Supps Out — Fail Credit In

There will be no more supps at UNB in any courses taken after July 1, 1970.

This is one of the main features of the proposed new Fail-Credit regulations approved by the Senate for the faculty of Arts and Business Administration. These regulations now only need final ratification by the Board of Governors before they become effective.

There are already differing versions of the Fail-Credit system in existence in the Faculties of Engineering, Law, and Forestry. The system is being actively considered in the faculties of Nursing and Science and the recommendations of these two faculties should be known within the next two weeks.

All faculties have expressed a desire for a common system throughout the University but it is doubtful whether Fail-Credit regulations from faculty to faculty will be eliminated in the near future.

The problem is that each of the faculties serve different needs of the community and are subject to different regulations governing course content and standards to be maintained. For instance, the members of the Law Faculty are subject to Bar Admission requirements, the Physical Education Students to the Department of Education standards and the Engineering Students to the regulations of the Association of Professional Engineers.

Probably the Faculty of Arts is the most fortunate in this respect, and has had the freest hand in setting its own regulations.

Well, what are they or what will they be?

Here is the breakdown, as it is known to date, on regulations that will govern you, academically, in the future.



ARTS

The primary purpose of these new regulations, says Professor Donaldson of the English department (who chaired the committees responsible for these new regulations) is to eliminate supplementals, to leave no doubt as to students academic standing, and to build a BA degree with credits rather than years.

This will eliminate the necessity for a student's "retiring" from a summer job in order to write the supplementals and the consequent financial loss; for the professor, the inconvenience of composing an exam with the accompanying disruption of his summer.

Because there would be no supplementals, the possibility of a change in academic standing because of them would be eliminated. It may have been noticed that so far, the mention of passing or failing one's year because of supplementals has been avoided. There will be no "years" as artsmen have known them from the academic year 1970-71 onwards.

A student's standing or advancement will be measured in terms of accumulated credits rather than years.

Here are the new rules:

1. To earn a degree a student must obtain twenty credits (twenty one for students entering before September 1967 or for students transferring credits earned before September 1967). Each full course will be counted as one credit towards the degree, and each half course as a half credit. In the subsequent regulations the word "course" shall be understood to mean one full course or two half courses. The courses elected must conform to the regulations governing the curriculum.

2. A student must enroll in five courses each year. This may be altered only with the permission of the Dean.

3. A student who has a failing grade of 45% or over will receive a Fail-Credit which means that the course will count as a credit towards the student's degree. A student who has a failing grade of less than 45% will be required either to repeat the course or to take a substitute which meets the curriculum requirements.

4. A student will be required to withdraw from the University if his total number of Fail-Credits and failures of the basis of ten or more courses exceeds 50% of the courses taken whether for the first time or through being repeated. A student will be required to withdraw from the university if at any time in his programme his total number of Fail-Credits and failures on courses taken whether for the first time or through being repeated exceeds ten. For the purposes of this regulation a failure in a course will continue to count as a failure in a student's total of Fail-credits and failures regardless of whether or not the course is subsequently repeated and passed. Before a student is required to withdraw, his record will be reviewed by the Senate Committee on Student Standings and Promotions, which may, in special circumstances, (particularly when the student's recent record has been satisfactory) make an exception to these regulations.

5. Students must take special account of University Rules stated elsewhere in this calendar.

6. In order to be eligible to receive a degree, a candidate for the Bachelor of Arts must have a minimum average of 50% on all courses counted as credits.

7. Each department had the right to decide whether a Fail-Credit can meet a prerequisite requirement.

Professor Donaldson further states that with regard to item 3. the mark of 45% was decided upon as the dividing line between a fail and a fail-credit as experience with it in the faculty had shown that the majority of students receiving below 45% in their final exams were not successful in their supplementals, in fact their marks generally deteriorated. Those receiving above 45% were generally successful.

Students may have also noticed that it will be impossible to "flunk out" in their first year under these new regulations. But any liabilities that he incurs, he will have to live with.

For example, if he were to receive five failures or fail-credits his first time around, then receives a single fail-credit in his second attempt, he is "out", so to speak.

In this respect these are actually the old regulations under a different wording.

If the student feels that there are any special circumstances surrounding his situation, he has the right of appeal.

It is possible for a student under these proposed new regulations, to graduate from UNB with a BA, having passed only ten courses, the other ten courses being fail-credits.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The new regulations proposed for this faculty are essentially the same as those for Arts with the exception that twenty three credits are required for a BBA degree rather than twenty credits as required for Arts.

Professor Kehoe of the Business Administration Department feels that these new regulations "present a more realistic point of view and in the final analysis can only result in a fairer decision to the student.

Professor Kehoe also mentioned that a basic function of the fail-credit system would be to re-direct the student from his weaker areas by the giving of a fail-credit. By this the professor indicates that while an honest effort has been made, the student should concentrate in some other field of study.

ENGINEERING AND FORESTRY

The engineers and foresters have yet another version of the fail-credit system in current practice and no new major changes have been proposed.

The Engineering faculty was the first to initiate the fail-credit concept in this campus and the system is in its third year of operation. Forestry having much in common with Engineering, has fully collaborated with the Engineers in the use of this system, and it is also in its third year of operation.

As in Law, applied science students must maintain "a weighted average" of at least 55% with no work less than 35%. The system of weighting is different from current or porposed practices of other Faculties, in that weighted marks range from 20 for Forestry 3903 to 200 for Physics 1000, depending on the number of hours per week of lectures and labs in a given course.

The student's average is calculated by dividing total weighted marks obtained by total possible weighted marks.

A student must repeat the year if a mark of below 35% is obtained in any course subject to regulation 3, subsection 2 of the General Regulations as found on page 112 of the current University calendar.

Approximately four years ago, in view of the practices of other Universities such as Queen's and Toronto, a University Committee was formed to look into the matter of fail-credits. They found at that time that it was impractical to apply considering the different needs of the different Faculties. However, the late Prof. Collier, Head of the Electrical Engineer Dept., who contributed so much to this University in many other fields and the now Acting Dean Garland of Enginnering went ahead and inaugurated the present system in the academic year 1967-68 for the Engineers.

All has been successful so far but according to Acting Dean Garland the system is constantly under review (for example, how failure rates are affected) and any improvements will be incorporated as soon as possible.

LAW

The Law Faculty is, of necessity, the most independent at the University. With the exception of two service courses offered to Engineering and Business, the Law school has nothing academically in common with the rest of the University.

For this reason, they have gone ahead to employ their own version of the fail-credit system.

These regulations are found on pages 316 and 317 of the current University Calendar.

Briefly, a law student must maintain an average of 55% throughout the three years of study and not more than six fail-credits in any one year, an accumulation of not more than 10 fail-credits at the end of the second year and not more than 14 fail-credits at the end of the third year. A half-term course with three lecture hours a week is given a weight of three credit hours.

Any mark bewteen 35% and 50% is considered a fail-credit. If a mark below 35% is obtained, the student is required to withdraw from the School, subject to the discretion of the Faculty.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

No changes are currently being considered in existing academic regulations in the Faculty of Physical Education.

Dean Meagher stated that his faculty did not feel that there could be any compromise in the standards of the profession and that a student should be able to maintain an average of 55% in his Physical Education courses without the benefit of fail-credit system — if he could not do so then he should not be in the faculty. However, Dean Meagher stated, we would be willing to abide by the fail-credit regulations of other faculties in their courses that his students must take.

SCIENCE AND NURSING

The science and nursing faculties have not yet decided their courses of action with reference to the fail-credit system. It appears as though they might be similar to the Arts proposal and the Science position should be known in the next few weeks.

Dean Franklin stated that as far as he was concerned "general rules consistent with the Arts faculty would be desirable." He was definitely in favor of the abolition of supps and felt most strongly that there should be a uniform fail-credit system throughout the University and that students should be treated the same regardless of faculty.

Dean McPhedran stated that since many of the courses taken by her nursing students were from the Science faculty, she could see no advantage in not being consistent with any regulations that are decided for the Science faculty.

These new regulations are an effort to solve the perennial problem of testing the student in the fairest manner possible. It does appear to be a small step forward. There will still be special exams for extenuating circumstances but it appears as though the days of supplementals are over at UNB. The success or failure of this new system is to be seen.

by peter forbes
special to the brunswickan