

The University of Arizona
Proceedings of the Faculty Senate

Meeting of Monday

December 2, 1968

PRESENT: Armstrong, Blecha, Bok, Brewer, Burton, Delaplane, Dewhirst, Gegenheimer, Gould, Green, Hall, Harvill, Hetrick, Johnson, Kassander, Kemmerer, Krutzsch, Lynn, Marcoux, McMillan, Mees, Murphy, Myers, Paylore, Resnick, Rhodes, Roy, Shields, Skinner, Sorensen, Steelink, Svob, Voris, and Windsor. Also attending part of the meeting were Professors Picchioni, Percy, and Vavich and students Geri Rivard and Dick Else.

ABSENT: Ares, Bingham, Carlson, Cockrum, Damon, Davis, DuVal, Forrester, Gaines, Harris, Hull, Joyner, Krebs, Leonard, Little, Martin, McDonald, Patrick, Paulsen, Spicer, Thompson, and Wilson.

CATALOGUE MATERIAL: The following catalogue material was accepted:

New Courses

Geography 257, Quantitative Analysis of Geographic Variables (3) II Gibson
Urban Planning 258, Quantitative Methods for Urban Planners (3) II (1968-69 only)
(For Continuing Education Only)

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF COMMITTEE TO STUDY PASS-FAIL GRADING PROPOSAL:

Members of the Senate had been provided with a copy of the revised report of the Faculty Committee to Study the Pass-Fail Grading Proposal as they arrived at the meeting. The revised report read as follows:

"In the spring of 1968 the Senate of the Associated Students of the University of Arizona passed a bill which requested the Faculty Senate to establish a limited pass-fail option for undergraduate students at this institution.

The Faculty Senate subsequently voted to ask President Harvill to appoint an ad hoc committee to study the students' proposal, and the President complied with this request.

The committee has studied the matter at length. The chairman obtained information from a number of other institutions concerning experience with such a program. Committee members have conferred with members of the faculty and with members of the student body. They have reviewed the student proposal with two representatives of the Associated Students, Miss Geri Rivard and Mr. Dick Else.

The committee has been impressed by the belief of the students and the experience reported at other institutions that the availability of a pass-fail option encourages students to explore among course offerings outside their major and minor disciplines and outside their prescribed college curricula, thus broadening their educational experience.

The committee submitted its report to the Faculty Senate on November 18, 1968. Following the discussion of the report, the Senate tabled it and asked the committee to hold further meetings and consider revising certain of its recommendations in the light of the Senate discussion. This the committee has done, and the following is now submitted as the committee's revised report:

1. A program providing a pass-fail option shall be established at the University of Arizona on an experimental basis for a two-year period, extending from September, 1969, to June, 1971, after which time the program will be thoroughly reviewed and evaluated.
2. Under this program an undergraduate student may elect to take courses under the pass-fail option only after he has attained junior standing and only if he has earned a cumulative grade point average of 3.0000 or better. He must also have the approval of his college dean to register for a course under the pass-fail option.
3. A student registering for a course under the pass-fail option must meet the prerequisites or otherwise satisfy the instructor of his ability to take the course.
4. An undergraduate student may register under the pass-fail option for not more than one course per semester up to a maximum of four courses. Further, the student must be carrying a minimum of twelve units of course work for a regular grade during each semester in which he elects to take a course under the pass-fail option.
5. Courses taken under the pass-fail option may not be ones required for graduation, but must be purely elective. Such courses may not be used to fulfill major, minor, or group requirements.
6. Each department shall decide which of its courses will be available under the pass-fail option. Further, a course shall be available under pass-fail only when the instructor teaching that course approves of its being so offered.
7. The instructor shall be informed by the Registrar which students are enrolled in his course under the pass-fail option.
8. Students may change from pass-fail enrollment to enrollment for a regular grade, or vice versa, only during the usual drop-add period at the beginning of a semester.
9. If a course is taken under the pass-fail option, the grade of P or F will be permanently recorded. However, neither a passing nor a failing grade will be included in the computation of the graduation grade average. If the course is passed, the units of credit will be applied toward graduation.

Professor W. Kirby Lockard
Dr. G. Douglas Percy
Dr. Mitchell G. Vavich
Mr. David L. Windsor
Dr. Albert Picchioni, Chairman"

To place the matter before the group, Dean Roy moved its adoption. His motion was seconded by Dean Brewer.

Dr. Gegenheimer commented that he was surprised to see that an item deleted by Senate action at its last meeting, Paragraph 6 in the revised report (Paragraph 5 in the earlier report) still appeared in the committee's report. He moved that the motion be amended to delete this paragraph from the proposal. His motion was seconded by Dr. Shields.

Several members of the Senate then asked that comments from the committee be heard. Members of the committee present who are not members of the Senate were Dr. Picchioni (chairman), Dr. Percy, and Dr. Vavich. Also attending the meeting at the invitation of the Senate were Miss Geri Rivard, currently chairman of the ASUA Committee on Pass-Fail, and Mr. Dick Else, Assistant to the President of the Associated Students who had been actively involved in the Pass-Fail Study Proposal last year. Dr. Picchioni presented the following statement covering the question raised by Dr. Gegenheimer as well as other points:

"As you will recall, our committee submitted its initial report to the Faculty Senate on November 18. Following considerable discussion of the report, the Senate tabled it and asked the committee to meet again and consider revising certain of its recommendations in light of the Senate discussion. The committee has met, discussed at length the various paragraphs of its original report, as well as the recommendations made by the Senate on certain points. The committee prepared a revised report, a copy of which has been presented to each of you at this meeting. I would now like to comment on the present revised report:

At its last meeting the Senate voted to remove the paragraph in the original report which states, "Each department shall decide which of its courses will be available under the pass-fail option. Further, a course shall be available under pass-fail only when the instructor teaching that course approves of its being so offered." Following its recent discussions, the committee still feels strongly that this proposed requirement has merit. It would appear most important that we initiate a pass-fail system at the University of Arizona that would win the good will of the faculty. The committee felt that it would not be appropriate to force departments or faculty members to accept pass-fail enrollees if they in principle were opposed to the pass-fail plan. Experience reported to the committee by other universities with an active pass-fail program indicate that acceptance by the faculty at these institutions is by no means unanimous.

During the committee's meeting with the student representatives, one student who has devoted considerable time and effort to study pass-fail programs at other universities, pointed out that experience at some universities has been that the students felt that some faculty members were prejudiced against their pass-fail enrollees and did not grade them on the same basis as they did other students in the course. The committee felt that there would probably exist less bias or prejudice among faculty members who readily accept the pass-fail program than those who do not. It is also noteworthy that the original pass-fail proposal which was submitted by the Associated Students and which was considered at the Faculty Senate meeting in May contained the following statement, "To maintain academic freedom in the University's 66 departments, each department will decide which of its courses should be available to pass-fail grading."

Finally, it is possible that not all courses in the various departments in the University are suited to the pass-fail grading system. At the last Faculty Senate meeting (November 18), a Senate member expressed some concern with regard to using this grading system in certain courses in his college.

Therefore, after due consideration, the committee recommends that the paragraph be retained in the proposal. It now appears as Paragraph 6 in the revised report.

At its meeting the committee also reviewed the question of prerequisites. The question had arisen in the Senate whether or not pass-fail enrollees should be held to course prerequisites in the same manner as regular enrollees. It was the consensus of the group at this meeting, as it had been at previous meetings when this

matter was discussed, that the same policy on prerequisites should govern pass-fail enrollees as other students. In addition, it was suggested by our committee that the catalogue statement concerning course prerequisites be incorporated as part of the revised report. It appears as Paragraph 3 and states, "A student registering for a course under the pass-fail option must meet the prerequisites or otherwise satisfy the instructor of his ability to take the course."

The committee also reviewed, with considerable discussion, the point made in the Senate that in certain programs, particularly in the College of Engineering and College of Mines, students do not have room for free electives, and the question had been asked, should not students in these colleges be permitted the pass-fail option in specified areas such as "technical electives"? The committee felt that in certain programs, particularly in Engineering and Mines, the nature of the programs are such that the pass-fail option may not be feasible. Technical electives are in fact group requirements and are part of the individual's professional training. The purpose of the pass-fail option is to encourage students to explore among course offerings outside their major and minor disciplines and outside their prescribed college curricula, thus broadening their educational experience. In this regard, it is of interest to mention the comments made by Warren Shirey, Associate Registrar at Indiana University. He states that at Indiana the School of Education has had fewer students than other schools at that institution who elect the pass-fail option simply because there are fewer electives in the junior and senior years. Knowing the curricula in the various colleges at Arizona as well as he does, Shirey volunteers the information that "at Arizona the restrictive programs in Engineering and Mines might affect the pass-fail program with regard to the number of students in these colleges who will be able to use the pass-fail option."

There are potential problems in allowing students to take group requirement courses under the pass-fail system. I would like to give you the following comments that were related to me by the Registrar at the University of Minnesota, an institution that apparently allows students to take group requirement courses under the pass-fail system. (Minnesota actually has a Pass-Non Credit Program rather than pass-fail.) "There is evidence that some students elect pass-fail grading to dispose of disagreeable requirements. For example, the student in Engineering who has no interest in social science requirements meets these requirements under pass-fail and some have announced to me that 'anyone can get a D.' If he performs at the D-level, he receives a P and the requirement has thus been met. Some have told me that they did not even buy the text; instead they went to class enough to acquire sufficient information to get a passing grade and that was all." On the other hand, this attitude of the student did not seem to exist in courses that they themselves select specifically for the purpose of broadening their education. In this regard the following are some comments from faculty members at the University of Minnesota: "I have been pleasantly surprised to find that many pass-fail students have done work which would have earned them "A" or "B" grades on the traditional scale." "My impression of pass-fail enrollees in my course is that they are weaker in the drudgery of memorization, but stronger than the class as a whole in following the conceptual material and seeing the further implications and applications of the subject." "I believe the system should be restricted to courses outside the major and lower division requirements...I knew a Phi Beta Kappa physics major who took a course in modern music; he would undoubtedly have received a C--possibly a D without the option. Knowing this he would never have tried. I suspect he learned more than anyone else in the class."

The committee recommends that the statement which pertains to exclusion of major, minor, and group requirements from the pass-fail option be retained. It appears as Paragraph 5 in the revised report and states, "Courses taken under the pass-fail

option may not be ones required for graduation, but must be purely elective. Such courses may not be used to fulfill major, minor, and group requirements."

A vote on the amendment was then called for and the motion lost.

Mr. McMillan then asked Mr. Else if he had any comments. Mr. Else said that the students appreciated the opportunity to be present at this Senate meeting. He said the students had prepared no formal presentation. He stated that the students felt the proposal was indeed a reasonable one, and would be happy to answer any questions they could. Mr. Else added that it was the wish of the students that an opportunity for exploration without risk of undue penalty be provided. He, for instance, is a zoology major. He would like to take some elective course work in the Fine Arts. However, he is unsure of how successful he might be in such courses and he would like to feel free to take such work on a pass-fail basis without the risk of endangering his grade average.

The vote on the original question was then called for and the motion carried with no dissenting vote being heard.

The visitors then retired as did several members of the Senate. Dean Rhodes said he would like to ask a question or two about the Pass-Fail plan just approved. He asked if the committee under Paragraph 2 meant that the required cumulative grade point average of 3.0000 referred to a true cumulative average, or to the average calculated after the first twenty-five units have been completed (in consideration of the new method of calculating the graduation grade average established earlier by the Senate), or what? Mr. Windsor said that it was intended to mean the student's actual cumulative grade average based on all work attempted in residence. Dean Rhodes said that he had hoped this would be the case. He said that another question he had referred to Paragraph 4 which specifies that the student must be carrying a minimum of 12 units of course work for a regular grade during any semester in which he elects to take a course under pass-fail. What is to prevent a student's later dropping a course, reducing the number of units he is carrying for a regular grade below 12? Mr. Windsor said that he did not know what the answer to this question should be. Several members of the Senate commented that it would be difficult to police this matter. Dean Rhodes said he hoped the committee would give attention to this matter so that if deemed necessary, provision could be made to take care of problems which might arise.

David L. Windsor, Secretary