"D" is failing in some departments

(Continued from page 4)

The controversy in this case centered around the academic value of the grade "D." Most departments use the definition on the back of the grade report, which states that a "D" reflects "minimal acceptable performance, demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it impossible to proceed further in the field without additional work." This means that a "D" is a passing grade.

The faculty has granted the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics and the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science the right to prohibit students from registering for a subject if they have received a "D" in a prerequisite, for example. This means that if you get a "D" in a course that is a prerequisite for a required course, you fail.

This policy - which is several years old - can only be used by these two departments. If any other department wants to implement such a policy - and it is very possible that several other departments will want to - they must get permission from the Committee on Educational Policy.

One purpose of this type of policy is to discourage enrollment in a crowded department without lowering the grade curve. A department can make "D" a failing grade without lowering the cumulative average of its undergraduate students.

Drinking and driving can kill a friendship

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