

# Faculty members discuss proposed marking system

By DERWIN GOWAN

There has been much controversy between faculties and departments on the university concerning the Kepros Report, which makes recommendations favoring a new system of evaluating a student's performance.

According to Acting Dean of Forestry, N.R. Brown, "There is no problem as far as Forestry is concerned."

He added, "We're co-operating with the Senate one hundred per cent."

Brown sees no real change as far as he is concerned, as it is basically what his faculty has been doing all along. He said that he would have to wait until after the system has been tried before judgement is pronounced.

This is basically the same opinion as that of the Chairman of the Physics Department, Derek L. Livesey, who said it is still too early to make an evaluation, saying, "I haven't tried it yet."

He added, "I'm willing to try it," also saying, "I've worked with various systems."

Livesey said he believes this system is partly an attempt by the administration to make their bookkeeping easier.

However, he added, it is difficult to apply the same system to "Law, right on down to Home Economics, then Engineering."

Both of these opinions are quite different from those of the Head of the Department of Civil Engineering, I.M. Beattie. Referring to the report, he said, "I'm not excited about it."

He said the major fault of the proposed system is "the coarseness of the marking." He said that with only 5 letters to choose from, it is hard to mark accurately.

He then stated, "The present system has all of the good aspects of the Kepros Report."

He said that the system now in use gives an average using weighted courses, on a scale of 1 to 20. With the proposed change of 2 to 5 for term courses, and 4 to 10 for year courses, it would simply be a different ratio.

He added, "Also, the very good student can be identified."

This would be done by giving a ninety rather than an eighty.

Beattie then said, "Mathematically, it doesn't hold water."

This is because the grade point credit is obtained by using figures which have no decimal figures following them. However, after the division is carried out, the grade-point average is taken to two decimal points. This means that the marker arrives at an answer which has two more significant figures than he or she started with.

He said that this will not greatly effect the majority of students, but "as you get away from the median, things start to pick up."

Beattie summed up by saying, "I'm sure we can live with it," and, "the idea of the system is not really different from what we are doing now."

The Dean of Education, D.A. Maciner, said, "There seems to be no problems," and "We can fit it in."

He added that, with respect to the in school practical teaching, students are marked, for the most part, on a "pass-fail" basis. He

said that, under the proposed system, they would likely continue this practice, not giving a letter-grade to the practical teaching part of the Education program.

He also mentioned, "The Kepros proposal was approved by the faculty of education in 1971."

The chairman of the Division of Physical Education, G.B. Thompson said, "We haven't had any negative feedback," and "We think we can live within it."

He added that, "In a lot of the courses we conduct, it's perhaps a more honest way of evaluation."

He said this with respect to some of the courses in which a large part of the evaluation was based on essays. With respect to uniformity among faculties and departments, he said, "I would prefer it if the university was on the same system."

He then said that, whether the system is adopted or not, it will likely have beneficial effects, in that it is "forcing everybody to re-access the workload on students."

He also said that there likely will be beneficial results in "forcing faculties to compare notes."

He concluded by saying, "I'm in favour of the concept," adding that his department has approved the report unanimously.

He said, "Generally, the students are in favour of it."

The Dean of Nursing, D. L.E. Graham, had this statement to offer, "The change to the Kepros marking system is not expected to have any marked effect on the Faculty of Nursing. It is close to the system I have used for thirty years, and faculty members do not appear to anticipate difficulties."

"In most instances (and in most university courses), especially where the point values are not clearly indicated for clearly described performances, fewer injustices are done by the use of the letter system than by the 100 point system. Even the most 'subjective' teacher, unhampered by any need to describe to himself or students the criteria used when assigning points for achievement, is more likely to be able to divide papers, examinations, laboratory performances, and achievements into groups which can be differentiated clearly as outstanding, very good, adequate but unremarkable, and unsatisfactory."

Head of the Department of Computer Science, W.D. Wasson, said, "Personally, I'm against it."

His basic reason for this was because of the "too coarse quantization levels," which don't allow for accurate marking.

He said that cumulative rating, such as the report recommends, as the system now in use by the engineers, give slightly better marks. However, he said that far most students, the difference between the two averages is small. However, he added that the proposed system, "will do injustices to a small number of people, about 10 to 15 percent."

He then added, "It's a terrible system, in my opinion."

He said that, for two students whose marks were near the borderline between B and C, are just above and one just below, they would be put in two different categories; although their marks are close enough so that they should be in the same category. He

said that the grade-point average was ridiculous.

He also said, "A finer level encourages people to do a little bit better."

Wasson added, "I would like to see the professor decide," and not have the mark decided upon by some mechanical process.

He also suggested that each professor calculate both a percentage mark and a letter. If the professor wants to just submit a letter, it could be changed to a number with the use of an agreed upon conversion scale.

He suggested that the mark could be used inside the university, whereas the letter could be shown to people from outside. He said that avoiding A, B, C, and D's should be up to the individual professor. He also said that with the use of computers, there would be no problem keeping letters and numbers.

He mentioned that he does not believe the Kepros system provides uniformity in evaluation among departments and faculties.

He said most students in Business Administration are against the Kepros proposals; and the petitions to this effect have been circulated. Almost all of the graduate students have signed one, while there is another one being circulated among the undergraduates.

Wasson added that, at this point, there has not been enough feedback to know whether or not to institute the system. He concluded by saying, "If adopted for this fall, I think there will be chaos, no matter what they do."

Dean of Arts, Thomas J. Condon said, "We consider it an improvement on the present system."

He said the system does a better job of comparing marks between departments and faculties.

However, he added, "Both systems have their drawbacks, both have their advantages."

When asked whether or not he believes there will be problems in changing from one system to another, he affirmed, "Yes, I do,"

However, he did not see these as insurmountable.

He also added that, if people always let obstacles stop them from achieving their goals, nothing would get changed.

Condon said, "I don't find any groundswell of disaffection among students," and finished by saying "I don't fully understand some of the objections of some of the other faculties."

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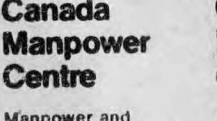
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**Leadership Conference to be held**

Another Leadership Conference will be held this Sunday at 10 a.m. in the Faculty Club. This will be the second one this year and is sponsored by the Alumni Association. All executive members of campus clubs, organizations and residences are invited to attend and a lunch will be served. The Faculty Club is located on the top floor of the Old Arts Building. For anyone planning to attend please inform the SRC office on Friday how many members of your group will be in attendance.

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