

# Kepros Report on grading system before Senate

by GEORGE MCALLISTER, JR.

A proposal for a new grading system at UNB is now before the University Senate. If approved, the proposal will completely transform the grading system now in effect at the University.

Originally, the essence of the proposal was brought before Senate by Arts Council in a series of recommendations in 1969. The content of these recommendations was two-fold: (a) to introduce the credit concept, and (b) to abolish supplemental examinations.

Concern was then expressed at the introduction of the fail credit system might have an adverse effect on the academic standards of the University. As a result, the matter was referred back to Arts Council for further consideration.

In 1970, several other faculties expressed considerable interest in the proposal. Consequently, the whole matter was turned over to the Student, Standings and Promotions Committee. An ad hoc sub-committee was then constituted with Prof. P. G. Kepros as chairman.

This committee then conducted an extensive examination of the grading system of this University as well as that of other universities. The results of the committee's efforts are encompassed in the proposal which now stands before Senate.

Basically, the objective of the proposal is three-fold: (a) to express every student's performance in terms of credit hours, letter grades and a grade point average, (b) to introduce the conditional pass concept to those faculties which do not at present incorporate

it in their grading systems while at the same time maintaining academic standards at the University, and (c) to introduce a grading system which is consistent across and within faculties and which is comparable to the system used at other Canadian universities.

The credit hour concept is not a new one at this University. Variations of it are already in use in Forestry, Engineering and Law. It is simply a relative measure of the total work load of a course.

A credit hour, as defined in the proposal, "represents a unit of work which includes one hour of lecture and two hours of work outside the classroom." Thus, the normal Arts course would count as three credit hours per term or six credit hours per year. If a laboratory is associated with a lecture course, it is necessary to determine whether the laboratory work is an alternate to private study or in addition to it.

If it is in addition to it, the proposal states that "one credit hour should be added to the total credit hour weighting of the course for every two hours of laboratory work each week." However, under no circumstances would any course carry a weight of more than ten credit hours per year.

Moreover it should be kept in mind that the weight which a course receives does not depend on the number of contact hours but on the amount of work involved in the course.

Under the proposal a student would receive a letter grade in each course taken. The following system is recommended:

- A. excellent performance, B.

good performance, C. average performance, D. below average, poor (the conditional pass or fail credit), F. fail.

However, there have been many objections to this system because many people feel that the grading categories are too broad. Consequently, an amendment has been proposed which would allow the symbols A\*, B\*, C\* to be used "to distinguish performance above the typical level for each letter grade."

Under the proposal there is no specific limit on the number of conditional passes which a student may receive and still graduate; but because a student must attain a minimum grade point average to graduate, there is in fact, a limit on the number of conditional passes which a student may receive.

It is recommended in the proposal that each letter grade carry a grade point to be used in computing the grade point average and the cumulative grade point average:

- A - 4, B - 3, C - 2, D - 1, F - 0.

As the proposal now stands, the symbols plus, minus would not alter the grade point which a student receives for a letter grade.

The cumulative grade point average is "based upon all courses taken up to the point-in-time at which the average is calculated." To graduate, the proposal states that a student must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 as well as the required number of credit hours, i.e. D or better.

Also, incorporated in the proposal is a recommendation for a sliding scale of standards. The basis theory behind this concept is that it often takes some time for students to adjust to university.

Under this system, any student attaining a cumulative grade point average below the minimum for his year would be placed on academic probation. In addition, any student who is on academic probation for two years in succession could be required to withdraw from the University.

By way of example, the sliding scale of standards would in effect "allow a student to attain grades lower than C, but by the time he had completed his third year, his marks would have to be sufficiently high to enable him to attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade point average by the end of the fourth year in order to graduate."

The following minima are recommended for adoption in the proposal: Year I - term 1 - 1.50, term 2 - 1.50; Year II - term 1 - 1.70, term 2 - 1.80; Year III - term 1 - 1.87, term 2 - 1.93; Year IV - term 1 - 1.98, term 2 - 2.00.

It is hoped that the system will promote consistency in grading across and within faculties, thus facilitating the awarding of prizes and scholarships. Its proponents also claim that it will bring the grading system at UNB into line with that in other Canadian universities. The following is a list of Universities and their grading systems, based on their 1969-70 calendars.

Acadia - letter grade and percentage system,  
Bishops - percentage system,

Calgary - letter grade and grade points,

U.B.C. - Percentage system,  
Dalhousie - letter grade, grade point, and percentage system,  
Lakehead - letter grade and percentages,

Lethbridge - letter grade and grade point system,

Manitoba - letter grade and grade point system,

McGill - letter grade and percentage system,

McMaster - Percentage system,  
Mount Allison - percentage system,

Queens - letter grade and percentage system,

Western Ontario - letter grade and percentage system.

Even if this proposal is adopted by Senate, it probably will not be implemented until the 1974-75 academic year. Then it will probably work its way through the system with the freshman class. In any event, it probably will not affect anyone now registered as a full time student at this University; but if you have any opinions which you wish to express about the proposed system see your student Senator, the Dean of Students, or write a letter to the BRUNSWICKAN.

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