

Registrar explains new marking system

By D.C. BLUE
Registrar

The University Senate has approved the new grading system for introduction in 1974-75. Naturally, students will be wondering how this affects them.

Where are the letter grades?

Marks that previously were first division will now be represented by A plus, A, and A minus (values 4.3, 4.0, 3.7). Second division grades will now be B plus, B, and B minus (values 3.3, 3.0, 2.7). Most of the previous third division marks will appear as C plus or C (there is no C minus) with values of 2.3 and 2.0 respectively. The grade of D (with value of 1.0) is, in effect, a conditional pass and will, as it does now in Engineering, represent the 40-50 percent mark range. If you get a D you can keep the credit, but you will have to compensate by doing better in other courses. Also a few departments may not accept a D for prerequisite or major requirements. F is a failure, and has a value of 0.0.

Credit Hours

Each course is given a credit hour weight by the faculty concerned. In Arts, for next year, most courses have a weight of 6 credit hours (if year courses) or 3 credit hours (if term courses). Other faculties vary somewhat. By multiplying the number of credit hours by the value of the grade obtained you get the grade-points, e.g. Classics 1000 - 6 credit hours; grade B - 18 grade-points are earned.

Cumulative Grade-Point Average

This is obtained by dividing the total number of grade-points earned by the number of credit hours attempted. A cumulative grade-point average gives the result of this for all courses taken to date (unless permission to replace them has been obtained).

Sliding Scale of C.G.P.A.

The minimum average for graduation is 2.00 (or a C average), for students entering in 1974-75.

In order to allow students time to adjust to University, there is a sliding scale (University minima 1st year - 1.5; second year - 1.8; third year - 1.93; and thereafter 2.0).

To make the transition less drastic (since faculty as well as students next year must adjust), all students need only achieve 1.5 next year (e.g. 3 C's, 2 D's can give a 1.6 average), the following year 1.8, etc. We hope most of you will do better than this.

Remember a 2.0 average is only a C average - not a very difficult feat with a modicum of work.

What are you losing by the change?

1) For one thing, the right to write supplemental examinations in some faculties. On the other hand, those most likely to pass the supplementals will now get a 'D' and be able to keep the credit. The chances of passing a supplemental with an original mark of 35 percent are not very bright anyway.

2) Some precision in marking. However, with the values given to the pluses and minuses in the A and B range, those who wish to shine will have a chance to do so.

3) For the guy or gal who likes to slide by with the minimum - the minimum does edge up a bit each year but this should not unduly worry those who make a reasonable effort. Most students improve over the years as they find their specialties.

What are you gaining by the change?

1) Most importantly, in my opinion, even although there are a few special twists to this system, it is very similar to the

grade-point system used most widely in the United States, and by a fair number of universities in Canada. Even universities which do not use it are familiar with it, as are many employers, whereas percentage marks vary so much that although they may look familiar, they may be misunderstood by others who are not familiar with UNB. Our percentage marks have tended to fall somewhat lower than those of many other institutions.

2) Competition may not be emphasized as much in the new grading system (again, my opinion).

3) Difficulty in one course, particularly a required course, may be less crucial than under the present system. A 'D' will very probably meet the requirement, and a student who tries may compensate by above average marks in subjects he is better at. Although the marking system is different, the guiding principle is much the same as in the present Engineering and Forestry regulations. It's the overall average that matters.

SAFEGUARDS

There are several special provisions which may seem complicated, but are really added protection for students. These include --

Replacement of courses

With special permission, a student can replace courses (and this also includes repeating required courses) to a limited extent (in most faculties about 15 - 20 percent of the total number of credit hours), without having the original grade counted into the cumulative grade-point average. One or two failures (F's) need not, therefore, ruin your chances, provided that you do better thereafter. A student with good grades (A's and B's) might also wish to use this provision to replace D or even C grades.

In addition, without special permission, most faculties will students to retake courses, but in this case, both grades would be counted into the cumulative grade-point average.

Several provision for first-year students

Without going into details here, first year students who get off to a bad start may be allowed to take some or even all

courses again to improve their average.

Transition provisions

As already stated, in 1974-75 all students, regardless of year, will have a minimum of 1.5 required.

Previous marks, before September 1974, will not be translated into letter grades. The number of credit hours needed to complete the degree will be assessed before you return in the fall. How then do we calculate your graduating division? If you are in the same division both in the years on percentage marks, and in the years on grade-points, there is, of course, no problem. If you get different standings in different years, the marks and grades will be translated both ways, and you will get the benefit of whichever is higher. So you can't lose!

Academic Probation

If you fall below the cumulative grade-point average for one year, you will be placed on probation. You should probably then obtain advice about repeating or replacing courses. However, only if you fall below the required cumulative grade-point average for two years in a row can you be required to withdraw.

Review and Appeals

All adverse decisions are subject to review by the appropriate faculty committee, before being implemented, and then the student still has a right of appeal. This provides additional protection for the transitional stage.

Most of you will not need these safeguards. Reasonable effort in study should enable you to meet, and hopefully exceed the minimum standards.

The actual requirements for the degrees are not greatly changed in most faculties. You may find that the grade-point system, in fact, gives a fairer assessment of your total effort. In any case, there is a lot of protection built in.

Finally, for some of you, the familiar percentage marks (weighted or unweighted) may still appear on the transcript, as well as the new grades. This is likely in Engineering and Science, and might happen in others.

Help centre offers assistance

By NEIL DICKIE

"God, I'd like to have to have a day of solutions for a change. A day of solutions, that would be nice."

It's been a rough day for the executive secretary of Chimo help centre. It's 4:45 p.m., she's spent the last 2 hours on the phone trying to straighten out a dispute between a welfare recipient cut off the rolls, a welfare recipients social action group, and the N.B. Department of Welfare. The hassle is over and her face shows fatigue, but mainly relief and calm. Shirley Phillippe is one of the most hassled women in Fredericton, because human problems are her business.

Come October, Chimo telephone help centre will have been in operation for 3 years. If that doesn't mean anything to you - you're not alone. According to a preliminary report of a research project set up to study the centre this summer under the financial wing of the Department of the Secretary of State - most Fredericton residents don't have a clear idea of what services Chimo performs. Most people seem to think that the service was a drug aid centre, or a general emotional crisis centre (Chimo is listed at the front of the phone book as an emotional crisis centre).

Officially Chimo is a telephone crisis response-referral and information centre. What that means basically, is that the centre has an extensive list of community resources - from Alcoholics Anonymous to The Department of Welfare; and is prepared to help people with human problems in

general, irregardless of the problems seriousness.

Another problem perceived by the group was that many people in Fredericton and area seeking professional help, were seeking it for non-crisis problems; mainly involving loneliness and normal - but stressful human Hassles in need of human attention. People were swamping the Mental Health Clinic and some other local counselling and psychiatric services. The solution seemed to be a highly visible and easily accessible service that could provide a sympathetic ear - to people who needed to talk and be responded to as human beings in times of personal trouble - but trouble not serious enough to require a professional.

A steering committee was set up to implement the study group's suggestions about community services in general. Chimo was formed; a constitution set up, space rented, volunteers recruited, telephones set up, a community resource directory was compiled by the centre (that is now used by businesses and government offices throughout the community) and a serious attempt made (still very much in progress) to maintain an adequate telephone help centre. A centre sensitive to community needs for a "sympathetic ear", as well as a competent informational agency.

The centre is open 16 hours a day, from a.m. to 1 a.m. Its phone number is 455-9464.

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