

Change in grading under consideration

By Harry Lucas

Professors and students university-wide have been split in their thinking about a possible change in the university's grading system.

Presently, student progress is measured on a 4-point system of straight letter grades ranging from A 4.00 to F/0.00. Plus-minus grades are not computed.

A random polling of 251 students from the university's 10 branches finds that 67 percent of the students favor a change in grading while 33 percent favor the present system. Collegian staff writer Ann Maturro reports that the results have not gone unnoticed by the Faculty Senate, and quotes Faculty Senate Chairman-elect Peter Bennett as saying he personally does not like the current grading system and would find the grade refinement attractive. "It hurts me to give a student who just barely missed the cut-off (for a B) a C, and to give a student who just squeaks by that same C," Bennett said.

Several different grading alter-

natives explored in the survey include: a plus-minus system where students receive an A plus/4.33 to an F/0.00, each level being an increase of 0.33 points; another plus-minus system with grades ranging from A/4.00 to F/0.00, and a direct percentage system with grades ranging from zero to 100 based on a curve.

According to the survey, the

A random polling of 251 students from the University's ten branches finds that 67 percent of the students favor a change in grading while 33 percent favor the present system.

direct percentage system is the most popular. Anthony R. Scian-dra, an engineering major at Capitol, says, "I'm content with the present system. However a change to the percentage system would lead to more exact grade point averages."

"It's silly," says Dr. Theodora Graham, a member of the Humanities Division. "What it boils down to is 'what is the grade being used for?'"

While acknowledging the fact

that grades are important as determiners for admission to institutions of higher learning, Graham said, the real benefit of student evaluation lies in the helpful annotations teachers write on students' papers and exams, not in the later grades given for work as "they don't tell the whole story."

Graham further emphasized the

fact that all grading, no matter how standardized, is subjective: meaning somewhere someone decides what questions are relevant and what questions are not. Graham believes that changing the grading system would not make a substantial difference in student evaluations.

Dr. William Welsh, head of the Division of Science, Engineering, and Technology at Capitol, feels a change to a plus-minus system would be beneficial. He sees a

fair amount of support for this system as compared to the direct percentage system.

"Numbers by themselves need an explanation," Welsh says. "Letter grades are better understood by other institutions, especially grad schools."

Using an example to demonstrate his point, Welsh tells of a hypothetical student who received the highest grade in his class, and by most standards, would receive an A. Unfortunately, the grade was 85 percent - a B. The 85 percent goes into his cumulative average if graded by percent, but an A equaling 4.00 cumulative points if graded by letter grades.

Grade refinement is still in the discussion stage at University Park, and will probably stay there into the near future.

EDITOR'S NOTE: See "Campus Commentary on page 11 for a random pole of campus students on the question of changing the grading system.

The *FITTING* Room

10 South Union St.
Middletown, Pa. 17057

**(The Newest Shop
In Town)**

20% OFF ALL JEANS

**Name Brand Jeans & Tops
For Men & Women**

Hours: Monday—Friday 9-6
Saturday 9-5

Call:
944-3905

SASSON Sergio Valente Union Bay Lee's ZENA Wrangler Calvin Klein BILL BLASS chic

Carpet Remnant Sale

*First quality
carpet remnants
and roll-ends*



MOORE'S CARPET

"Next to Brewer's Outlet"

**TRI-STATE BAZAAR
OLMSTEAD PLAZA
MIDDLETOWN,
PA 17057**

**HOURS:
Thurs., Fri.,
Sat.: 1-8 pm
Sun.: 1-5
Phone 944-4504**




Welcome PSU students