

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Proceedings of the Faculty Senate

Meeting of Monday

December 6, 1971

SENATE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ares, Bannister, Bleibtreu, Bretall, Brewer, H. Butler, Christopherson, Cole, Delaplane, Dewhirst, Eisner, Evans, S. Fahey, W. Fahey, Gegenheimer, Goodwin, Green, Herber, Hetrick, Johnson, Joyner, Keating, Layton, Mason, Massengale, Mautner, McConnell, McMillan, Munsinger, Muramoto, Murphy, Putt, Reiblich, Richard, Robson, Schaefer, Skinner, Steelink, Thompson, Varney, Wise and Zwolinski. Student representatives attending were Julie Lauber and Nanette Warner.

SENATE MEMBERS ABSENT: Anthony, Barnes, Bartlett, Bok, Boyer, Dixon, Dresher, Edwards, Freeman, Gaines, Gould, Grant, Hull, Krebs, Lane, Lytle, Mathews, H. Myers, L. Myers, Nigh, Paulsen, Rhodes, Shields, Siegel, Sorensen, Svob, Tomizuka, Voris, Windsor, Younggren and Zumberge. Student representative absent was Bruce R. Tufts.

CATALOG MATERIAL: The catalog material previously distributed to members of the Senate by means of the "Curriculum" bulletin was approved.

PROPOSAL RE OPEN SENATE MEETINGS AND PARTICIPATION BY THE PUBLIC: The Senate considered the proposal received from Dr. Conrad Joyner concerning open meetings of the Faculty Senate and participation by the public. Dr. Joyner had made the following proposed statements of policy:

"All meetings of the Faculty Senate are open to the public. The only exceptions are when a majority of those present and voting call for an executive session or when the presiding officer calls an executive session.

"Non-members may participate in discussions or debates upon invitation of the presiding officer.

"Before the close of each Senate meeting, the presiding officer 'calls the audience.' Under this item only those who are not members of the Senate may address the body on any matters which are germane to the Senate's responsibilities. Comments under 'call to the audience' may not exceed five minutes unless the presiding officer rules otherwise."

Dr. Joyner moved that the Senate adopt the proposed policy statements as previously distributed. Several seconds to this motion were heard.

Dr. Gegenheimer pointed out that the bylaws of the General Faculty stated that the meetings of the Senate were to be closed to newspaper reporters, persons representing campus publications and representatives of the University News Bureau. Since this prohibition was in effect the current bylaws would have to be changed before Dr. Joyner's proposal could be adopted. Dr. Gegenheimer then indicated that the committee appointed to consider changing the Faculty Constitution would be bringing a recommendation to the next Faculty Senate meeting which would

speak to the point of opening the meetings to the press. Dr. Gegenheimer then moved that this motion be tabled pending a report from the committee to consider revising the Faculty Constitution. The motion was seconded and carried with several dissenting votes heard.

Dr. Joyner pointed out that he was also concerned that the public have the privilege to speak in the Faculty Senate. This is why he had included a statement in his recommendation regarding the "call to the audience." He suggested that perhaps the committee should consider this and include it as part of its report.

Dr. Steelink asked if Senate members could invite anyone to attend the Senate meetings and if so could they invite members of the press. Dr. Gegenheimer stated that he felt that the bylaw provision would overrule inviting members of the press. Dr. Thompson said that we can invite anyone except those excluded by the bylaws.

Dr. Joyner stated that he felt the issue of closed meetings was really moot since the Arizona Constitution provided that all such meetings be open to the public.

Dr. Skinner moved that this subject be placed on the agenda for the next Senate meeting. This motion was seconded and some discussion followed. Dr. Joyner asked if the press would be barred from the next meeting. The answer was affirmative.

After some further discussion the motion to place this on the agenda of the next meeting carried.

Dr. Joyner then requested that the secretary seek the advice of the University's legal counsel to determine if in fact the Constitution of the Senate is in conflict with the laws of the State of Arizona. President Schaefer said that he would gather this information and report to the Senate.

PROPOSAL FROM STUDENT SENATE REQUESTING THE FACULTY SENATE TO INSTRUCT THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR TO SEND D AND F MIDTERM REPORTS ONLY TO THE STUDENT HIMSELF AND NOT TO THE PARENTS OF THE STUDENT: The Senate had received the following resolution from the Student Senate:

SENATE ACT #437

Introduced by:
Frank Metzger and Miles Burke

A MEMORIAL

To the Faculty Senate concerning the sending of D and F midterm reports to the parents of unmarried students under 21 years of age.

Whereas, Students should be treated as adults and not as children, and

Whereas, the voting age has been lowered to 18 and therefore implies that at 18 a person can accept his own responsibilities, and

Whereas, midterm grades are usually based upon a very minor part of the final course grade.

Wherefore: The ASUA Student Senate requests the Faculty Senate to instruct the University Registrar to send D and F midterm reports only to the student himself and not to the parents of the student.

First Reading:	10/13/71	Committee:	Action:
Second Reading:	10/20/71	Robert M. Judge, Chairman	Do Pass, 2-0-0
Third Reading:	10/27/71	Nanette Warner	

Senate Action, Third Reading: 22 aye, 4 nay, 0 abstentions, 26 voting members present.

Speaker of the Senate Action(s): /s/ JULIE LAUBER Date 11/1/71

ASUA President Action(s): /s/ Randy Tufts Date 11/1/71

President Schaefer recognized Miss Warner who spoke to Student Senate Act 437. She stated that she felt that the University on one hand assumes that the student is an adult while on the other hand treats him like a child by notifying his parents when he is receiving grades of 4 and 5 on the mid-semester scholarship report. She further stated that the nation has given the 18 year old the right to vote, many states have emancipated 18 year olds, and therefore it is demeaning to a student to treat him as if he were still a child.

Miss Warner said that some instructors do not report midterm grades. Therefore the report is incomplete. Data has not been presented to indicate the efficacy of sending midterm reports to parents of students.

She went on to say that many students are self-supporting and parents have no responsibility for their attendance or grades at the University. She asked why there was a difference between married and unmarried students as far as the reporting of grades was concerned. She concluded by stating that the present policy of sending grade reports to parents of students runs counter to general University policy and national policy.

Mr. Green asked if the policy helped one student, would not the procedure be worth it? Miss Warner replied that this was a matter of principle and students needed to be treated as adults.

Dean Brewer stated that the parents of students write for information if they do not receive it automatically. Dr. Eisner replied that this was a matter between the student and the parent. If the student wanted the parent to know of his midterm grade, he could then inform him. Dr. Robson stated that many students are not mature enough to handle college work. However, the action of sending a grade report to the parents will not help him mature.

Dean Fahey stated that over the past years parents had appreciated being informed of the student's mid-semester grades. However, recently within the past two years he has received replies from parents indicating they wished for their son or daughter to be treated as an adult.

Vice President Johnson spoke in favor of the current practice. He referred to the positive effects of notifying the parents that the student is in academic difficulty. He stated that throughout the state many parents have expressed appreciation to him for this service and having been informed of the academic difficulty of their son or daughter have taken steps to assist them.

Miss Lauber stated that she felt that sending the mid-semester scholarship report to the parents did not result in improvement of the student's grade. What did result in improvement was notifying the student himself. She further stated that the policy as it now stands is arbitrary. She estimated that only 10 to 15% of the classes she had taken made use of the mid-semester scholarship report.

Dr. Joyner pointed out that Vice President Johnson's comments did have substantial merit. He stated that it has been his experience that parents have helped the student constructively when notified that he was on the mid-semester scholarship report. Many times the parents have been able to assist the students in a financial manner, thus enabling the students to cut down on their outside workload. He further stated that although we have no empirical data to indicate the effectiveness of the mid-semester scholarship report he felt that it had a greater effect on students than we realize. He also agreed that there was some arbitrariness in reporting mid-semester grades. However, he felt that most professors were very careful to do this for large lower division courses.

Mr. Green stated that in this discussion it seemed that the parent was being relegated to the role of "the bad guy." He felt that many times parents are supporters and helpful when they find out that the student is in academic difficulty. President Schaefer pointed out that the mid-semester scholarship report was a useful counseling device for the academic deans.

Dr. Eisner asked if we could assume that when young people get grades of D and F that they hide this fact from their parents. He felt that most young people would share this information with the parent but he wanted to remove the insult of the University's reporting this grade to the parent.

Dr. Skinner asked if it were feasible to have a dual system in operation. Could the students let the University know if they wished to have the grade reports sent to their parents?

Dr. Christopherson stated that he agreed with Dr. Joyner's remarks that this was a very important procedure for lower division students. He then asked if it were possible to devise a method of reporting grades to parents of lower division students.

Dr. Steelink said that the heart of the problem was that students in trouble should be counseled. However, he felt that the student should be counseled by academic counselors and administrators.

Dr. Gegenheimer asked if we had studies available which indicated the effectiveness of the mid-semester scholarship report. Mr. Butler replied that to his knowledge we had none. Dean Ares asked Vice President Johnson if in his opinion he felt that the mid-semester scholarship report notice going to parents was more important for lower division than upper division students. Vice President Johnson replied that in his opinion it was.

Professor Reiblich stated that he believed that it would be unwise to discontinue our policy at this time. If students wished to be treated as adults,

they should be adult enough to accept the responsibility of discussing this matter with their parents.

At this point Dr. Joyner moved that we accept the student memorial. The motion was seconded and further discussion followed.

Dean Bleibtreu stated that he felt there was a great deal of difficulty with departments not reporting mid-semester grades. He had polled his departments and found that the main reason for not reporting mid-semester grades was that the mid-point in the semester as indicated in the academic calendar did not coincide with the actual mid-point of the course.

Dr. Gegenheimer moved that we amend the Student Senate memorial to read that mid-term grades of D or F be sent to parents of students under 21 until they achieve junior status. Several seconds to this motion were heard.

Miss Lauber asked if any other deans present would wish to give their opinion. Dean McConnell stated that the College of Architecture was in favor of the present policy.

Dr. Hetrick asked about the beneficial effect of sending reports to parents. He wanted to know how much would be lost if we changed our procedure. Vice President Johnson replied that much would be lost. He stated that his office received many phone calls concerning the academic progress of students. Dean Munsinger said that the College of Business has promised parents that they will inform them of the student's progress at mid-semester.

After some further discussion the amendment to the memorial was carried. The motion to accept the memorial then was carried with a few dissenting votes heard.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON STUDENT COMPLAINTS ABOUT GRADING: President Schaefer recognized Dean Ares who presented the following report from the Committee on Student Complaints About Grading:

"In late July 1971 President Schaefer requested a small committee of the Advisory Council to consider the question of student complaints about the assignment of semester grades, to make recommendations regarding the desirability of establishing a formal procedure for investigating student protests, and to suggest an appropriate procedure if it is felt that one should be established. The President requested Mr. Ares, Mr. Bleibtreu, Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Tufts to serve, with Mr. Rhodes acting as chairman. Subsequently Mr. Tufts assigned his responsibility to Miss Gwen Mikeal, his assistant for academic matters. Miss Mikeal, in turn, requested Miss Nanette Warner to accompany her to committee meetings and to take part in committee deliberations. Following is the report of the committee of five constituted as here indicated.

"The Committee is not aware of any serious abuse of grading practices and no complaints have been made directly to Committee members, although the existence of the Committee was given rather wide publicity in the Wildcat during July. In an institution of this size, however, it is inevitable that errors will occur in grading; misunderstandings will arise between graders and graded with respect to criteria and procedures. As long as faculties are composed of human beings, it is probably also inevitable that instances of unfairness and arbitrary grading will arise from time to time. The Committee therefore agreed that a procedure should be established

by which student complaints regarding the assignment of course grades can be investigated and their validity established or denied. It was further agreed that the procedure should: (a) be available to all students in all parts of the University, (b) be as simple and free from ponderous and time consuming steps as possible and (c) be capable of providing thorough consideration of both the student's and the instructor's views. The availability of the procedure should be made known to students and faculty alike.

I

"The procedure we shall propose and the policy basis on which it rests are not meant to call into question the academic judgment of the mature, qualified instructor, but rather to establish that pertinent facts are known, that computational and other mechanical errors have not been involved in assigning the grade in question, and that the student has gotten a 'fair deal.'

"It is traditionally and universally accepted that only the instructor in a given course may assign grades in that course and that only he may make changes, for cause, after the initial grade assignment has been recorded. So well established is this practice and so universally accepted that the matter is not even mentioned in the University catalog except by implication (page 181) in the provision that final grades may be changed by the instructor (emphasis supplied) if there has been an error in computation or for an equally justifiable reason. In confirming this principle, the Committee thinks it is an important responsibility of each instructor that he do everything he reasonably can to eliminate the possibility of misunderstandings with respect to the assignment of grades. Toward this end,

- (a) Each instructor of every course or section should advise students as clearly and explicitly as possible at the beginning of the semester exactly how the student's performance will be evaluated and how grades will be assigned. Grading criteria should be explained, point systems and grade computations (if such are to be used) should be explained carefully and in detail so that misunderstandings about such matters can be kept to a minimum. The instructor should also explain his policy regarding missed examinations, late papers and attendance. In classes of any considerable size, it would be preferable for such explanations to be provided each student in writing.
- (b) Test papers and other graded work should either be returned to the student or made available for his inspection upon request so that he can see for himself the basis upon which individual paper grades were assigned.
- (c) Teachers in charge of courses which utilize teaching assistants should maintain frequent communications with and among assistants so that their work might be correlated, consistent grading criteria might be established, and other methods serving to reduce grading discrepancies might be employed.

"The case of the graduate assistant deserves special attention. Although assistants serve as junior faculty and may act quite independently in planning and carrying out the instructional function, and although some of them are experienced and highly qualified teachers, the fact is that graduate assistants as a group are essentially apprentices. Most of them have had little experience in teaching and in the intricacies of fair grading, and some have had none at all. The grading practices and grade assignments of graduate assistants should be subject to review

(and possible modification) by the instructor in charge of the course. If an assistant has essentially complete responsibility for one or more sections of a course (such as freshman composition, elementary foreign languages, lower division mathematics, etc.) the responsibility for review of his performance and grading rests with the appropriate program director or his department head.

"The Committee recognizes that it is often difficult, if not impossible, to draw a clear line between error and poor judgment; indeed, to distinguish in some cases between academic judgment and arbitrary conduct; to render a fair judgment that a student has or has not been treated fairly by an instructor who may or may not have been completely impartial and objective in his grading. We can only say that any review procedure should have as its objective the elimination of error and misunderstanding and the determination of whether the criteria for grading are fair and have been fairly applied in a particular instance. In no event should there be an inquiry into the qualified instructor's academic judgment or prerogative and responsibility for assigning grades as his judgment and conscience dictate.

II

"Information obtained from the several colleges reveals that, whether formalized and officially adopted or merely 'available' as a result of individual handling of a few cases in the past, the approach to a consideration of student grade complaints is remarkably consistent across the campus. We say 'remarkable' because it is recognized that colleges vary considerably in their organization, that tradition and requirements of procedure may vary widely among the several professions, and that acceptable procedures in relatively small, coherent student groups may not be at all practicable in large, complex colleges. With the understanding that local conditions and tradition may dictate some departure from the prototype, we should like to propose that the following steps be adopted as a basis for a reasonably consistent approach to investigating student complaints about grade assignments:

- (a) The aggrieved student should first confer with his instructor, stating his evidence (if any) and reasons for questioning his grade. The instructor should be obliged to review the matter, explain the grading procedure, and show how he arrived at the grade in question. If the instructor is a graduate assistant and this interview does not resolve the difficulty, the student may then go to the person in charge of the course (regular faculty member in nominal charge or the department director) with the problem.
- (b) If the grading dispute is not resolved in step (a), the student may appeal to the department head or other appropriate officer (committee chairman or director in the event the course in question is not given within an academic department). The department head may confer with the instructor and presumably will do so although he will generally handle the problem as he sees fit.
- (c) If these discussions are not adequate to settle the matter to the complainant's satisfaction, he may then confer with the dean of the college concerned, who must provide a procedure for convening a committee to review the case. The Committee should probably consist of five members with at least two selected from the faculty of the department of the instructor concerned, at least one selected from the faculty of another department, and at least one student member

provided by the student council of the college concerned (if there is one) or the ASUA Academic Committee.

"The committee should design its own procedures and rules of operation. It may or may not: (a) meet separately with the student and the instructor, (b) request each of the parties to submit a brief written statement summarizing his side of the issue, and/or (c) interview other persons who may have relevant information. In any event, the committee should always meet with the student and instructor together in an attempt to rationalize the differences. At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee should make a written report containing its recommendations and provide copies to the student concerned, the instructor, the department head, and the dean.

- (d) Final action in the case should be taken by the dean after full consideration of the committee's recommendation. He should have the authority to change the grade as he sees fit and the registrar should accept the dean's judgment in the matter. It should be understood, however, that no grade should ever be changed over the objection of an instructor except upon the recommendation of the committee with the approval of the dean of the college in which the course is offered.
- (e) A student's appeal of a grade must be lodged during the first regular semester after the semester or summer term at the end of which the grade in question was awarded.

Dean Charles E. Ares
Dean Hermann K. Bleibtreu
Miss Gwen Mikeal
Mr. Bruce R. Tufts
Dean Herbert D. Rhodes, Chairman"

Dean Ares then moved that we accept this report and several seconds were heard.

Dr. Joyner stated that we have been talking a great deal about student rights and he felt that this is an excellent step forward and he wished to commend the committee for their work in bringing this report.

Dean Fahey stated that the report indicates that the appeal of a grade must be lodged during the first regular semester after the semester or summer term at the end of which the grade in question was awarded. Students must officially appeal the grade during the next official grading period for it to be effective. It should be understood that the student's first contact with the instructor does not constitute initiating an appeal.

The question was then called for and the motion to adopt this report was carried unanimously.

OTHER ITEMS: Dr. Steelink asked if any consideration had been given to salaries for those on research contracts next summer. He stated that since the semester will start two weeks earlier those with research contracts will have two weeks less on their contracts. He asked if the Vice President for Business Affairs could research this matter and bring a report to the next Senate meeting. President Schaefer said that such a report would be forthcoming by the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

David Butler, Secretary pro tem