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Fort Hays State University Faculty Senate Minutes, November 27, 1967

FHSU Faculty Senate

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Discussion: Pass/Fail Proposal - problems, technicalities, etc.
Registrar presented statistics on grades of last spring's classes.
Dean Garwood communicate with Dean at Pittsburg regarding their
Pass/Fail program.

Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Senate, Monday, November 27, 1967,
at 3:30 p.m. in the Office of the Dean of the Faculty.

Members Present: Mr. Bachkora, Mr. Schroder, Dr. Thomas, Dr. Hamilton,
Mrs. Popp, Mrs. McFarland, Mr. Smith, Dr. Wilkins,
Miss Gangwer, Dr. Witten, Mr. Heil, Mr. Dalton and Dr.
Garwood, Chairman.

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Kellerman.

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Garwood, Chairman.

PASS/FAIL PROPOSAL. A discussion of the letter which Dr. Garwood
received from a faculty member regarding the Pass/Fail System (referred to
in the Minutes dated November 20, 1967) was continued.

One member indicated that although most of the people in her Division
are in accord with the system several questions were raised. Some expressed
the thought that the present system of grading is adequate. This member read
a letter from one faculty member in her area who is opposed to Pass/Fail.

Another member stated that in his Division the reaction was generally
favorable.

It was suggested that if many students in a class were taking it for
Pass/Fail it might be a class where the morale of the class would be low.

One Senate member stated he would like to put all his courses in Pass/
Fail but that would defeat his program. No one comes deliberately to his area
for a major. After taking a few courses students may decide to major here.

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The question was asked as to what would happen if a student changes his major in his junior year? It was pointed out that under the proposal the individual must have a 1.5 grade point average to take courses Pass/Fail. He must be at least a sophomore and he may elect to take only one course per semester for Pass/Fail. It was thought those who change majors would be isolated cases. Possibly this could be handled as an exception to the rule.

The advisor should advise the student not to take a course in Pass/Fail until he has decided on his major. It does not appear that this would happen very frequently. Perhaps these cases could be handled on an individual basis.

Will not a letter grade be evident some place in the grade book? It was thought most students will elect Pass/Fail courses in their junior or senior years. It was stated that at Pittsburg only nine students were in the Pass/Fail program. It was felt by the time the Basic Studies courses, courses in the student's major or minor field are eliminated and the student meets all the other requirements, there will be few students who would take Pass/Fail courses. One member commented that the success of the program does not hinge on a large participation in the Pass/Fail program.

Another member stated that members of his Division favored the program by a 12 - 5 ratio. Their main objection was the 1.5 grade point. They felt that the program should be left open to students with 1.00 average or give all students on campus an opportunity to participate in the program.

Why require a 1.5 average for Pass/Fail? It was noted that a grade point of 1.5 is necessary or the program might attract students with low averages. One member stated he knew of no other school which has such Pass/Fail requirements. Some members preferred a "C" average rather than the 1.5 grade point average. One member stated the 1.5 GPA serves as a safeguard. This safeguard can be eliminated if necessary after the program has been given a trial by either raising or lowering the standard. At KSU the program is for students in Honors.

If someone takes a course for Pass/Fail then decides to take this course for grade, could this student be given the grade that is in the roster? Under the proposal if a course were taken for Pass/Fail--the P/F could not be changed to a letter grade. Any exceptions might be made by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate.

The Registrar stated that last spring cutting point of the upper half of the freshman class was 1.03; sophomores, 1.33; juniors, 1.37 and the seniors, 1.46. He stated that a fourth of freshmen have averages of 1.56 and above; sophomores, 1.78; juniors, 1.73; and seniors, 1.82. There were 340 sophomores with a grade of 1.5 or above, 291 juniors and 394 seniors with a grade of 1.5 or above. There were approximately 1000 students with a grade of 1.5 and over which means about one-third of the sophomores, juniors, and seniors are qualified for Pass/Fail.

Which students would be most interested in Pass/Fail--those with 1.5 and over or those with lower than 1.5 grade? One member commented that the program is intended to satisfy the intellectual curious student. He would hate to see it degenerate to an easy way out for some students.

Some faculty criticize this program as they feel some students might use this program to do only "D" work where they are capable of doing much better.

It was the opinion of the Senate that we communicate with Pittsburg to see what students choose the Pass/Fail options. Other information about their Pass/Fail program will be requested. This information will be secured for the Senate meeting, Monday, December 4.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p. m.

John D. Garwood, Chairman

Lucille Drees, Recorder