

MINUTES

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

DATE: Friday, May 12, 1972 at 3:00 PM in ESB 291

PRESENT: E. Eminhizer, F. Rosenberg, M. Siman, M. Brunner, R. Curran,
J. Scriven, V. Richley

GUESTS: D. Robinson, W. Hammack, T. McCracken (all from school of
education)

1. Because of the late arrival and early departure of various committee members, a quorum was not available to conduct business. The meeting was a fruitful one at any rate, with full attention being given the School of Education's request for special grading practices for Student Teaching and Lab Experiences.
2. V. Richley opened the meeting by acquainting guests with the committee's past attempts to address itself to the special grading policy. Previous agenda items as well as failure to reach a quorum precluded serious discussion on this matter at several past meetings. In fact, committee members did not review Education's supportive materials until the week of May 7.
3. D. Robinson presented back ground information regarding the matter of special grading. Points mentioned were:
 - a. The School of Education has generally considered the problem for some time, formally since Fall 1971. The request is not a capricious one.
 - b. Education faculty approved of the new policy by a 32 to 11 margin.
 - c. In Ohio, 9 of 12 State schools have adopted non-letter grade rating systems for Student Teaching and Lab Experiences.
 - d. Education is anxious that the new system be implemented by Fall Quarter 1972.

4. W. Hammack then elaborated on the reasons for requesting the new grading practices. For details of his discussion, see the attached materials which result in the following policy recommendation.

"The permanent record in Student Teaching and Student Laboratory experiences will show only one of three possible symbols: Cr (for completion), W (for withdrawal by six weeks), and I (for special cases of incomplete)."

Specific courses are:

Education 704 - Professional Laboratory Experiences,
High School
Education 705 - Professional Laboratory Experiences,
Elementary
Education 841, 842, 843, and 860 - Student Teaching

5. It soon became clear that although committee sentiments favored the above policy it did not agree that the use of the I grade in the manner intended by Education was in keeping with its established purpose. The committee also pointed out the lack of a mechanism with which to deal with a failing student who refuses to be counseled out of a course before the end of the sixth week.
6. V. Richley again raised the advisability of using a Credit/No Credit system similar to that being recommended by the Ad Hoc committee on Pass/Fail. It was pointed out that this system would meet the needs of Education and eliminate committee objections as raised in (5) above.
7. D. Robinson and W. Hammack agreed that the Credit/No Credit system was realistic but were concerned with:
 - a. The approval of said system by Education faculty
 - b. Possible Senate disapproval of the Pass/Fail Committee recommendation to Senate.
8. The committee agreed that with Education's approval of a Credit/No Credit system (to be determined by May 17) a motion will be prepared by the Academic Affairs Committee for Senate consideration at its May 19 meeting. If the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Pass/Fail is approved by Senate, the separate motion by Academic Affairs will not be necessary.

VAR:lw (5/16/72)

V. A. Richley

cc: A.R. Curran, E.E. Eminhizer, R. Kreutzer, J. Roderick,
F. Rosenberg, M. Siman, V. Richley, E.E. Edgar, J.A. Scriven,
M. Brunner, President Pugsley, Mrs. Schnuttgen

We propose that the grading system for student teaching at Youngstown State University be modified, effective Fall quarter, 1972. Our purpose in student teaching is in part to provide an extended practicum whereby students are encouraged to "apply techniques and methods learned in prerequisite courses to actual classroom teaching situations," (University Catalog, p. 157) centering on "process" rather than "product." Within those guidelines the student teacher needs to experiment, make mistakes, and determine whether he is suited for teaching. All of these practices need to occur in an atmosphere free from threat or penalty if they are to be achieved. No educational purpose is served by penalizing students for not performing satisfactorily in student teaching.

Present practice in grading for student teaching amounts to a double jeopardy for the student: 1) it may affect his future employment--where prospective employers examine the grade for student teaching; 2) it simultaneously affects his university grade point average more importantly than any other course (student teaching receives 15 hours of credit). As supervisors from the university have the primary responsibility for assigning grades in student teaching, their burden is obvious. Regardless of what evaluation instrument the supervisor uses to determine what "excellent potential" may be for student teachers, he feels forced to consider the extraneous criteria of grade point average and future employment in assigning grades. The dilemma for the student also becomes obvious. He feels that too much chance rests upon such an important matter for him. Inappropriate placement, the particular style and attitude of a given cooperating teacher or university supervisor - combined with the student teacher's concern for grade point average requirements - can provide far too many variables for him to cope with. Those variables work against the goal he is trying to achieve. Satisfactory work in student teaching can represent a wide range of behaviors, but the present grading system was not built to reflect them and so it breaks down.

Last quarter we indicated that we have in practice reduced the university system (A,B,C,D,F) to a two-symbol system: we assigned 142 A's, 32 B's and 1 C, a condition which supports the need for a simpler and more equitable system. Grades are not, however, the only records we keep on student teachers. We have three sets of books: 1) the recommendations in the Placement Office, written by the cooperating teacher and the supervisor at the student's request; 2) the supervisor's evaluation of the student teacher, kept in the Office of Student Teaching; 3) the grade on the permanent record which is included in the student's grade point average. As long as the first two exist, there is no need to have the grade point average affected by whatever symbol we use for the permanent record.¹

We believe that we can better meet the objectives of student teaching by adopting the following policy:

Effective Fall 1972, the permanent record in student teaching (Ed. 841,842,843,860) and Professional Laboratory (Ed. 704,705) should show only one of three possible symbols: Cr (for completion), W (for the usual withdrawal), I (for special cases of incomplete).

Dr. W. Hammack, Director of Student Teaching

Dr. T. McCracken, English Department

1. Some have argued that the 2.5 requirement in Education for graduation necessitates an A or B for the student in Student Teaching so that he may, if needed, bring a deficient average up to par. Such an argument is educationally unjustified. What is unfair to the student is allowing him to enter the School of Education with less than a 2.5. However, if the student is allowed to do so, and if this proposal were adopted, he would understand that student teaching would neither help nor hinder his average.