Pass/Fail: plausible options

By Lee Giguesir

Two and a half weeks ago, The Tech aired the issue of the effect of hidden grades system on pass/fail. The issue, however, failed to reach the question before the end of the discussion when a formal vote was deferred to this month’s meeting. It is now, two weeks later, that some come up with the faculty — what are some of the alternatives to pass/fail?

A slight variation on this option would be to leave it up to students to obtain a grade or evaluation from their instructors on an individual basis. The only advantage to this is that it eliminates the general collection of “hidden grades” by the instructor or department and limits their use to only those students who specifically request them. It does little, however, in preserving the integrity of pass/fail.

With all of its proposals, the CEFP stated: “It is the responsibility of each instructor to provide each freshman with a written statement in the form in which he or her work…” Embedded in this, it seems, is another alternative to the current system of grading or the hidden grades system. It has been suggested that there be a mechanism for keeping “hidden grades” or evaluations, but the medical schools want it removed. How can it be possible to discuss some of these alternatives which these new versions are measured.

There appears to be some sentiment both among the CEFP members and student body in general (even the letter from Marvin Sirbu G and Louis Storek “71 in The Tech, February 25) to take a “hard stand” and refuse to “go pass/fail.” In other words, Louis Storek put it: “By what right does John Hopkins ask us to subvert our education system?”

While this somewhat philosophical construction of the issue seems to be a much more important question, and one with a more personal significance, I would like to add a few more points of view to the discussion.

To the editor:

Paul Schindler’s article on campus media (February 25) may have created some controversy about the financial status of Thursday which I would like to correct. I will not now discuss my original article, but I will say that I disagree with Mr. Schindler; I wish to point out some errors in his article and explain something he leaves a mystery.

The section of the article on the financial statements of Thursday is incorrect without explanation, that Thursday’s financial record were at Simmons. Though this was true during most of last term, it was not true at the time of the writing of the article. Furthermore, they were at Simmons because our business manager, Mindy Paiz, was a Simmons student. It is not accurate to state the records were “unavailable.” Mindy had been at all times, Mindy has since resigned, and our new business manager, Jack Moninger, is currently preparing various statements and summaries.

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