

November 16, 2010 Faculty Meeting – Minutes

The second faculty meeting of the 2010-2011 year took place on Tuesday, November 16, at 4:00 PM, in TH 193.

1. Call to order: 4:05 PM; there were 33 faculty/staff present
2. **M/S/P** Approval of the minutes of the October 4, 2010 faculty meeting.
3. Announcements
 - a. Steven Neshyba introduced Judy Brockhoff, Executive Director of the Palmer Scholars program. The program provides scholarships for underrepresented students and would like to bring more Palmer Scholars to Puget Sound. The program is looking for mentors (and financial contributions). Mentorship is a 4-5 year commitment. There are currently about 100 students in the Palmer Scholar “pipeline.” Over 90% of the scholars graduate. Lisa Ferrari asked what mentoring entails. A mentor meets with their Palmer Scholar about 6 months prior to the start of college and then meets about once per month with the scholar throughout their college career. Mentors help shepherd the scholar through the college process (often the scholars do not have access to family or friends who have attended college).
 - b. Peter Greenfield reminded us about the upcoming Register Lecture scheduled for Thursday, November 18, 2010, at 7:30 PM. David Lupher will present the lecture (with an introduction by Peter Greenfield).
4. President’s Report

President Thomas has traveled extensively this fall, including visits to Washington D.C., New York, San Francisco, and Denver. These visits focused on alumni events, development calls, and pre-campaign events. We expect to announce the campaign publicly in the fall so the president is laying the groundwork now. Patrick O’Neil presented to alumni groups.

In general, donors and foundations continue to be cautious. Parents are very enthusiastic. We have been redesigning our financial aid award structure in order to meet our yield and enrollment targets to maximize net revenue and meet our diversity and academic goals while being aware of the anticipated challenges ahead.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) preparation continues. The readiness assessment report was presented to the cabinet and ERP steering committee today.

The Benefits Task Force and Budget Task Force are both in process. Both will present reports by the end of the calendar year. The Budget Task Force has significant challenges before it (dealing with financial aid needs, declining endowment payouts, etc.).

Thank you, and congratulations, to all those involved with the Race and Pedagogy National Conference. The conference was inspiring, substantive, and valuable. Also, congratulations to all involved with organizing the conference for surviving the preparation process.

5. Academic Vice-President's Report

Kris Bartanen provided a brief overview of the budget issues facing us for 2011-2012.

Although we must reduce the academic budget by close to \$1M next year, we will:

- Support all sabbaticals;
- Retain faculty development and research travel funds;
- Maintain the academic teaching department/program operating budgets;
- Support all steps and promotions.

From where will the budget reductions come?

- Conservative sabbatical replacements (submitted sabbatical coverage requests were close to what we need);
- Reductions in some academic administrative operating budgets;
- Natural attrition in the academic staff pool.

Regarding sabbaticals for 2011-2012, Dean Bartanen noted an abundance of sabbatical leaves are currently planned for the spring. A few "flips" from spring to fall would be helpful. She also noted that an ERP system would certainly be beneficial in processes such as these. With an ERP system we could see the course schedule for 2011-2012 and plan sabbatical coverage more easily. Dean Bartanen relayed that the ERP will be funded from a pool separate from the operating budget (so funding the ERP will not compete with our compensation, operating, and equipment budgets).

6. Report of the Faculty Senate Chair

Steven Neshyba reported the Senate has met three times since the last faculty meeting (October 4, 2010). Topics discussed by the Senate include:

- Charges to the Institutional Review Board, the International Education Committee, the Diversity Committee, and additional charges to the Library, Media, and Information Systems committee.
- Academic Standards Committee (ASC) policy regarding changes to the incomplete policy. The Senate rescinded the changes of due dates for incomplete grades that were approved by the ASC in 2009-2010. The Senate will determine the nature of the current incomplete grade policy at its next meeting.
- Changes to the *Bylaws* to allow for co-chairs of senate committees (currently waiting for *Bylaws* language revisions from the Faculty Advancement Committee).
- Received a report from the *ad hoc* Committee on Childcare (reported by Julia Looper and Megan Johnson). The committee is wrapping up a survey and analyzing the results.
- Received a report from Marta Palmquist-Cady and Skylar Bihl regarding a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service project. They are receiving nominations for a person to be honored in that regard ("Living the Dream" award).
- Received a report from Karly Siroky and Todd Badham regarding Peirce Transit and commuter options.
- Operational changes in the Senate:
 - implement more detailed reports from the committee liaisons

- work on mechanisms to avoid conflicts of interest (such as committee chairs serving as liaisons)
- add a replacement senator for spring 2011 [return to the “runner-up” list (1 person remains) or take nominations]

Regarding the Senate’s stance on the Pass/Fail (P/F) policy and related ASC changes, Neshyba noted the following:

- he reviewed an excerpt from the ASC final report for 2009-2010 regarding P/F policy changes (see below)
- at the October 4, 2010 faculty meeting, the faculty approved allowing instructor-designated P/F enrollment limits in individual courses
- ASC changes to P/F policy have been in place over 30 working days; however, a “hold” was placed on the policy change at the May 3, 2010 faculty meeting so changes were not implemented
- the Senate wants to make review and implementation of committee actions work more smoothly

7. New business (4:25 p.m.): Update and discussion of the Academic Standards Committee’s changes to the Pass/Fail (P/F) policy with a motion to repeal the Academic Standards Committee’s proposed changes to the P/F policy. President Thomas noted the faculty suspended implementation of the changes to the P/F policy in May 2010 with the charge to address the matter this fall.

Background (from the Academic Standards Committee Final Report for 2009-2010):

Changes to the Pass/Fail Grade Option: The ASC considered a number of possibilities for changing the P/F grade option, including: 1) No P/F courses in department of major; 2) No P/F courses for freshmen or sophomores; 3) Permission of instructor required (either at instructor or course level); 4) Lowering the number of P/F courses students may take from 4; 5) Raising the grade required to “pass” from C-. The ASC passed language adopting the first two changes: *No Pass/Fail courses shall be taken in the department of major or minor and The Pass/Fail grade option is only available to juniors or seniors.*

The faculty has delayed implementation of the ASC’s two changes. The ASC hopes that these issues will be resolved one way or another early in the 2010-11 academic year so that a final decision on Puget Sound’s Pass/Fail policy can be made.

The ASC decided that the issue of instructor permission should be discussed by a broader body, either the Faculty Senate or the Full Faculty, as the Committee could not reconcile the desire to protect instructors with the desire to preserve the intent and spirit of the P/F option.

Steven Neshyba reported that the Senate response to the policy changes was not unanimous; however, Neshyba brought forward two motions regarding the P/F policy.

M/S/F the faculty affirms the policy passed by the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) on November 4, 2009, that no pass/fail courses be allowed in the department/program of the major or minor. Second by Nick Kontogeorgopoulos.

Discussion:

Eric Scharrer wondered what process would be used for those students who took a course P/F yet ended up needing that course for their major. Bill Beardsley confirmed that students cannot take a major requirement P/F. Bill Haltom noted this discussion pertains to the upcoming second motion regarding the timing of when course P/F course can be taken. In response to Eric's question, Sarah Moore reported that the department determines how to address the situation. She noted that departments/programs often accept the P/F graded course for the major/minor; however, the request sometimes goes to the ASC petitions committee. Neshyba reiterated that the motion deals with courses taken outside the major/minor requirements. Kris Bartanen affirmed that the ASC developed the present policy change so students would use the P/F option for its original intent—to explore a broader range of courses (outside the area of their major).

Alisa Kessel asked how credit was counted if a student changes to a major where they then have a P/F course in the major requirements. Several faculty members confirmed that the credit would not count toward the 32 units for graduation.

Beardsley spoke against the motion noting that many majors are complex with different tracks/variations and some students in those majors may want to “taste” some other areas of major. Steve Rodgers reminded us that departments/programs have policies in place to curtail students from using P/F within the major requirements. Diane Kelley agreed with Beardsley, wondering why we would prohibit a student in a French major from taking a Spanish class P/F.

Neshyba asked members of the ASC to identify themselves so the views of the ASC would be represented accurately. The only ASC members that were able to attend the meeting were Sarah Moore and Debbie Chee.

Nancy Bristow observed she wants to set policy for very best students and wondered why we should interfere with students late in their major. She views this as a paternalistic approach to students. Sarah Moore presented an overview of the ASC perspective: the P/F policy is in place to allow students to take academic risks. The ASC does not view taking courses P/F within the department/program of the major as being “risky.” For example, a student in a Psychology major would probably not view taking a Psychology course as being “risky.” In addition, the ASC addressed a faculty concern that seniors were enrolling in 200-level classes, for P/F grades, thus making it difficult in some cases to teach to all students effectively.

Peter Wimberger remarked that a policy is usually crafted to address a problem. He wondered what evidence is available that there is a problem of students taking courses P/F in the departments/programs of their majors. He reiterated Beardsley's point, giving the example of biology, where there are two majors, Biology and Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB) [secretary N.B., and a third option with Natural Science Biology]; some MCB students may want to take a non-MCB biology course P/F. Sarah Moore responded that it depends on how you count and what constitutes a problem. Eight to 15% of all P/F courses are taken in the department/program of the major. She noted that there can be 3-4 seniors taking lower division courses (e.g., PSYCH 274) P/F. Sarah reiterated that the ASC thought this was not in the spirit of the appropriate use of the P/F option.

Bill Haltom asked for the total number of P/F courses. Sarah responded that there are about 50 courses taken P/F in fall and about 200 taken in spring (P/F courses). Martin Jackson noted that the P/F issue came up some time ago when he was a member of the ASC. The committee at that time had similar concerns—students were taking courses P/F to “lighten their load” rather than broadening their experience. Haltom raised the concern that we do not know how students are using P/F so it is difficult to make an effective policy. Regarding this motion in particular, Haltom noted there was some confusion regarding the outcome of the policy change as well as a lack of compelling information regarding the extent of the problem (in his opinion, 3-4 students in a class was not of concern). He, therefore, recommended opposing the motion and allowing any member of the faculty to bring it up again with data/evidence.

Kent Hooper agreed that this was not much of an issue, in his opinion. He commented he would rather have a student take a course, even if P/F, so he could “bully” the student into doing more work. Judith Kay wondered if the newly instituted policy allowing faculty members to set a cap on the number of P/F students in a given course would address this problem. Nick Kontogeorgopoulos noted that the ASC made this policy change in May, prior to the cap option [passed in October 2010]. He then called the question.

The motion failed.

M/S/F the pass/fail grade option be made available only to Juniors and Seniors.
Second by Amy Spivey.

Discussion:

Providing an ASC perspective, Debbie Chee noted that the ASC is concerned that many 1st and 2nd year students are “painted into a corner” by taking courses P/F and later deciding on a major/minor that requires those courses. Bill Haltom asked for the data supporting this concern. Sarah Moore responded that the numbers for two semesters were: 18/200 and 4/51 P/F courses were taken by first/second year students. Haltom wondered how many then changed to a major within the area where they took the course P/F. Wimberger noted the number of P/F courses taken was a small percentage of the total number of

courses taken by first and second year students. Amy Spivey observed that, if passed, this policy would not affect many students and would help the ASC in their work.

Bill Beardsley remarked if the point of the P/F option is to allow students to take risks, then this is a preferred outcome. Students may find they like a certain area they didn't think they would and the payoff is potentially changing their major. Eric Scharrer questioned whether students are using the P/F option to take risks or because of laziness.

Jonathan Stockdale offered a workable solution: a student could petition to change their P/F grade to a letter grade in a course that became a requirement for their major/minor. Keith Ward wondered if there really is an overarching problem of first and second year students taking courses P/F then needing them for major requirements. He thinks this is an issue of principle—we should encourage students to take academic risks but not dictate student choices. Returning to the idea of revising student grades from P/F to a letter grade, Diane Kelley asked if the Registrar keeps track of the letter grades changed to P/F. Debbie Chee affirmed that the Registrar does have a record of the letter grades received. Kris Bartanen cautioned that we need to be clear about when the Registrar should be able to change faculty grades. We should not move to a model where students can choose their grade option after the start of the course (e.g., if student finds they are doing better than anticipated in a P/F course).

Judith Kay asked about the ASC track record on petitions to change P/F grades for courses that become major requirements. Sarah Moore explained that the decision usually reverts back to the department/program. Those decisions that do come to the ASC are usually granted in the student's favor. Bill Haltom noted that there is no guarantee that future ASC petitions subcommittees would act in a similar manner. On a matter of principle, Haltom would lean toward underclassmen taking courses P/F and limit upper-classmen (to allow for experimentation)—upperclassmen can fend for themselves.

Fred Hamel invited ASUPS President Dan Miller to speak to the issue (since the Student Senate had discussed P/F policies). Miller distributed copies of a document outlining the "Student Resolution on the Issue of Pass/Fail" (Appendix A). Mike Segawa called the question.

The motion failed.

Summary: Regarding the P/F policy, we have the existing policy (established prior to May 2010) with the addition of the option for a faculty-set cap of the number of P/F seats in a given class (passed October 2010). With this meeting, we have completed review of the actions proposed by the ASC in 2009-2010.

Steven Neshyba moved to adjourn at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Alyce DeMarais.

Appendix A

11/16/10
Fac Meetg

Student Resolution on the Issue of Pass/Fail

Much discussion surrounds the Pass/Fail Policy and potential changes to it. As student representatives, we, the ASUPS Senate, believe that the goals of the faculty in regards to improved communication and class participation can be achieved without sacrificing the privacy of students. We propose maintaining the Pass/Fail system as it existed prior to the Academic Standards Committee's recommendations, and would support the focused encouragement of a voluntary communication of Pass/Fail status. The students in question should be prompted by their advisors to get into contact with the professors of any course they are taking Pass/Fail. Students and faculty should be communicating, but knowledge of Pass/Fail status should remain the student's prerogative to disclose.

Beyond our issues with the proposed changes to the Pass/Fail policy, we would ask the ASC to bring forward a clear and concise argument in favor of these changes. We are willing to assist the ASC in publicizing their arguments. At this point, we have not received enough information from the committee to take any action aside from opposition to their proposals.

After looking through the various minutes of faculty meetings, we have found several arguments that attempt to support the ASC's effort to make structural changes to the Pass/Fail policy. However, these arguments all operate under the assumption that the Pass/Fail opportunity is flawed and needs correction. We cannot find evidence within the minutes that shows a need for change. Such structural changes would be necessary if these were widespread issues, but as they seem to be localized, we believe that local solutions rather than policy change would be the most effective way to address the issues.

Many high-achieving students use pass/fail during a semester when they have an internship or other outside commitments that will occupy a substantial portion of their time. This doesn't mean that they have resigned themselves to a simple C- grade, but are seeking the ease that comes with knowing that they don't have to hit 95% for 16 weeks to maintain their GPA.

Instead, Pass/Fail flexibility allows them to continue to produce high quality work across their various commitments.

With the caliber of students attending Puget Sound, and the consistent rigor of courses, it is unlikely that a significant number of students are using Pass/Fail out of laziness. As a residential, liberal arts institution, Puget Sound provides a comprehensive education that extends outside the classroom. Students are taught the value of the work/life balance, as well as the balance between curricular and co-curricular activities. Pass/Fail provides the opportunity for greater diversity of student interests and backgrounds in the classroom, which will help not only majors in the course, but also non-majors as each group is challenged to expand its thinking.

With most issues, we support soft solutions (changes within the existing policy) over hard solutions (policy change). Advising students about potential Pass/Fail issues during the registration process may achieve the same goals as a blanket policy change without sacrificing the benefits to the majority of students. Mandatory communication will not achieve the desired goal. Voluntary communication would improve student-faculty relations without violating privacy, while keeping students' work consistent with the quality that is associated with a Puget Sound degree.

We would welcome a response from Faculty Senate or from the Academic Standards Committee. This document is based on the minutes below gathered from Faculty Meetings, Faculty Senate and ASC Meetings. We are eager to enter into a conversation with the ASC or faculty about these issues.

The Associated Students University of Puget Sound

Senator Erin Jamroz
Senator Brendan Witt
Senator Jordan Greiner
Senator Peter Cellier
Senator Pieter Ver Haar
Senator Sohan Punatar
Senator Scott Miller
Vice President Alex Lewis

Senator Steve Rodgers (Faculty)
President Dan Miller

Printed Name

Signature

Various Faculty Minutes

Academic Standards Meeting – Nov. 4, 2009

Discussion of Pass/Fail Policy based on the following items (taken from Agenda Item 5):

- a. No P/F courses in department of first major
- b. No P/F courses for freshman and sophomores
- c. Permission of instructor required to take class P/F
 - i. Student by student with course add codes
 - ii. Class by class (entire class may or may not be taken P/F)
- d. Lowering number of P/F classes available (currently 4)
- e. Raising the grade require to “pass” which is currently C-

Data circulated from the Office of the Registrar showing a record of students selecting Pass/Fail Grade Option (based on the academic record of students enrolled in Spring 2009) (materials attached)

S.W.—Five Freshman had taken courses Pass/Fail. Thirteen Sophomores had taken courses Pass/Fail. Important to note the presence of several students taking Pass/Fail courses within their major (Sophomore History major taking a History course P/F; Geology Major taking a Geology class P/F; English Major taking an English course P/F; Psychology Major taking a Psychology course P/F; etc.). This data show that a good number of students are taking P/F courses within their major. It is also noted that only two students actually failed when exercising the P/F option.

J.R.—Seven students are taking English 202 P/F. This was the course that initially prompted the discussion last year.

S.W.—Although there is an example of a Psychology Major taking a Psychology course P/F and receiving a D- as a grade, it's important to note that usually students receive a grade on par with their “usual” grade in class. It's safe to say, however, that there is a non-trivial number of students taking courses P/F within their major.

J.R.—Several Pac Rim students opted for P/F option while on Pac-Rim. Is this really in the spirit of P/F?

D.S.—Some P/F options are reasonably well used. For instance, a Business major taking Greek Mythology or an Art Major taking Bio-ethics.

J.R.—Why does a Senior need to take an entry level class P/F?

S.W.—The chart on page 12 shows that there is about a 3 to 1 ratio of students not using the P/F option to student using the P/F option.

S.M.—We can safely say that there are enough instances of students taking classes within their major area to warrant review of this policy. Data show that a number of students are taking P/F courses within their own department.

J.R.—There are problems with Freshman and Sophomores taking courses P/F: students can impose an advising error upon themselves (i.e.: taking O-Chem P/F their Freshman or Sophomore year before declaring a major, then later not being able to count the course toward their major or minor)

D.S.—Can we regulate or build in a way to check during registration so students won't register P/F for courses in their major?

J.R.—Yes—the system regulates this.

G.M.—Do we have a sense of whether certain courses tend to be taken P/F?

S.W.—Yes. Ceramics. English 202.

D.S.—Can we look at whether the department can rule out certain classes from being taken P/F? Also, when people audit classes, they can't add until after the first day of class. Can we implement P/F in a similar way? Set a limit of the number of students taking P/F and once that limit is reached no more students can take the class P/F?

S.M.: The limitations of not taking P/F within the major and not allowing Freshman and Sophomores to take P/F solves the problem of the misuse of the policy. Items c, d, and e are more specific to the professor or the class.

S.W.: Only five Seniors have taken three or four P/F classes over the course of their four years at Puget Sound. Is this significant enough to change the policy of the number of P/F classes we allow students to take? It may be important to note that the students who have taken three or four courses P/F during their academic careers appear to have lower grades.

S.M.: Less than 1% of graduating class took three or four classes P/F.

J.R.: We can report that the incidence of three to four courses P/F is so low that it warrants changing the policy.

S.M.: Motion to vote on whether to adopt recommendations 5a and 5b.

J.R.: Do we want students to be able to take P/F courses in any course of study that is listed on the diploma (major, 2nd major, minor)? Recommendation that we make a friendly amendment to the wording so that it reads, "**No P/F courses in the department of major or minor.**" Vote: Unanimous

S.W.: Motion to vote on item 5b with new wording: "**The P/F grade option is only available to juniors or seniors.**" Vote: Unanimous

S.W.: This conversation was prompted by an instructor who had a large number of students taking her class P/F. Should we address this now or send 5a and 5b on as is? Discussion of Item 5c: Permission of instructor required to take class P/F (either student by student with course add codes or class by class with entire classes being closed to P/F grade option).

D.S.: Propose that the departments control which classes are P/F. Thus, this is in the hands of the department, not in the hands of individual faculty.

S.M.: This solves the problem of different faculty teaching the same course. This could be listed in the Bulletin, along with pre-requisites for a course.

S.W.: Student representatives: how do you feel about this?

K.H.: **This completely violates the purpose of having a P/F grade option.**

B.L.: Propose that students ask the professor directly if they can take a course P/F. For example: my own student came to me toward the end of the semester and said, 'I am staking this course P/F and I don't want to do the final paper. Will I pass?' If he had obtained permission for me at the beginning of the term, this wouldn't have been an issue.

S.M.: Having the professor no longer be blind is a big departure from our current policy. Can we collect more info on this?

S.W.: Many schools actually have a policy like this. Can we also collect more data on C-students and whether this is a grade compatible with their "normal" grades in other classes?

S.M.: We need to point out that it is already the department's discretion to put courses on the books P/F. We should forward to the Senate that we also observe that departments are not prevented from prohibiting certain classes from being taken P/F. At this point, I don't see any way to reconcile the atmosphere of the classroom and the ability of students to explore classes outside of their department.

S.W.: Can we look at Lewis and Clark as a comparison? Let's gather more data on this subject. M.S.: It's important to point out that even without a P/F grade option, students are still able to explore classes outside of their department. The fact that we are establishing limitations does not mean students can no longer explore new classes.

Academic Standards Meeting – oct. 21, 2009

Changes to Pass/Fail grade option: SW outlined five possible options for revising the current P/F grading option that arose out of the faculty discussion last year. These included:

- 1) No P/F courses in department of first major
- 2) No P/F courses for freshman and sophomores
- 3) Permission of instructor required to take class P/F (either at course level or individual level)
- 4) Lowering number of P/F classes available
- 5) Raising grade required to "pass"

After a brief review of the history of this issue for those people who are new to ASC this year, the committee discussed the possibility of enacting the above options. It was acknowledged that these are solutions to different problems and that we should have a clear understanding of the purpose and spirit of P/F. SW clarified that last year, the majority of faculty agreed that P/F is important for exploration outside of one's primary area of study.

While a formal vote was not taken, SW asked for objections to 1 & 2 listed above. The issue of whether #1 will apply to minors and *all* majors (as opposed to only first major) was raised. The committee agreed that the language should change to include *all majors and minors*. Regarding #2, the issue of sophomores who qualify as juniors was brought up. The committee agreed that using "unit count" would be the most efficient way to determine class standing in the context of P/F. Overall, there was wide agreement for adopting 1 & 2 listed above.

There was little discussion about #3 (requiring permission of instructor). However there was concern that there are some upper-level courses that have no prerequisites. These classes may draw an excessive number of P/F students and “block” other students from taking the course for a grade. Allowing instructor approval may rectify this problem. **Some faculty and student members of the committee, however, were worried that this option may create bias.** Faculty may treat and evaluate P/F students differently than other students in the class.

It was suggested that proposal #4, lowering the number of P/F classes be enacted. While there was general agreement that this was a good idea, the committee eventually determined that in order to make informed decisions about these options and align the rules to the behavior of the students, the committee would need to review data on P/F. BT said that he would bring data to the next meeting.

The discussion of #5, raising the grade requirement (currently C-) to pass, was minimal. It was suggested that the C- floor is too low. This, however, brings up a contradiction in the purpose and spirit of P/F. If students use P/F to explore new disciplines, then raising the floor for passing may not allow students to “take risks” in new areas of study.

Discussion tabled until next meeting when BT will bring data.

Faculty Senate – February 8th

VI. Pass/Fail grading a. Cannon reminded the Senate that the ASC recommended no Pass/Fail (P/F) grading option be allowed in the department of major, minor, or second major and that P/F was recommended to only be allowed for student with Junior or Senior status. He went on to remind the Senate that they passed a motion last semester to delay decision on the ASC recommendation to stay in line with the 30 day limit.

b. Anderson-Connolly reminded the senate that Permission of Instructor (POI) solves a lot of problems with P/F.

c. Weinberger mentioned that ASC was debating the idea of POI and said the committee was divided **because the students on ASC were very against POI because the students would feel that the professor would hold this against the students. Weinberger also expressed the broad spirit of P/F and didn't want to limit students who wanted the ability to take classes this way.**

d. Cannon said he thought that ASC wanted to consult with Senate and Weinberger agreed.

e. Hutchinson wanted to clarify if Core classes could currently be taken P/F and asked how many P/F classes can currently be taken by a student during their academic career.

f. Weinberger answered that Core classes may not be taken P/F and a total of 4 P/F classes are allowed. He added that the reason for the proposed Jr/Sr limit on P/F came from the spirit of P/F is not in line with underclassmen since they are not pushing themselves outside of their major field of study at that point since they have no major and that if they did take P/F it could hurt them later if they decided to major in a field needing that course. Weinberger

noted that only 4 underclassmen had encountered this trouble of taking a course P/F and then not being able to use it.

g. Barry noted that if only 4 students had run into this then it wasn't that big of a deal. Barry also asked if the students on the ASC committee had any issue with the new proposed changes.

h. Ward spoke to the proposal and thought it spoke to the spirit of P/F and thought that only having 4 students run into difficulty showed that the upperclassmen proposal wasn't an issue.

i. Johnson wanted to know if **sound advising wouldn't just clear this up** and Weinberger said that when students sign up for P/F a screen pops up and tells of the consequences. Weinberger also said that the ASC has let the students graduate who come up against current P/F rules anyway so there is no teeth to the current system.

j. Luu said the warning on the computer during registration is like a computer popup and is ignored by students.

k. Barry wanted to know how many P/F grades are recorded each semester.

l. Roundy and Weinberger said they didn't know but certainly more than 50.

m. Holland asked if this matter of P/F is coming to the Full Faculty meeting.

n. Weinberger asked for clarification of whether Holland meant the idea of POI or the adoption of the proposal from ASC. He followed by saying that there has already been a straw poll taken at the last Faculty meeting of 5/5/09. And added that according to his notes that the numbers of those for and against the different P/F options were incorrect in the approved minutes from that meeting.

o. Barry asked if this should be passed on to the full Faculty again.

- p. Anderson-Connolly agreed with Barry that this should come up again at the full Faculty meeting. He also noted that if 4 total P/F courses are allowed that you might end up with senioritis and find that all P/F courses could be taken in a short amount of time at the end. He continued to say that POI is not that big of a deal, he thinks the students' concerns of professor bias is a groundless worry.
- q. Weinberger said that the number of underclassmen that take P/F classes is actually small and that most students that do take P/F classes don't take 4.
- r. Hamel asked Roundy if struggling students used P/F as a way of lightening load.
- s. Roundy responded that P/F is for grade protection and said that students in trouble actually need grades and wouldn't take P/F.
- t. Hamel asked about a situation where a student's G.P.A. is fine but has a tough semester should they take P/F.
- u. Roundy responded that he would encourage the student to take fewer classes and not take more but as less of a participant.
- v. Anderson-Connolly said he wanted P/F to be grade protection for students to be adventurous in course selection and thought that POI would still encourage this. He added that he thought faculty would be open and not discourage P/F in those instances.
- w. Weinberger said that ASC probably would have agreed to POI.
- x. Johnson noted that upperclassmen have tight schedules and maybe couldn't use the P/F option.
- y. Weinberger noted that currently P/F is used almost exclusively by upperclassmen.
- z. Neshyba encouraged the ASC come to the Faculty meeting and explain their proposed changes to the P/F option.
- aa. Cannon suggested that we extend this topic for another meeting or that someone motion to take the ASC recommendations to the full faculty.
- bb. Barry asked why we should extend the issue?
- cc. Cannon asked what was being forwarded to the full faculty. If it is the ASC proposal then Weinberger could take it to the full Faculty but he noted that if we want to be in on the proposal we should take more time to discuss what we are proposing.
- dd. Barry said he wouldn't want the Senate to tinker with ASC motion.
- ee. Cannon reminded the Senate that the bylaws allow the Senate to review, reject, etc... committee's proposals.
- ff. Barry asked if the ASC would be willing to take the proposed changes to the full faculty.
- gg. Weinberger said ASC wanted Senate guidance on what should be taken to the full Faculty.
- hh. Cannon terminated discussion and placed the P/F proposal on the Senate's next agenda.

Faculty Senate - March 1st, 2010

Course eligibility for Pass/Fail grading

Cannon reminded the Senate that the ASC had approved before winter break a revision of pass/fail policy that limited the pass/fail option only to juniors and seniors and only to courses taken outside the department of the major. The policy will have no effect on courses for which the only grading option is pass/fail. Cannon noted that the ASC decision will go into effect if the Senate should fail to act on it specifically. Moved (Barry) and seconded to forward the ASC revision of the pass/fail policy to the faculty for discussion and final approval. The motion failed.

In the absence of another motion addressing the ASC action, Cannon asserted that the ASC's change in pass/fail policy would go into effect.

Anderson-Connolly moved and seconded: To forward to the full faculty with a recommendation to pass the following motion: **Students must obtain permission of instructor in order to enroll a course with a pass/fail grade.**

Anderson-Connolly noted that students who elect pass/fail option can sometimes prove a drag on the class as they are not fully invested in the coursework. Holland noted that an added benefit of the motion would be instructor knowledge of who was taking the course pass/fail. She noted that she agonizes over assigning grades and finds it particularly frustrating when her final grade decision for a pass/fail student might not matter. Luu worried that if faculty know who is taking the course pass fail, they might not be fully invested in evaluating student coursework.

Faculty Senate – March 22, 2010

Course eligibility for Pass/Fail Grading

The Senate returned to the motion left on the floor at its last meeting: “The Senate forwards to the full faculty with a recommendation to pass the following motion: Students must obtain permission of instructor in order to enroll a course with a pass/fail grade.”

Issues raised in the discussion regarding course eligibility for pass/fail grading included the benefits and drawbacks of removing anonymity, whether faculty should be given the option of limiting the number of pass/fail slots in a course, problems that may arise in registering for classes, whether students taking courses pass/fail would need to identify themselves in course evaluations, and whether the motion maintained the spirit of pass/fail for students, who wish to have the option of exploring a particular academic area while protecting their GPAs, while also addressing the expectation of faculty that students taking a course pass/fail will be fully engaged in the content and activities of the course.

Upon voice vote, the motion failed.

Faculty Senate – April 26, 2010

P/F Grading—knowledge of instructor: Holland asked where we stand with this, since we voted down that Pass/Fail require “permission of instructor.” Holland would like to separate the idea of “permission of instructor” and getting rid of anonymity. Holland says we are out of step with other institutions in having anonymity, to her understanding. She says that she will anguish over whether to award a C+ or B- when in the end the grade will simply be turned into a pass or fail grade.

Anderson-Connolly said this is fine with him, but it doesn’t address the concern about the number of students. He wants the instructor to decide the number of students taking a course Pass/Fail.

Dan Miller would like data to know how widespread the problem is, and wonders how many students this involves and how many faculty feel this is an issue.

Weinberger said that he has the numbers in his ASC documents, which were not present at the Senate meeting. He communicated that the concerns he heard were about P/F students not pulling their weight in group projects.

Bill Barry said anonymity insures there will be an equality of evaluation from student to student. He is not entirely sure this wouldn’t affect the faculty evaluation of student work.

Marc Phillips stated that losing anonymity would be a positive result for both parties and would allow students to meet goals for the course and allow instructors to spend less time evaluating work. Weinberger said that students on the ASC didn’t feel that way; they would rather not lose anonymity. Miller said he would support voluntary sharing of P/F status.

Stockdale asked what the detriments would be. Miller said he believes students will think professors will think less of them. Stockdale believes that some professors might grade differently if they knew a student was taking a class P/F. However, he wants open, honest, and free communication between professors and students, and the anonymity bothers him. Holland thinks the culture of anonymity contributes to students worrying about being perceived as “slackers.” Faculty Senate, April 26, 2010, p. 4

Ward asked us to think of our principles regarding P/F, and asked why we are talking about P/F students as “slackers” instead of thinking of the virtue of P/F in allowing students to explore new subject areas.

ASC Feb. 24, 2010

4. Pass/Fail Policy. Seth Weinberger began framing this topic by reminding the committee of the conversation about the Pass/Fail grading options. He continued to remind the committee that after the ASC’s vote to abolish the Pass/Fail grading option, the Faculty Senate did not approve the motion and sent the issue back to ASC. ASC then offered two recommendations to change the Pass/Fail policy; 1. Only junior and seniors can use the Pass/Fail grading option and 2. The Pass/Fail grading option is only available for use in classes outside of the student’s major or minor. The ASC also considered an option to give instructors approval rights to grant individual requests for use of the Pass/Fail grading option, but did not make this option an official recommendation. The Senate asked ASC to review all recommendation and send forth their final recommendations to the Senate who will send them for a vote at a full faculty meeting. Seth Weinberger defined the instructor approval option as either; the student making a request to the instructor who will grant the request and give a Pass/Fail code, or the instructor could identify the entire course as not accepting Pass/Fail requests. He indicated that the Senate had mixed support for instructor approval option. Seth Weinberger noted that in both the original ASC conversation and the Senate conversation, there was concern about the student’s choice to take a class Pass/Fail being known to the

instructor and receive different treatment. In the current practice, the instructor is unaware if a student is taking the class Pass/Fail.

Seth Weinberger asked the ASC for feedback on the two recommendations and the instructor approval option. Betsy Kirkpatrick responded to the instructor approval option by suggesting an additional option. The instructor could limit the number of seats in their class for Pass/Fail. This way, the instructor is not aware of students selecting the Pass/Fail grading option and selecting Pass/Fail would be "first-come first-served." Brad Tomhave stated the ideal policy would not curtail motivated students to enroll in a course that they may not take.

Sarah Moore described the issue with the Pass/Fail grading option as; 1. protecting the student from poor choices, such as enrolling in a course Pass/Fail to then later realize that course will not fulfill a requirement, and 2. offering some authority to instructors to manage intentions of incoming students, such as restricting unengaged students who may disrupt the course.

As the conversation continued, several ASC members, including Sarah Moore, Betsy Kirkpatrick, Sarah Apple, Linda Williams and Carolyn Weisz, opposed the instructor approval option. Carolyn did not like the responsibility of granting permission to a student without fully understanding their degree plans. Sarah Apple gave an example of the benefit of Pass/Fail being "blind" to the instructor. *A student took two classes. One course is in her minor, and the other was an additional language course to further her skill. The language course requires a lot of work, but she needs to put her energy into another class. She takes the language course Pass/Fail to give her a reassurance, but she would not want that instructor know in fear that it would insult them.* Some concern of the instructor approval is that the instructor may not treat the student the same knowing they are taking the class Pass/Fail. To that comment, James Bernhard stated that he would push student to success no matter their grading option.

Seth Weinberger shifted the conversation to discussing blocking a course from the Pass/Fail grading option. Betsy Kirkpatrick was in favor of the course block, but Sarah Moore identified a challenge with the course block option when considering courses with multiple sections. Seth Weinberger mentioned a concern about a lack of availability of courses a student could take Pass/Fail if instructors could block a course. Maria Sampen added that everyone can enroll in the course and take it for credit.

As the conversation continued, Seth Weinberger noted that there did not seem to be much support from the ASC to include a recommendation that would allow either instructor approval or the ability to block a course/set limits. He will send forth the two original recommendations.

10. Consideration of Changes to Pass/Fail Policy (Richard Anderson-Connolly) [see attached] - May 3rd Faculty Meeting

Prof. Anderson-Connolly presented three motions regarding changes to the University's Pass/Fail Policy:

1. Motion: Students must obtain permission of instructor in order to enroll a course for a pass/fail grade.
2. Motion: The policy approved by the ASC on 4 November 2009 prohibiting pass/fail grading in the department of major or minor is hereby repealed. (The ASC motion: No P/F courses in the department of major or minor.)
3. Motion: The policy approved by the ASC on 4 November 2009 limiting pass/fail grading to juniors and seniors is hereby repealed. (The ASC motion: The P/F grade option is only available to juniors or seniors.)

M/S To require students to obtain the permission of instructor in order to enroll a course for a pass/fail grade.

Discussion:

Prof. Nick Kontogeorgopoulos spoke in favor of the motion, noting that several of his courses are adversely affected by the high number of p/f students, many of whom openly disclose their grading status to the instructor. This fact would suggest that the fear of students being evaluated in an unequal way is unfounded. Other faculty supported this notion that the current policy was often supported by "cynical" or "negative" assertions regarding treatment and perception of pass/fail students.

Prof. Cannon wondered what the criteria for giving permission would be and stated that the motion was at odds with a system that sought to facilitate student access to different subjects. He also noted that other issues of grading policy do not require instructor permission. Prof. Seth Weinberger later commented that similar ideas had been mentioned during the meetings of the Academic Standards Committee.

Several faculty voiced concern that a large number of p/f students could have a negative effect on the dynamics of a class.

Prof. Suzanne Holland cautioned that instructor permission might be too sweeping, but transparency was a key issue.

Dean Bartanen asked Registrar Brad Tomhave if professors could cap the number of p/f students.

Though this was in theory possible, Registrar Tomhave stated, in response to another question, that individual instructors now do not have the option of eliminating p/f in their courses. Instructor Steve Rogers invited ASUPS presidents Dan Miller to represent the student perspective, and Dan defended at length the standing policy.

Prof. Keith Ward noted that the discussion up until this point had centered on "marginal" students and reminded his colleagues that p/f also encouraged students to take intellectual risks.

At this point in the discussion, it became apparent that three discrete issues were emerging and Prof. Bill Haltom proposed taking a straw poll for the purpose of gathering information. The results were as follows:
In favor / opposed to 1) a cap via the Registrar (21/6)

2) Instructor Permission (8/22)

3) Instructor Knowledge of P/F status of students (22/10)

M/S/F A motion was made to call the previous question.

M/S A motion was made to remove the anonymity of p/f.

M/S/F A motion was made to extend the meeting.

Prof. Haltom suggested that the faculty adjourn and called for the delay and, thus, the continuation of the ongoing discussion to be entered into the minutes of the meeting.

Prof. Cannon reminded the faculty that in the subsequent meeting a motion could then be made to reconsider the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.
