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FHSU Faculty Senate, "Fort Hays State University Faculty Senate Minutes, August 1, 1967" (1967). *Faculty Senate*. 532.

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Discussion: Representatives of Student Council meet with Faculty Senate to discuss Pass/Fail System. Student Council favors trying the Program; Faculty Senate members prefer to wait.

Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Senate, Tuesday, August 1, 1967, at 3:30 p.m. in the Office of the Dean of the Faculty.

Members Present: Mr. S. Johnson, Mr. Schmidt, Mr. Dalton, Dr. Youmans, Dr. Smith, Mr. McGinnis, Dr. Wilkins, Miss Gangwer and Dr. Garwood, Chairman.

Members absent: Miss Cotham, Mr. Crites, Mr. Schroder and Miss Veed.

Also present: Sharla Barber, Lois Ruder and Don Whitaker, representatives of the Student Council.

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

Pass/Fail Program. It was suggested at the last Faculty Senate Meeting that representatives of the Student Council be invited to meet with the Faculty Senate. Three representatives of the Student Council, Sharla Barber, Lois Ruder and Don Whitaker, were present to give their reaction to the Pass/Fail Program. The necessary introductions were made. Student Council distributed literature to members present; copy attached.

Dr. Garwood read an article published in the SATURDAY REVIEW July 15, 1967, which stated: "Stanford University has abolished undergraduate class ranking. This makes it the second major institution to do so. Columbia ended class rank this spring. ... Case Institute of Technology plans a 'pass-fail' grading system for all freshmen this fall, 'to break the pattern of 'grades for the sake of grades' instilled during high school," said James R. Hooper, dean of undergraduate studies. Upperclassmen may elect one pass-fail course each semester. While about fifteen other institutions offer the pass-fail alternative to letter grades, Case's plan is the most comprehensive so far."

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One Senate member asked how many institutions have screening examinations?

It was suggested that Universities of Wisconsin, Chicago, Nebraska, Penn. State, Penn., MIT, Columbia, among others, have screening examinations.

It was noted again that the purpose of the Pass/Fail Proposal is to permit students to work in an area they are not likely to take for fear of a bad grade. Eligible students could be those with at least junior standing (55 hours or 110 grade points; those not on academic warning, those who have declared a major, or as an institution desired.)

The HPER representative was unable to attend the meeting but submitted material which indicated that the Division members generally opposed the Pass/Fail Program.

Dr. Garwood called upon the representatives of the Student Council for their opinions regarding the Pass/Fail system at Fort Hays.

One representative indicated that they were a small body expressing their views and not those of a cross section of people on campus and from what he had learned from fellow student councils throughout the state, he believed the Pass/Fail system would be acceptable and beneficial to faculty and students. He felt this would give the person who wanted to take courses outside his major and the basic requirements an opportunity to do so without harming his grade index. ~~It would be for the student's intellectual furtherance.~~

Another indicated it would permit students to get acquainted with areas outside their majors or minors.

The third member felt it could establish better relations around campus by enabling students to look into other fields. There would be more tolerance for various courses on campus in different fields. Initial freedom might be one course per semester.

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Pass/Fail would not be exploited for grades.

One Faculty Senate member indicated some members of his Division thought this was a good idea; others had reservations. The plan might work but after a few years, it might be dropped and therefore would it not complicate records? If this plan is in operation at other schools, why not wait long enough to see how it works for them? (The Pass/Fail system is on a trial basis at KSC, Pittsburg, KSU ^{at} ~~and~~ Manhattan.)

The Registrar replied that the grades would transfer because we are well enough established and would not run into any difficulties there. If a student did Pass/Fail work in a field where he might fail, his transcript would just tell that he passed or failed the grade.

The question was raised if a student transferred to a graduate school, would there be any problems?

It was pointed out that most schools set the maximum on the number of courses that could be taken in this manner. Upper classmen would have one course per semester. Perhaps they can take the maximum number of courses - these would be outside the major fields; outside basic studies and not in any minor. A transcript for further study would create no problem.

A Student Council member said they sent out 14-15 letters to schools interested in this system. Four or five said they have no Pass/Fail; seven or eight have Pass/Fail. He felt it sufficient if the person received the instructor's permission to take Pass/Fail and the grading would be handled through the Registrar's Office. He was asked if basic studies were not to encourage a student to broaden his interests. The

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student replied there are students who have completed basic studies but would like to take courses outside their majors for the personal benefit derived. For example, an Arts Major might like to study Human Growth and Development, etc.

One Faculty Senate member asked one of the students how many courses she had skipped because of fear of failing. She said she was a firm believer if you work hard enough in any course, you will come out with a good grade. She can see herself using this program; she has finished majors, minors so why not take Pass/Fail?

The question was raised if this program should be limited to Juniors and Seniors? The answer was that this has been done in other schools. Basic requirements have to be out of the way before you take this Pass/Fail program.

The Student Council members asked if background courses would defeat the purpose. One thought it would differ with each person; it depended upon how sincere a student is with himself. Another stated you may work at a course to get two hours but later will find the benefit is a very personal one. You may even get three hours' credit but where you are competing with people in that field, you will learn something. She advocated a two-year trial period.

One of the faculty inquired if the intellectual students were interested or only the "goof-offs"? The reply was that the lower caliber students have a more negative attitude. Another student said in basic requirements or major fields some do not feel they even want to take the time. She did not think it would affect the student body as a whole but a minority, possibly juniors and seniors.

Another faculty member who is hesitant about the Pass/Fail program does not want any arrangement for people to take it easy in classes just to be getting credits in

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an easy way. Perhaps if a student were working for an "A", he might have worked much harder.

It was observed that in the lower grades they do not give grades of A, B or C but rather constructive criticism. The Registrar is in sympathy with the idea but fearful of modification, the student's record and the student's education.

A Student Council member stated that out of 15 schools contacted in the U.S., Kansas is fortunate enough to have Kansas State University and Pittsburg who have it in their programs.

One Senate member noted that he worked hard for his grades. He realizes the program exists but does not know that it should be encouraged. He is not sure that we should have to encourage a student to take a course. He should be interested enough without this encouragement just for Pass/Fail. He believes there is overemphasis on accumulative grade index. Pass/Fail is just a way of getting around it. Should the grade index be based on your major or minor field?

A Student Council representative noted that when faculty members went to school, they could take time deciding their fields of study. The person in college today doesn't have time. They are pressured by the government, school and financially. The faculty member contradicted this statement completely indicating there were as many pressures if not more, after World War II than there are now. Every generation has its own pressures.

Would it be possible to take the lowest 20 hours but don't count them on the accumulative grade index? What is "C" for one instructor may be a "B" for another. Would this ^{lower} ~~lessen~~ our academic standards?

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It was asked how Pass/Fail would affect the Honors Program. Another student asked how they operate in a class with Pass/Fail. A student has no way of knowing where he stands; he could find out from the instructor. Possibly a minority of students would take Pass/Fail.

Dean Garwood read a letter from Kansas State University indicating the Pass/Fail program has been established on an experimental basis at KSU beginning with the spring semester of 1967-68. There are a few administrative wrinkles to be worked out and they will know more about the program when they record grades in spring, 1968.

The Student Council favored trying the Pass/Fail program. One Faculty Senate member definitely does not favor it. Another faculty member preferred waiting for some school to experiment then decide after we see how it has worked for them. Some schools have used the plan then dropped it. Another favored waiting until one of the schools on the two-year program has experimented before we make a decision. Most of the members favored waiting. If we start then drop the program, there is bound to be confusion in our records.

The Registrar felt his office would suffer more than anybody else because they will be pressured to change in the middle of the stream.

A student asked if you took a course for Pass/Fail then get to class and feel you want to take the course for credit, what would be the procedure? A deadline would have to be established and when this deadline is reached, you must indicate definitely what your intentions are.

Pass/Fail presumably is for the students' benefit. One Faculty member stated that he wanted to be evaluated on his own merits. He was asked if he would not rather

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see "Pass" or "Fail" and have broader spectrum of courses rather than limited courses for grades? He replied he took courses for broader learning. He never took a course because it was an easy "A". He felt we should not encourage students to avoid any kind of challenge and Pass/Fail seems to be avoiding challenge; it encourages mediocrity, etc.

A student asked this faculty member to view it from the student's point of view, i. e., a student is cramped for time; takes 15-18 additional hours in his major; is trying to get a good education and still have a desire for learning something in an entirely different area. There is additional worry as he is competing with majors yet he is willing to do this for what it may benefit him in later life.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p. m.

John D. Garwood, Chairman

Lucille Drees, Recorder.