

## GFC to consider new marking systems

by Harold Kuchertz and Brian Tucker

Proposals for a new grading system at the U of A will be discussed at a special meeting of the General Faculties Council, Monday.

The U of A presently employs a nine-point grading system which was established in 1966. This system is unique in North America but has been criticized by students and faculty members.

Last year a committee was set up to review the nine-point system and consider alternatives. The committee's report recommended to keep the present system since no better alternatives could be found.

Some GFC members, however, were not satisfied with the results. On Jan. 23, GFC

passed a motion by Robert Curtis and Wayne Madden which asked for submissions on alternative grading systems. The motion also asked for a special GFC meeting to discuss the present system and alternatives.

Most of the six briefs that will be presented to GFC Monday recommend a pass/fail honors system, or variations of it.

Curtis, who called for the meeting, says that in a pass/fail, honors system no credit would be given for failing. At the other end of the scale, honors would indicate a "mastery beyond what is necessary for credit."

According to Curtis' proposal, students are promoted by credit for individual courses,

rather than an average.

A.D. Fisher, an associate professor of anthropology, proposed a system that established excellent (7-9), pass (4-6), and no credit (1-3) classifications.

Fisher also suggested that grad students be graded on a pass/fail basis.

R.J. Buck, a professor in the department of classics, opted for a system used in Britain, which rates students first, second or third class; the latter meaning a bare pass. These grades would be determined by scaling raw test scores.

Students should have the option of either a pass/fail system or grading systems, Peter Flynn, Grad Students President,

states in his brief.

Flynn suggests that first-year students make their choice when they register, but have the option of changing their decision two weeks after registration. Once you make your decision in your first year, you must stick by it for the remainder of your university career.

Only two briefs recommended a system other than pass/fail.

G. Samuel, secretary of the university co-ordinating council, wants the U of A to conform to the A,B,C,D,F, five-point system used by both the Universities of Calgary and Lethbridge, while L.G. Chatten, a pharmacy professor, calls for a return to

the percentage marking system.

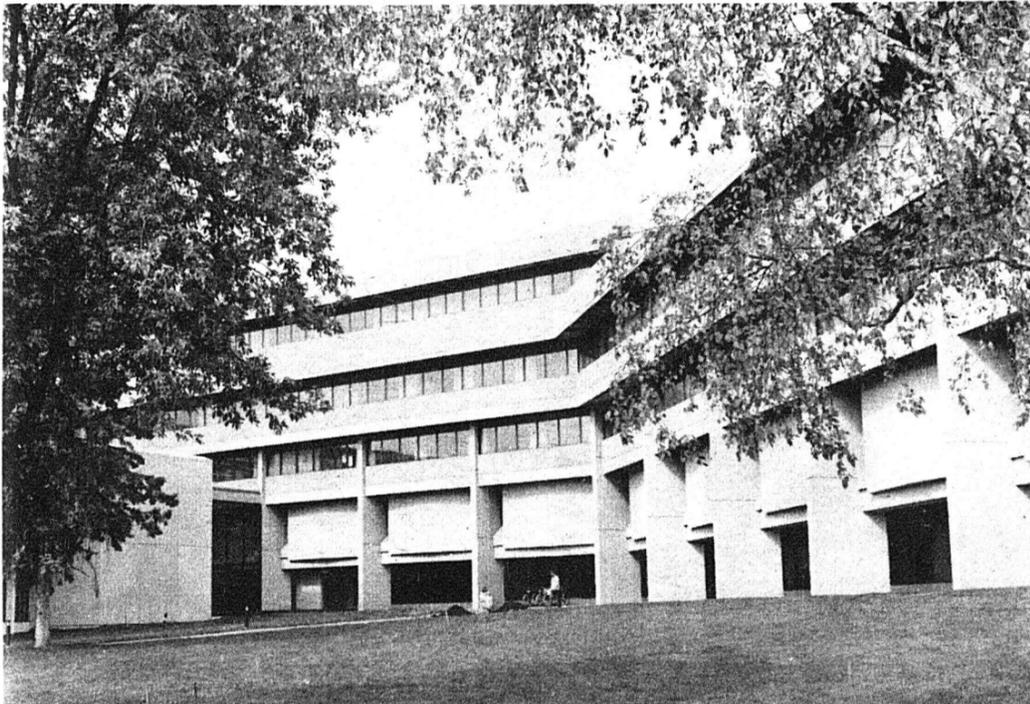
Separate Gateway interviews, reflected the variety of the previous proposals.

Max Wyman, president of the U of A, and chairman of GFC, said that there would have to be more student input and discussion between students and staff before a change would be made in the marking system.

Wyman wouldn't commit himself to one system, but said "I've been a student under three of four systems. It really didn't matter to me unless I felt I wasn't being marked unfairly in relation to other students."

"If we do have a pass/fail, we would have to do away with scholarships," he added.

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The Humanities Centre officially opens today. The opening ceremony will be held at 2 p.m. in the second floor lobby of the centre.

Photo by Doug Moore

## GFC tables motion for student voice in tenure

A motion calling for student representation on academic tenure committees was tabled by the General Faculties Council Monday, to give faculties a chance to discuss it.

The motion asked that a graduate or senior undergraduate student be given voting privileges on tenure committees.

Under the present system, students are excluded from these committees, which decide whether to appoint professors for indefinite teaching terms.

In a letter to GFC, Peter Flynn and David McMurray, both grad students, said the changes would alter "the current climate of divisiveness between teacher and student."

The letter also stated that student representation on the committees would not only avoid conflict but provide a broader range of opinion for tenure decisions.

Flynn, GFC grad rep., said at the meeting that students have proven their competence in academic affairs.

Harry Gunning, president elect and dean of chemistry, said he could see cases where students should be represented but that this shouldn't be a generalization.

He said the faculties should decide whether students should sit on committees, rather than the GFC as suggested by Flynn.

Flynn stressed that voting, rather than non-voting membership on committees would be better because "when students can't vote, their comments aren't considered."

Max Wyman, president of the U of A, joked that if the

property of others.

Outside council chambers, Wyman said that the tribunal, which would have student representation, probably wouldn't be used more than the Deans' Council. And during his 13 years on the council, he recalled hearing only four cases.

Wyman said the tribunal came out of the student unrest in the 1960's and a desire to give students a fairer hearing.

"One student would be facing 20 people three times his age," and he didn't think it was fair."

Some of the cases heard by the tribunal would lead to further action in courts outside the university community.

"It's not a question of double jeopardy. It's a question of double jurisdiction," said Wyman.

council had followed his suggestion to drop tenure, "this whole business wouldn't be necessary."

"Clearly, the awarding of tenure is an academic decision which strongly affects students in the university. Yet on this campus, there is virtually no way students can make an input into that decision-making process," the letter says.

However, D.M. Ross, dean of the faculty of science, suggested that the motion be tabled because tenure affects many academic staff members and they haven't had a chance to examine it.

# Vote!

Proposals for a new marking system at the University of Alberta will be presented to a special General Faculties Council meeting Monday. *The Gateway* is running a poll to determine what kind of marking system students really want. See page five for our ballot form.

Ballots will be placed at the information desk in SUB and in the *Gateway* office.

## SUB dispute flares

A dispute between the students' union executive and a campus political group over setting up displays in SUB flared up again at Monday night's student council meeting.

Henry Malta, a member of the Young Socialists, and Pat Delaney, academic vice-president, engaged in a verbal battle over representation on a committee established by council to review SUB building policy.

Council named four students to the committee, Charlotte Macdonald, Sherri Gould, Wendy Merkley and John Taylor.

It also extended the deadline for receiving the committee's report to Oct. 40, since two council vacancies on the committee body for council members must still be filled.

Malta, who protested the fact that he wasn't included on the committee, stormed out of council chambers after he was ruled out of order by Speaker Howard Banks.

The administration board, which accepted applications for the committee, recommended that committee members would be unbiased. On that

basis, Malta, as well as others who represent groups which set up displays in SUB, were excluded.

Tuesday, Delaney said in a *Gateway* interview, the executive had decided they wouldn't sit on the committee "but after last night I let my name stand because I felt the committee wasn't set up right."

He said that two members of the committee, MacDonald

and Merkley, were affiliated with the YS.

Prior to the meeting, however, Malta said both were acting as individuals and not as representatives of the YS.

Last July, George Mantor, SU president, called campus police to evict the YS from SUB for selling magazines on a Thursday, which is illegal according to a by-law passed last November by council.

## Amendments passed

Amendments of the discipline, law and order report were passed by GFC Monday. It had previously been criticized by several student leaders and rejected by students' council.

The report had been approved in principle by GFC last March and sent to the university solicitor, John Dea, for further study. The amendments involved small alterations in wordage.

The manner in which Dea presented the report - referring back and forth to several sections of the report - confused council members, who repeatedly asked on which

amendment they were voting.

Among other things, the report calls for the establishment of a disciplinary tribunal that would hear charges against students and impose fines and penalties.

Max Wyman, U of A president, explained at the meeting that the new body was needed because "it was felt that the present procedure of bringing students before the Deans' Council was inadequate."

Cases that would come before the tribunal include cheating on exams, plagiarism, and destroying or removing university property or the

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