

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Tuesday, May 18, 1954
Room 101, Law Building

The Faculty Senate convened in special session at 3:40 P.M. on Tuesday, May 18, 1954, in Room 101 of the Law Building. Twenty-two members were present with President Harvill presiding.

The minutes of the meeting of May 3, 1954, as previously distributed to members of the Senate, were approved.

Catalogue Material: The Senate considered the following catalogue items with the provision that they be referred to the Advisory Council for review and, where necessary, to the Graduate Study Committee.

New Courses: Entomology 107 - Insect Physiology; Philosophy 20 - World Religions; Philosophy 21 - Religious Ethics.

Course changes: Anthropology 134a,b-S, add "G" for graduate credit; Geology 11 and Geology 12 - change to 1R, 6L for each course; Journalism 5a - offered each semester; Journalism 110a, b - add phrase "P 5b, 8, or concurrent registration therein;" P.E. for Women 165, add II to description; Zoology, delete Zool. 30 - Biology of the Vertebrates; Zool. 45, change laboratory fee to \$7; Zool. 115 - change prerequisite to read "P 112 or 114 or junior standing in zoology, anthropology, botany, geology, sociology or psychology;" Zool. 141 - make yearly offering; Zool. 144 - add "G" for graduate credit; Zool. 146, add "G" for graduate credit; Zool. 160 - change prerequisite to read "P 10 and one field course in zoology, botany, or agronomy and range management."

Absences, report of committee on: Dr. Roberts reviewed the report of the special committee appointed to study the problem of absences. Copies of the report, one of which is in the files of the Senate, were distributed to the members at the last meeting. A copy of the report as amended and adopted by the Senate is appended to and made a part of these minutes.

The report emphasized that the responsibility of reporting absences should be placed upon the student, who should notify the instructor as soon as possible as to the reason for his absence. A written statement might be required from the student in explanation of his absence and instructors may penalize a student for absences through the grade given in the course.

Except in the case of administrative excuses, the instructor shall be the sole judge as to whether the reasons given justify an excuse of the absence.

The report recommended that unexcused absences totalling the unit value of the course shall be reported to the Dean of Men or the Dean of Women and unexcused absences occurring on days immediately before or immediately following regularly scheduled holidays shall be counted double.

The plan provides that the Deans investigate the reasons for the absence. If a notice is not withdrawn by the instructor the Dean would warn the student that two additional unexcused absences authorize the instructor to request his disqualification from the course. In such case the instructor is to notify the Dean of the College that the student be dropped from the course with such grade, W or 5, as his record at the time warrants. The Dean would then notify the student of his dismissal unless information regarding extenuating circumstances would lead the instructor to withdraw his recommendation.

Dr. Roberts stated that his committee felt that the plan submitted would result in a reduction in absences and less detailed administrative work in the offices of the deans. He emphasized the instructor's privilege in using his own judgment as to recommending that the student be dropped from a course because of absences. The instructor may, but is not required, to submit such a request.

Dr. Solve pointed out that counting absences with double their value when occurring immediately before and immediately after holidays might result in a very severe penalty. Further discussion by the Senate indicated that there was a question as to the advisability of this provision.

Dr. Galbraith reported a serious problem in connection with large classes in General Geology. He did not think, however, that absences immediately before and after holidays constituted a real problem. He was in favor of a plan which would indicate to the student the number of cuts which might be allowed. Students frequently ask this question, and he felt that in Freshman courses in particular it would be helpful to have the policy in this regard clearly stated.

Mr. Leshar called attention to the establishment of the present policy many years ago, explaining that it came about because a policy similar to the one proposed actually encouraged absences. At that time students were penalized by the loss of one-half credit for every nine absences or major portion thereof. As result, the Registrar's office was flooded between classes with requests for information as to the number of cuts that might be taken without penalty. Students were interested not so much in regular attendance as in the number of absences to which they were entitled. He pointed out also that the plan provided for reporting not only consecutive absences but a total based on cuts throughout the semester. This would inevitably result in more work for the teaching staff and certainly in more work in the administrative offices. He felt that the proposed plan is not only more involved than the present one but would actually result in an increase in the number of absences rather than in a reduction. It was important, he stated, to emphasize the privilege of attendance rather than a penalty for cuts. He questioned, as well, the validity of awarding a grade of W for absences when as a matter of fact the student is doing satisfactory work.

Dr. Roberts replied that in his judgment a student who was not attending classes was not doing satisfactory work, and that regular class attendance should be a definite requirement for a course. Regular attendance is the responsibility of the student and his failure in this respect, irrespective of the quality of his work, should merit dismissal.

Dr. Muir pointed out that many instructors, particularly newer members of the faculty, seem not to understand the authority given them by the present policy. They ask regarding requirements in connection with attendance. It was his judgment that a more clearly stated policy on the part of the University would clarify the position both of the instructor and the student.

It was Dean Slonaker's judgment that three-fourths of the faculty feel that the present system is not satisfactory. One reason for this is that a third party, the Dean, must attempt to discover the reasons for absences. He felt it would be more effective to have the student responsible for reporting directly to his instructor.

Dean Carlson reported that many students do not understand the present policy and feel that a limited number of absences are allowed. She felt that the relationship of the student and the instructor would be clarified by the proposed policy.

Dean Park raised the question as to the position of the Dean of the College in connection with notification to the student of his dismissal. He explained that it was his judgment that the Dean should not authorize such a dismissal without definite know-

ledge of the student's case and that action could often be modified by having the Dean follow up the circumstances related to the student's absence. In this connection, President Harvill pointed out the responsibility of the Dean of the College from the administrative point of view, stressing the necessity of having the Dean fully aware of the absence situation and of making it possible for him to investigate the circumstances. The University may avoid criticism by having the administrative point of view clearly defined. He suggested that every precaution should be taken to see that the student actually merits dismissal from the course before such a report was submitted.

Dr. Roberts pointed out that the plan provided for a warning to students before action was taken. He indicated also that the instructor may penalize the student through a change in grade rather than by having him dropped from a course.

Dean Garretson remarked that this latter point is covered in the present policy which authorizes the instructor to administer the matter of absences at his discretion but provides only that protracted absences be reported.

Dr. Roberts also remarked that absences in his course in freshman chemistry had been drastically reduced when he advised the students that cuts would be reflected in their final grade. When Mr. Leshar pointed out that this practice could be used to control absences under the present system, Dr. Roberts replied that it would depend upon the situation in any particular semester.

There was further discussion regarding the paragraph which provides for the dismissal of the student from a course through the office of the Dean, and as result of this discussion and upon motion by Dr. Roberts, duly seconded, the paragraph was revised to read as follows:

.....Upon receipt of such recommendation, the Dean of the College, after investigating the circumstances, shall request the Registrar to close the records of the student with the appropriate grade unless he has learned of extenuating circumstances which, when communicated to the instructor, will lead him to withdraw his recommendation.

On motion by Dean Roy, the Senate then voted to delete the provision which would provide for double absences immediately before and after holidays.

Dean Lyons emphasized the fact that the present plan has not been followed carefully and has not had a real opportunity to function, possibly because many instructors do not understand it. He felt that the faculty should be made acquainted with the present plan and that it should be used sufficiently to discover whether or not it is desirable to try a new plan.

President Harvill also raised the question as to whether the faculty generally were aware of the proposed plan and its possible effect. If a new plan is adopted, it is to be administered in detail and made as effective as possible. He questioned that many of the teaching faculty would be in favor of dismissing a student from a course because of absence when he was actually doing satisfactory work.

Dean Slonaker moved, with second by Professor Herrick, that the report of the committee be adopted as amended. The motion passed with nine affirmative and six negative votes.

The President then asked that Dean Park, Dean Slonaker, Dean Carlson and Mr. Leshar serve with the committee to work out the procedure involved in the plan. In respect to query by Mr. Leshar the President indicated that the gist of the plan should appear in the summer

supplement to the catalogue, and be prepared for the next issue of the biennial announcement. He asked Dean Slonsker to see that the plan is included in the Student's Handbook.

Dr. Roberts felt that the Senate had considered a very important matter and indicated that he would like to regard the action taken as in the nature of an experiment. Every effort will be made to make the new plan effective.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.


G. Laner Leshner, Secretary.