

***Minutes of the February Session  
of the Faculty Senate  
Missouri State University***

The Faculty Senate held its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, February 14, 2008, in Plaster Student Union, Room 313. Chair Tom Kane called the session to order at 3:31 p.m. Dr. Eric Shade served as parliamentarian.

**Substitutes:** Christina Simmers for Diana Haytko, MKT; Gary Ward for Michael Hudson, SMAT; Kishor Shah for Xingping Sun, MTH; and Jill Oswalt for Lisa Wood, CSD.

**Absences:** Ann Branstetter, CGEIP chair; Andrew Cline, MJF; Gay Ellis, Non-tenure track Instructor; Norm Griffith, Staff Senate representative; Joseph Hulgus, Graduate Council chair; Arden Miller, Academic Relations Committee chair; Dale Moore, Staff Senate representative; Gerald Moseman, CLSE; Kyle Rieman, SGA; Jenifer Roberts, FID; Greg Skibinski, SWK; Miles Walz, MIL; Tom Wyrick, Budget & Priorities Committee chair; and Scott Zimmerman, Assistant Professor rank representative.

**Guests:** John Catau, Provost's Office; Nicole Rovig, Registrar's Office; Belinda McCarthy, Provost's Office; Candida Arvizu, PSY; Mark Richter, CHM; Frank Einhellig, Graduate College; Don Simpson, Enrollment Services; Edward DeLong, LIS; Tom Tomasi, Graduate College; Pam Sailors, PHI; Bill Cheek, FPMAC; Joe Martire, PHI; and Ken McClure, Administrative Services.

***APPROVAL OF MINUTES***

The minutes of the January 17 Senate session were approved as distributed.

***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

1. Friday on finals week for next fall is December 19. That means that grades are due on December 22, giving the university staff only one day to complete their obligations before vacation begins on December 24. The Senate Executive Committee, Graduate Council chair, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, and Dean of the Graduate College discussed options for submitting final grades. Faculty will be asked to submit final grades by Saturday, December 20, at 12 noon next fall. However, faculty with extensive grading requirements for final exams or projects will be offered the option of giving exams the week before finals week.
2. President Nietzel will give the University budget presentation to Faculty Senate/Staff Senate on April 22 beginning at 3:30 p.m. in Glass Hall 101. All who want to attend or who can fit in the room are welcome.
3. If you haven't noticed, a lot of assessment activity is going on. The Faculty Concerns Committee has made its biennial review of the President and Provost available, and the IDEA assessment of Department Heads and Deans is coming to a conclusion.
4. The implementation of the Banner system provides opportunities, challenges, and new realities with respect to curricular issues. John Catau addressed the Senate with respect to the curricular issues

associated with implementing the new network. A handout was shared with the Senate that summarized curricular issues associated with prerequisites and distinguishing between graduate and undergraduate classes.

### ***REPORT CONCERNING UNIVERSITY SPACE DECISIONS***

Dr. Bill Cheek presented a report from the Facilities Planning Master Advisory Committee (FPMAC) on University space decisions. Sicheluff Hall will be closed for a major renovation beginning this summer with the work scheduled to be completed by fall of 2010. Most occupants of the building will be moving to Park Central in what was formerly the old Union Bank building. Two projects are also scheduled for the West Plains Campus, and Kings Street Annex and Temple Hall will also undergo some renovation. The HPER Department will be moving from McDonald Arena to Hammons Student Center, and Art & Design will move to what was the old ice house building in Downtown Brick City. The Committee is discussing whether shuttle service and security need to be expanded and whether the interval between classes should be changed from 10 minutes to 20 minutes to accommodate the changes to the downtown locations.

### ***REPORT FROM AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PLUS/MINUS GRADING***

Dr. Mark Richter, chair of the *ad hoc* Committee on Plus/Minus Grading, addressed the Senate concerning the above Committee's two recommendations from their report (Attachment 1 to the February Senate agenda):

1. The committee recommends that questions related to the repeat policy be referred to a future committee to be chosen by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
2. The committee recommends adoption of the attached Senate Action, which reaffirms the Senate's endorsement of a plus/minus grading system and provides additional details required for implementation.

The Faculty Senate originally passed the concept of implementation of a plus/minus grading system in 2003, but it was not approved by Administration because of the costs associated with the implementation of the system. Now with the new Banner system, the plus/minus grading system can be implemented without additional cost. According to Dr. Richter, the Senate action recommended by the *ad hoc* Committee is the same as originally passed by the Senate except for the D and D- designations (the D- designation was eliminated since there is no A+ designation).

Senator Kaufman moved and Senator Herr seconded a motion to approve the Senate action on plus/minus grading as received from the *ad hoc* Committee. Senator McCrary moved to amend (seconded by Senator Herr) the first sentence of the C- wording from "below average work" to "slightly below satisfactory work," and the motion passed. Senator Finch moved to amend (seconded by Senator Kaufman) the second sentence of the D+ wording from "achievement below average..." to "achievement below satisfactory..." and the motion passed. Senator Weaver moved to amend the second sentence of the C- section so the wording would agree with the first sentence. Chair Kane advised the *ad hoc* Committee members would work on refining the wording in the Senate action so that it all agrees. By voice vote, the main motion to approve the implementation of a plus/minus grading system was approved. It will go forward as **Senate Action 17-07/08**.

## ***ACTION ON CURRICULAR PROPOSALS***

Senator Bourhis, a member of the Budget and Priorities Committee, reported that the Committee had reviewed the two curricular proposals below and recommended them to the Senate for approval.

1. ***New minor in Ethics and Social Policy*** - moved by Senator Kaufman; seconded by Senator Chesman; discussed by Dr. Martire; approved by voice vote. The motion will go forward for approval as **Senate Action 18-07/08**.
2. ***Program change: Elementary Education, B.S. in Education*** - moved by Senator Buckner; seconded by Senator Hurst; discussed by Senator Wilson; approved by voice vote. The motion will go forward for approval as **Senate Action 19-07/08**.

## ***REPORT FROM FACULTY CONCERNS COMMITTEE***

Mr. Kyle Winward, chair of the Faculty Concerns Committee, presented the Committee report (Attachment 4 to the February Senate agenda). The Committee recommended that the Senate Executive Committee submit a proposed change to Section 8.B.2 (hh) of the *Constitution and Bylaws of the Faculty* to the Senate Rules Committee so section would read,

Shall ~~conduct~~ **ensure** that an Academic Administrators Assessment survey of all full-time faculty **to evaluate Department Heads, Deans, Provost, Office of Provost, and President is conducted no less than biennially during the fall semester of odd numbered years.** A report to include analysis of survey results and any appropriate recommendations arising from the survey shall be distributed to the Faculty Senate members in time to be included on the agenda for the ~~February session~~ **spring semester sessions**. To facilitate comparison with earlier surveys, data for department heads and deans shall be tabulated, analyzed and reported separately.

Rules Committee Chair Julie Masterson asked that more information be provided concerning the changes before being sent for committee consideration.

Concerning the second item in the Faculty Concerns Committee report, Mr. Winward reported that the Faculty Concerns Committee had voted and agreed unanimously in October that the committee members should serve as College Advisory Committee members. A draft of a Senate action was presented for approval outlining the formation of a standing College Advisory Committee for each academic college composed of the elected department representatives of the Faculty Concerns Committee and the Budget and Priorities Committee representative within the college. Senator Piston moved for approval of the above Senate action, and his motion was seconded by Senator Kaufman. After discussion, the motion to approve the Senate action failed.

The last item in the Faculty Concerns Committee report listed Pay for Performance concerns. Mr. Winward summarized some of the concerns and said the Faculty Concerns Committee voted earlier to recommend that the Faculty Senate and the Senate Executive Committee reestablish the merit survey done last spring. However, since the time of the recommendation, it has been decided to redo the survey, making the committee recommendation moot.

***UNFINISHED BUSINESS***

There was no unfinished business.

***NEW BUSINESS***

Senate members discussed with Provost McCarthy the Pay for Performance plan and what could be done to make the process better. Some faculty who should have appealed last year didn't know they could appeal, and a disconnect between what the Provost says and what is actually happening in the departments appears to be evident. It was suggested a town hall meeting devoted to this issue might be a good way to help improve the process.

***ADJOURNMENT***

Chair Kane adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m. The next Faculty Senate session will be held on Thursday, March 13, beginning at 3:30 p.m. in PSU 313.

Rebecca Woodard  
Secretary of the Faculty

Right of Challenge Expires March 11, 2008

***Senate Action on Implementation of a Plus/Minus Grading System***

***Whereas***, Faculty Senate Action 2-03/04, adopted May 8, 2003, called for the implementation of a plus/minus grading system at Missouri State University;

***Whereas***, Faculty Senate Action 2-03/04 received favorable comments from both the Vice President for Academic Affairs and President but was denied due to budgetary considerations (a cost of ~\$400,000 to implement);

***Whereas***, Faculty Senate Resolution 7-05/06, adopted November 10, 2005, again endorsed the implementation of plus/minus grading "...at the earliest possible moment that academic computing services and the MSU Records Office can accommodate the change in grade reports, official transcripts, and other reporting practices";

***Whereas***, the University has purchased and is implementing the Banner computer system (ERP project) that is pre-programmed for plus/minus grading;

***Whereas***, the 'student module' (i.e., grading, transcripts, etc.) is scheduled to go 'on-line' in Fall 2009, and decisions regarding the addition of a plus/minus grading system must be communicated to the campus community in Fall 2008;

***Therefore, be it resolved***, That the Faculty Senate endorses the implementation of a plus/minus grading system to be implemented by Fall 2009 (or at the earliest date possible taking into account the technical considerations of bringing the Banner system on-line); and

***Be it further resolved***, That the definitions of grades within the MSU catalogs be revised as follows (new wording underlined, old wording struck out):

A (4.0) ~~Excellent~~ Outstanding work. Outstanding achievement relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was of the highest level. Excellence while meeting course objectives was sustained throughout the course. Not only was the student's performance clearly and significantly above satisfactory, it was also of an independent and creative nature.

A- (3.7) Excellent work. Excellent achievement relative to the necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was clearly and significantly above satisfactory, and was creative and independent.

B+ (3.3) Near excellent work. Achievement was significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was clearly and significantly above satisfactory, and was creative and independent.

- B (3.0) Superior work. Very good work. Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was very good, although not of the highest level. Performance was clearly and significantly above satisfactory fulfillment of course requirements (For undergraduates: B = meritorious. For graduates: B = adequate).
- B- (2.7) Good work. Achievement at a level just above that necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was notable.
- C+ (2.3) Slightly above satisfactory work. Achievement that meets the course requirements. Performance was slightly more than adequate.
- C (2.0) Satisfactory work. Achievement that meets the course requirements. Performance was adequate, although marginal in quality (For undergraduates: C = adequate. For graduates: C = inadequate).
- C- (1.7) **Slightly below satisfactory work. Below average work.** Achievement that barely meets the course requirements. Performance has been **slightly below satisfactory average** and marginal in quality.
- D+ (1.3) Passing work. Achievement below **satisfactory average** in meeting course requirements. Student demonstrated **below satisfactory** ~~unsatisfactory~~ achievement in meeting course objectives, yet fulfilled a sufficient enough portion of the course objectives that repeating the course is not necessary unless required by academic unit.
- D (1.0) Minimum passing work. Achievement barely worthy of credit. Student demonstrated **unsatisfactory** achievement in meeting course objectives, yet fulfilled a sufficient enough portion of the course objectives that repeating the course is not necessary unless required by the academic unit.
- F (0.0) Failed – no credit. A failure to meet course requirements. The work or course objectives were either: (1) completed but not at a level of achievement that is worthy of credit, or (2) have not been completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an “I” (incomplete).

***Be it further resolved,*** That the recommendations (R) to the following questions and concerns (Q) raised by the Office of the Registrar be incorporated into the plus/minus system.

- Q1: Will all faculty members be required to utilize +/- grades?  
 R1: No. The decision of whether to award plusses and minuses will rest with the individual faculty member, as will the decision of where percentile cutoffs for grades should be for the class (e.g., 90% or higher for an A, etc.). However, this information must be communicated to the students in the course syllabus or policy statement at the beginning of the course.
- Q2: Will +/- grades be allowed only for the semester of implementation and future semesters? (For example, if we implement +/- grades for the fall 2009 semester, would we prohibit grade changes to +/- grades for previous semesters as well as assignment of +/- grades as replacement for I grades?)

- R2: Yes. From both a practical standpoint (e.g., implementation of the new system for the registrar's office) and for clarity (i.e., the policy that is presented in syllabi during the Spring of 2009) the system will not be retroactive. However, students who received an "I" grade in semesters prior to implementation will be held to the standards in place at the time the "I" grade was assigned.
- Q3: Will we modify our transfer credit policy to accept +/- grades in transfer?  
 R3: Yes, accepting +/- transfer credits will be the fairest and most accurate method for assessing the records of, and giving credit for work performed by, incoming students. Also, this will be consistent with the philosophy of adopting a plus/minus grading system.
- Q4: If implemented, will we only award +/- in transfer for students who begin here on or after the semester of implementation of our +/- policy?  
 R4: Yes. This new policy, if implemented, begins in the Fall of 2009. However, since many institutions award grades that will not be recognized by MSU under this Action, the grade of A+ will count as an A, and D- will count as a D.
- Q5: The current proposal for +/- grading has a C- grade having 1.7 grade points. Will this impact our Academic Status policy that requires students to have a 2.00 GPA to be in good standing?  
 R5: No. The definition of a C grade within this Action states "Satisfactory work. Achievement that meets the course requirements. Performance was adequate, although marginal in quality (For undergraduates: C = adequate. For graduates: C = inadequate).". Students at MSU are expected graduate with a GPA that is at, or above, a level that "Meets the course requirements". A C-, by definition, is "Below average work" and therefore an overall GPA of less than 2.0 on a 4.0 scale is unacceptable. For graduate students, a GPA of less than 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is unacceptable.
- Q6: If a course has a prerequisite of C or higher in another course, will a C- be acceptable?  
 R6: In general, no, a C- is not considered acceptable. However, since departments have the authority to assign prerequisite requirements this is a decision that must be left up to individual units.

***Be it further resolved,*** That as the implementation of the plus/minus system progresses, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (or a group empowered by the Executive Committee) have the authority to deal with any policy issues and other questions that may arise. This group will then inform the Senate of these decisions during the normal course of business in the manner deemed most appropriate by the Chair of the Faculty Senate (e.g., via announcements, as a handout, etc).

**Senate Action 18-07/08**

**Adopted by Senate on February 14, 2008**

**Right of Challenge Expires March 11, 2008**

***New Minor in Ethics and Social Policy***

A complete copy of the above curricular proposal can be viewed in the Faculty Senate office.



**Senate Action 19-07/08**

**Adopted by Senate on February 14, 2008**

**Right of Challenge Expires March 11, 2008**

***Program Change in Elementary Education, B.S. in Education***

A complete copy of the above curricular proposal can be viewed in the Faculty Senate office.