as you will be accountable for your performance in the organizations you will lead in the future. You each should be at liberty to provide recruiters with the fullest possible picture of your accomplishments -- including your academic performance while here at the School. In addition, Harvard Business School's reputation is deeply rooted in the transformational experience we provide in our classrooms, an experience that is vitally dependent upon maintaining high academic standards. The relatively recent policy of prohibiting disclosure is inconsistent with our commitment to these standards.

In individual emails and conversations as well as other larger forums for discussion and the recent Student Association poll, current students have raised a range of concerns related to disclosure, including decreased cooperation and collaboration in the classroom, less willingness to take risks (including course selection during the second year), grading practices, and a potentially less diverse mix of incoming students. I have talked at length with faculty, with staff, and with former students, particularly those who were here before we had prohibitions on disclosure. Based on their extensive experience at the School (including faculty who themselves were students at HBS), most believe the transition back to our original policy can be managed -- with careful consideration of the implementation issues many of you have raised -- to minimize

any such effects. Based on our own experience over many years, Rick and I agree with this view.

I would hope we can use the coming year, working together, to plan the implementation of the change, and to make detailed recommendations on ways to monitor and mitigate any detrimental outcomes. I have asked Rick and the MBA program group to engage student leadership on this implementation, forming student-faculty working groups to develop guidelines we can apply for the Class of 2008. We all want to ensure that HBS remains an outstanding learning environment on every dimension.

I am grateful for the time and energy many of you have taken to share your thoughts and opinions over the last several weeks. Your passion is a clear measure of how much you value your experience here, and how much you wish to strengthen and improve the MBA program. We share that deep commitment to the School and to the very special educational experience that it provides.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay O. Light". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jay Light