



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Oakland University Senate

Second Meeting
Thursday, October 24, 1974
3:15 p.m.
Oakland Room, Oakland Center

AGENDA

Submitted by Frederick W. Obear. for the Steering Committee.

A. Old Business.

1. Motion from the Academic Policy Committee (Mr. Feeman)

THAT OAKLAND UNIVERSITY'S GRADING SYSTEM BE CHANGED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS, ALL CHANGES TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE WINTER TERM. 1975.

1. THAT A "WS" OR "WN" BE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IN A COURSE FROM WHICH A STUDENT WITHDRAWS OFFICIALLY FROM THE END OF THE REFUND PERIOD IN THE TERM TO ONE WEEK BEFORE THE FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD IN THAT TERM. "WS" IS TO BE ASSIGNED IF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENT AT THE TIME OF WITHDRAWAL IS SATISFACTORY IN TERMS OF GRADUATION STANDARDS, THAT IS, IF IT MERITS A GRADE OF 2.0 OR BETTER. "wn" IS TO BE ASSIGNED IF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENT IS UNSATISFACTORY, THAT IS, IF IT MERITS A GRADE OF LESS THAN 2.0.

THE OFFICIAL WITHDRAWAL AFTER THE REFUND PERIOD FROM A COURSE OR COURSES, AS OPPOSED TO COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY AND THE SUBSEQUENT ASSIGNMENT OF "WS" OR "WN" ARE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY:

- a. THE STUDENT OBTAINS AN APPROPRIATE FORM, TO BE DESIGNED BY THE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE, IN THE OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT WHICH OFFERS THE COURSE FROM WHICH THE WITHDRAWAL IS TO BE MADE.
- b. THE STUDENT TAKES THE FORM TO THE INSTRUCTOR AND HAS IT COMPLETED. ONE COPY IS KEPT BY THE STUDENT AND ONE BY THE INSTRUCTOR
- c. THE INSTRUCTOR RECORDS THE GRADE ON THE FINAL GRADE REPORT.

2. THAT THE DEFINITION OF THE "N" GRADE BE CHANGED TO: THE "N" IS ASSIGNED

BY THE INSTRUCTOR IN ANY COURSE FROM WHICH A STUDENT DOES NOT OFFICIALLY WITHDRAW PRIOR TO ONE WEEK BEFORE THE FINAL EXAM PERIOD IN THE TERM IN WHICH HE/SHE HAS REGISTERED FOR THE COURSE AND FOR WHICH THE STUDENT DOES NOT RECEIVE CREDIT. IT IS UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN THAT THE STUDENT HAS COMPLETED THE COURSE UNSUCCESSFULLY.

3. THAT ALL GRADES, NUMERIC AND NON-NUMERIC ALIKE, BE RECORDED ON A STUDENT'S TRANSCRIPT SO THAT THE TOTAL ACADEMIC RECORD OF THE STUDENT IS VISIBLE TO THE READER.

4. THAT NONE OF THE NON-NUMERIC GRADES (S, N, W, WS, WN, I, P) BE USED IN THE COMPUTATION OF THE GRADE POINT AVERAGE.

Second reading, eligible for final vote.

Comments:

Since its introduction in 1970, there have been many problems with the "N" grade. Some of them are:

1. Since N grades do not appear on transcripts, the grade records of students are distorted. For students with good records this represent; a devaluation of the record. Those who look at a transcript do not know whether to take it at face value or not. Are there N's lurking in the background? For students who take fewer credits than the normal full load of 16 to 18, the situation is the same. Did they simply not register for a full load, or did they get N's? What was the actual situation? On the other hand, students with poor records benefit from the N's not showing on the record.
2. Attitudes about the N vary greatly. Some professors won't use it. Others negotiate with students about it or are pressured by students to negotiate.
3. Administrative and governance difficulties with the N have become severe, particularly with regard to implementation of dismissal and probationary policies. The Committee on Academic Standing and Honors has expressed a desire that legislation be passed to permit it to distinguish the various meanings which are inherent in the present N grade.
4. Problems with the legislature are on the horizon. There is a movement toward appropriating funds on a "completed credit" basis. The reduction in FYES resulting from this elimination of N grade credits could be equivalent to a loss of more than \$1,000,000 at current funding levels.
5. The presence of the N grade has caused a change in student behavior toward the rule for repeating a course. Prior to 1970, students repeated courses in which they had earned grades in the range below 2.0 Since 1970, they have chosen to drop out if in trouble, receive an N, then repeat the course. The result is that none of this action appears on the transcript, thus benefiting the students while distorting the record.

The purpose of the proposed legislation is to resolve these problems and to create a better system of grading. We on the APC believe that there is a great need at Oakland for stability in the grading system. So many changes have been made in a short period of time that few people,

faculty and students alike, know precisely the whole system and what it means. Therefore, we have sought a solution which is at once simple, palatable, and acceptable, yet one which will have maximum impact.

The introduction of the W, WS, and WN, as in earlier legislation and in item I of this motion, will separate out the various meanings of the present N grade without penalizing the students. It does require them to take official action however. The legislation reinstates the role of the instructor in the choice between "WS" or "WN". The reason for terminating the official withdrawal period one week before the final exam period is that, technically, faculty members are not allowed to give examinations during that week, thus the total pre-final examination record is available to the instructor. In addition, the introduction of the W, WS, and WN, permits a single meaning to be attached to an N grade, as in Item 4 of the legislation. It means that the student has completed the course unsuccessfully. Thus, N grade credits are "completed" credits. The effect of Item 3 of the motion will be to provide an honest recording of grades on the transcript with flexibility of interpretation by the reader. Since the total record would be shown, readers of a transcript could interpret it as they would. The important thing is that the entire record would be visible. Thus distortions would no longer be possible. For example, one student might have a G.P.A. of 3.00 in 31 courses with 10 N's, while another might have a G.P.A. of 3.00 in 31 courses with 0 N's. If the interpreter would wish to downgrade the G.P.A. of the first student for the 40 credits of N's, he/she could do it easily. If, on the other hand, he/she would not care about doing that and would wish to credit the student for persistence or some other positive characteristic, he/she could do that too. Let the interpreters interpret as they will. Internally the student would still benefit from not having the nonnumeric grades count toward the G.P.A.

Finally, the APC encourages the Committee on Academic Standing and Honors to consider two things:

1. A limitation on the number of S, WS, N, and WN grades a student may have on his/her record in order to compete for University honors. This would force students who have the achievement of honors as a goal to consider these actions carefully before selecting S/N courses or before withdrawing from a course during the term. There is no justification for placing limits on the number of "S" grades a student may accumulate toward graduation, as is done in many schools. Data on student behavior shows that such action is not warranted, in fact such action would have an adverse effect on experimentation and on special programs with the University, such as New Charter College.
2. Determination of probationary and dismissal policies with regard to W, N, and WN grades, as soon as possible after this legislation has been approved and not later than the Fall of 1975.

These recommendations seem to provide a balanced solution to our present grading problems. The new system would provide greater clarity while retaining flexibility of interpretation.

To summarize, should this legislation be approved, the grading system would be as follows:

- (a) The first two weeks of a term (one week in Spring or Summer Sessions) are a free period for dropping and adding courses, a no-grade period.
- (b) "W" is assigned by the Registrar if a student withdraws officially from a course between the

end of the no-grade period and the end of the refund period.

(c) The instructor assigns a "WS" or "WN" in a course from which a student withdraws officially between the end of the refund period and one week before the beginning of the final examination period.

(d) The Registrar assigns a "W" in all courses if a student withdraws officially from the University at any time prior to the end of the term.

(e) The "I" grade is assigned by the instructor if the student becomes ill or other circumstances prevent completion of the course near the end of the term. The course must be completed within the first four weeks of the next term in which a student registers. Extensions are permitted on request of the instructor to the Dean. (For a complete statement, see the current catalog.)

(f) A "P" grade is assigned if a course is continued in progress. (For a complete statement, see the current catalog.)

(g) If none of the above applies, the course is considered to be completed, and the instructor assigns an S, N, or a numerical grade from 1.0 to 4.0 inclusive, where S means 2.0 or greater. As at present, S/N graded courses must have prior approval by the appropriate Committee on Instruction. For external purposes the numerical grades may be converted to letters as follows:

3.6 - 4.0 A

3.0 - 3.5 B

2.0 - 2.9 C

1.0 - 1.9 D

All grades, numeric and non-numeric alike, are to appear on a student's transcript. However, only numerical grades are to be used in the determination of the student's grade point average.

B. New Business.

1. Motion from the Steering Committee (Mr. Obear)

THAT THE SENATE APPROVE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FOLLOWING STANDING COMMITTEE: COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC AND CAREER ADVISING.

CHARGE: TO CONSIDER, RECOMMEND, AND EVALUATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES INVOLVED WITH THE ACADEMIC AND CAREER ADVISING FUNCTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY.

MEMBERSHIP: FIVE FACULTY, FOUR STUDENTS AND TWO ADMINISTRATIVE-PROFESSIONALS; AND THE DEAN OF STUDENT SERVICES AND THE DIRECTOR OF CAREER ADVISING AND PLACEMENT, BOTH OF WHOM SHALL BE *EX OFFICIO* AND NON-VOTING.

First reading.

2. Motion from the Steering Committee (Mr. Obear)

THAT THE PERSONS NAMED ON A LIST TO BE DISTRIBUTED AT THE SENATE MEETING BE APPOINTED TO THE STANDING COMMITTEES INDICATED, WITH TERMS AS SPECIFIED.

Procedural motion, eligible for final vote.

3. Motions from the Steering Committee (Mr. Obear)

During the 1973-74 year, the Steering Committee appointed an *ad hoc* Committee on Constitutional Improvement to recommend needed changes in the University Senate Constitution. The Committee consisted of Sheldon Appleton, chairman, and the following members: Messrs. Hurd, Righter, Tomboulion, and Williamson, and Ms. Cross.

The Committee Report was received by the Steering Committee in June, 1974. The Steering Committee has studied the Report and as a result intends to bring a number of proposed constitutional amendments to the Senate. As specified in Article IX of the Constitution, if a proposed amendment is approved by the Senate, it will then be submitted to all members of the organized faculties by means of a mall referendum. Because of the substantial number of amendments involved, the Steering Committee has not placed all of them on this agenda. It is the intent of the Steering Committee to place the remainder on the November agenda for first reading and then call for votes on all amendments at the December meeting.

To aid members of the Senate In considering these amendments, a complete copy of the current constitution Is attached to this agenda. In the motions, underlined material is new and would be added; bracketed material Is existing and would be deleted.

The Steering Committee is bringing forward intact the recommendations of the *ad hoc* Committee. In cases in which the Steering Committee is not fully in agreement with the recommendation, an amendment to the amendment which the Steering Committee will offer is set forth.

All motions are in first reading.

a. THAT ARTICLE V, SECTION i BE DELETED IN ITS ENTIRETY AND REPLACED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

I. The University Senate shall be composed of twenty-nine Senators, as follows:

Nineteen Senators shall be elected by the organized faculties.

One Senator shall be elected from among the Administrative and Professional staffs, and three Deans shall be elected by the Deans in a manner to be prescribed by the Elections Committee of the University Senate.

Three students shall be chosen by the students of Oakland University. Both graduate and undergraduate students shall have the right to run for and be elected to these seats.

The Provost shall serve *ex officio*, with full voting rights and privileges.

Two Senators shall be appointed by the President after all the elective seats have been filled.

Comment: From the *ad hoc* Committee Report:

The size of the Senate has already expanded, and with the creation of new schools could soon be expected to approach seventy. It is the conviction of all of us that this number is too large for an academic legislative body which has any hope of effectiveness. Without changing the proportions of representation very much (except to increase relatively the representation of the students) we have therefore proposed reducing the size of the Senate to twenty-nine ? about as large as we believe will be conducive to its effective functioning, and adjusted representation accordingly. It is intended that this size remain constant regardless of future change in institutional structure.

Proposed amendment:

THAT THE PHRASE "BY THE DEANS" BE AMENDED TO READ "BY AND FROM THE DEANS OF THE ORGANIZED FACULTIES AND THE DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDY,".

Comment: This amendment is intended to clarify to which deans the provision has reference.

b. THAT ARTICLE V, SECTION ii BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

ii. Beginning with the winter semester, 1967, and every two years thereafter, the elected faculty membership of the Senate shall be apportioned as follows: Elective seats shall be assigned by the Elections Committee of the University Senate among the faculties in proportion to the number of members of organized faculties, with the proviso that no organized faculty shall be awarded more than forty-nine percent of the seats in the Senate, and that each organized faculty shall receive a minimum of one elective seat [in addition to the Dean of that faculty who sits *ex officio*]. For these purposes, Learning Skills faculty shall participate in the College of Arts and Sciences. [For the election of 1967 only, Senators shall be assigned as described in this article, except that full-time faculty of all ranks shall be the basis of assignment.] Until such time as a procedure for electing Senators has been approved as part of a faculty constitution, the manner of electing the appropriate number of Senators from each faculty shall be prescribed by the Elections Committee. Until such time as a procedure for the election of student Senators has been developed by the students and approved by the University Senate, the manner of choosing student Senators shall be prescribed by the Elections Committee.

Comment: From the *ad hoc* Committee Report:

This is proposed in an effort to clarify the present status of the Learning Skills faculty for purposes of Senate representation.

Proposed amendment:

THAT THE SENTENCE "FOR THESE PURPOSES, LEARNING SKILLS FACULTY SHALL PARTICIPATE IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES." BE DELETED.

Comment: The organizational status of the Department of Learning Skills is at this time

unclear. In any event, a constitutional linking of a department to a College or School is inappropriate.

c. THAT ARTICLE V, SECTION ix BE CHANGED AS FOLLOWS:

ix. The University Senate shall have a Steering Committee composed of the Provost of the University, who shall serve as chairman, and six other Senators elected at the first Senate meeting of the fall semester. The Committee's term of office shall be two years. [At least one Senator from the College of Arts and Sciences, one from the School of Engineering, and one from the School of Education shall sit on the Committee, and] No more than three seats shall be held by Senators from any one faculty.

Comment: The proposed language will continue to limit representation from any given organized faculty while not prejudicing representation from newly organized faculties as they come into existence.

d. THAT A NEW PROVISION BE ESTABLISHED IN ARTICLE V, SECTION x, AS FOLLOWS:

(The Steering Committee shall ...) 7. recommend, in place of the Senate, candidates for degrees in course, by unanimous consent of all members of the Steering Committee present and voting, provided that a majority of the Steering Committee is in attendance.

Comment: This provision would permit the Steering Committee, when unanimous, to act for the Senate in awarding degrees. This would: 1) reduce the time between the earning of the degree and the entry of that fact on the transcript, and 2) avoid time-consuming *pro forma* Senate actions. It should be noted that this provision in no way changes the role of the assemblies in the degree approval process.

Proposed amendment:

THAT THE PROVISION READ:

7. RECOMMEND, IN PLACE OF THE SENATE, CANDIDATES FOR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES IN COURSE.

Comment: 1) Since the power to approve graduate degrees is granted by the Constitution to the Graduate Council, the term "undergraduate" is needed to qualify the authority of the Steering Committee. 2) It is the desire of the Steering Committee to have the flexibility to delegate the degree approval function to the Academic Standing and Honors Committee, and in fact, it is the intent of the current Steering Committee to do so if this amendment is approved.

e. THAT ARTICLE V, SECTION xii BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

The University Senate shall establish other standing committees and *ad hoc* committees as it deems necessary. Unless otherwise specified by the Senate, the term of office for all standing committees shall be two years with members serving until new committees have been elected to replace them. [Every Senate Committee shall be chaired by a Senator but] Committee membership shall not be restricted to Senators. Whenever a committee of the University Senate is presenting a motion or making a report, all members of the committee shall have the

right to attend that meeting of the Senate and take part in debate, but only Senators shall have the power to vote on the report or the motion.

Comment: This amendment would operate to avoid overburdening Senators unnecessarily ? especially since it is proposed that their number be reduced.

4. Information items.

a. The Steering Committee has established the following dates for subsequent Senate meetings during the 1974-75 year:

Thursday, November 14

Thursday, December 5

Thursday, January 16

Thursday, February 13

Thursday, March 13

Thursday, April 10

All meetings will start at 3:15 p.m.

Additional meetings will be scheduled as necessary.

b. The following is the report of the Financial Aids Committee for 1973-74. The Financial Aids Committee did not receive any recommendations for action from the Steering Committee. In general, the Committee's function was primarily an educational one, i.e., learning more about the types of financial aid available and the qualifications for the receipt of such aid. It was learned that most of the policies governing financial aid are set by the various governmental agencies and that the administrative details are under the control of the financial aids office. In the light of these circumstances, the University Financial Aids Committee has had very little responsibility over the years and the advisability of its existence on a permanent basis must be questioned. Either the committee must be abolished or its terms of reference must be broadened.

The Committee, (largely the Chairman) attempted to undertake a survey of student and faculty opinion on the operation of financial aid. While most faculty members demonstrated scant knowledge of or interest in the financial aids programme, some students suggested ways in which the programme may be improved. Specifically students suggested that

- a) a review board be set up to study student grievances in case of denial of financial aid;
- b) graduate students be made eligible for financial assistance.

The new committee should examine the feasibility of these proposals early in this academic year.

As in previous years, the Committee had a late start. To be effective, this committee and all committees should be constituted earlier than is currently the case. It is important also that the Student Congress name its representatives to these committees within the first few weeks of the fall semester.

c. The Steering Committee has named Mr. John McKinley to the Elections Committee in the place of William Moorhouse, who has resigned this appointment in favor of his roles as chairman of the Admissions Committee and member of the Steering Committee. The Elections Committee now consists of Richard Light, Chairman, and Virginia O'Leary and John McKinley, members.

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