

Committee on Committees gets senate approval on proposal to abolish two committees

The University Assembly will hear three recommendations from the University Senate and a new motion at today's 3:30 meeting in 150 Geology.

The senate approved proposals by the Committee on Committees to abolish the Educational Opportunities and Academic Distinction committees. It also accepted a revision of the grading system that would allow credit from courses offered only by major departments on a pass-undifferentiated basis to be counted toward the 45-hour residence requirement for graduation.

The graded-hours vision would affect academic majors only within their departments. According to Robert James, Fine Arts department head, the change would primarily help transfer students in CSPA, education and architecture.

James says transfer students in those fields often have to petition to get pass/no-pass upper division course work to apply to the 45-graded hour residency requirement, or face the prospect of taking that many hours in other graded courses not directly related to their field to satisfy the requirement.

The Committee on Committees proposals to disband the two committees arise from the discovery that they no longer function. Catherine Jones, University business professor, says both have been replaced by other channels.

The Academic Distinction Committee was formed to recommend graduating students for academic honors, but now the individual departments and schools work directly with the Registrar's Office to identify worthy students.

D-bate

(Continued from Page 1A)

to the 65 percent rule to try to prevent such a mishap.

As of this term, the D will be interpreted as unsatisfactory work in determining academic probation and warning.

Last term, when a student received six hours of A, B and C work, three hours of incomplete and three hours of D, he or she was credited with passing 75 percent of attempted work because the D was a positive factor. The student could easily stockpile too many D's while being oblivious to the consequences.

However, now that the D is considered a negative factor, if the same situation occurred, the student would be credited with satisfactorily completing only 50 percent of his or her work and would be given academic warning.

According to University policy, a student taking a class pass/no-pass must do C work or better to pass the class. George Wasson of student services says many students have been petitioning to change N/P to D, not realizing the implications of the latter.

"They don't realize, however, that in a few terms they could soon accumulate as many as 18 D's," says Wasson. "They don't realize that a D can be more punitive than a flunk."

According to the 85 percent rule for graduation, a student can accumulate as many as 32 F's in his or her 186 hours at the University and still pass.

Wasson also says there seems to be a trend of more D's being given than either C's or N/P's, according to an earlier SDC report.

"The bottom line seems to be that students are unaware of what the grading system is doing to them," agrees Chris Munoz, assistant to the registrar and secretary of the SDC.

"It's important that students are sensitive to the amount of D's they are accumulating."

Barbara Nicholls, counselor for student athletes and an SDC member, feels one of the big problems with the D-grading system is it is nearly impossible for anyone, to understand, except for those who work closely with it.

"Anytime a student can't easily understand his or her status and how to change it by reading the materials available to him or her, we should reconsider the system," Nicholls says.

She also says some advisors are not quite up-to-date with all the consequences either, unless they continuously conduct followup studies on it.

Not only does the new grade cause confusion among adminis-

trators, students and advisors, but some individual departments have had trouble deciding how they would treat the D in terms of awarding credit to their majors.

Most departments, however, have decided to count the D as a passing grade, with the exception of political science, which doesn't accept the D, the law school, which doesn't use it at all and the history department, which still hasn't made a decision on it.

Even though most departments will honor the D, students should be aware that in some schools such as journalism, a specific departmental grade point average (GPA) must be maintained (2.5 for journalism majors) to graduate.

The D was re-instated last term to help combat grade inflation and to make grades more meaningful

by allowing teachers to award students with more precision. It was argued that without the D, students doing unsatisfactory work would be given a C rather than be flunked.

Nicholls and Degidio would like to see some consideration given to the re-instatement of the GPA.

"People used to object to the GPA, because they felt it classified people as being 2.4 persons or 3.0 persons," says Degidio. "But at least with the GPA, people knew where they stood."

Despite SDC efforts to make the D and its implications clearer to students, there seems to be only one way to save yourself from the perils of the D.

Just never get one.

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