

Last Spring the Faculty Senate passed a resolution calling for the adoption of a plus-minus grading system. Over the summer months, I notified the Chair of the Faculty Senate that, after lengthy deliberation, I had decided to decline to approve the resolution. It took me several months to come to this conclusion, not only because I found the issue a difficult one to resolve, but also because I believe that the exercise of a veto of Faculty Senate action should be used sparingly.

Fundamentally, my decision not to approve the resolution is based upon the notion that those students most likely to be harmed by this resolution are those who are our best students. The student who now receives an A in a course would be subject to receive either an A or an A-, but would not be eligible to receive an A+. The net effect, I believe, would be a probable diminution of grade point average without the opportunity to recoup in other courses. While one argument advanced for the plus-minus system is that it would serve to attenuate grade

inflation, this particular form of attenuation seems both unnecessary and unfair.

My second reason not to approve the resolution is that I am not convinced that the present system is failing to serve the desired evaluative needs. Some have argued that the present system does not provide a sufficient level of refinement in grading. I cannot help but observe that in the student's view a B+ is still a B (and not an A) and an A- is still an A (albeit with a little of the luster worn off).

The agenda today will include consideration of an appropriate mechanism to consider the Racial and Ethnic Harassment Policy which I set in place last spring. The proposed policy is the product of an ad hoc committee charged early last year with the responsibility to draft such a policy. Events of last year caused me to believe that it was important to state a policy to the campus community without delay. Hence, I took the initiative and approved the policy as prepared by the committee with the understanding that it would receive the

review of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association during the Fall Semester. I ask that you give the policy your careful consideration and report your recommendations to me at your earliest convenience.

President Spangler announced a fourteen-point plan for the conduct of athletic programs at the constituent universities of the University of North Carolina system at the August 25, 1989 meeting of the UNC Board of Governors. Time considerations prevent a full discussion of all fourteen points today, but I will comment on three of the points which have received considerable public discussion. In his remarks, President Spangler called for a mandatory drug testing program for athletes. East Carolina University has had a mandatory, random drug testing program in place since Fall, 1985.

President Spangler further called for a public reporting of the financial reports of athletic foundations. The Pirate Club, also known as the ECU Education Foundation, has had its financial records audited by the State Auditor since its inception,

and the University has included the annual financial statement of the Pirate Club in the annual University Financial Report. I intend to include both the Medical Foundation and ECU Foundation financial statements in the 1990 University Financial Report.

The President asked each Chancellor to review the faculty role in the Athletics Committee. I have alerted Ernest Schwarz, Chair of the Athletics Committee, that I wish to discuss this matter with the Committee. I have also informed Faculty Senate leadership that I will seek their counsel in this matter following my discussion with the Athletics Committee.

Finally, I wish to share a portion of the commentary on higher education in North Carolina from the annual Almanac section from the September 6th issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education:

"For public higher education, the strength is not limited to the top research universities. The 14-campus system is thriving, with many campuses pushing to expand programs or

improve facilities. The UNC campus at Charlotte and East Carolina University in particular are seen as institutions on the move."