

SM 2/12/68

TO: All Members of Senate

FROM: H.M. Evans,
Secretary of Senate and
Registrar.

December 2, 1968.

Re: REPORT ON REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION AND THE CALCULATION OF
THE GRADE POINT AVERAGE FOR HONORS AND HONORS FIRST CLASS DEGREES.

1. At its meeting on October 7, 1968, Senate passed motions as follows:
 - (a) "that (1) for the First Class Honors Degree a Grade Point Average of 3.5 be required and that the 3.5 Grade Point Average be calculated from the Cumulative Grade Point Average based on the entire 132 semester hours required for the degree or on the 60 semester hours of 300 and 400 level courses included in the degree requirements, whichever is the higher Grade Point and (2) that the same procedure be followed for calculating the Cumulative Grade Point Average of 3.0 required for an Honors Degree as pertains in calculating the 3.5 Grade Point Average for the First Class Honors Degree."
 - (b) "that there be no distinction in the General Degree between different classifications"

It was noted that the result of this vote would provide for the First Class Honors Degree, an Honours Degree, and a General Degree which would not carry indication of any classification of First Class Standing.

2. The question was raised at the meeting of November 12th, by D. Sullivan, Dean of Arts, concerning the method of calculating the Grade Point Average referred to in item (1) above. Extract from the minutes of November 12th follows:

"D. Sullivan referred to the last item on page 6 of the minutes of the Open Session of October 7 stating that there was some misunderstanding and disagreement concerning the interpretation of the statements pertaining to the calculation of averages required for the First Class Honors Degree and for the Honors Degree. Question concerned grades of 'N' and 'F' as to whether these were to be dropped in the calculation of the averages as outlined on page 6 or whether they were to be included, and asked the Secretary to comment.

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*Grading
on degree*

The Secretary indicated that it was his interpretation that the average would be calculated on the courses "used for credit towards the degree" and that on this basis the grades of 'N' and 'F' would not be included in the particular calculation for the average to which reference was being made. He explained that there would be available to departments and faculty a semester Grade Point Average which would include such gradings, that there would be available also a Cumulative Grade Point Average which would be based on all courses undertaken thereby including grades of 'N' and 'F', and that there would be an additional calculation which would not include such gradings but which would be in keeping with the intent of the motion of page 6 under interpretations as made by the Registrar's Office.

The Secretary noted that at present the minimum requirement for graduation on the General Program is a grade point average of 2.0 computed on the courses used for the degree and enquired whether it was proposed to continue with this regulation based solely on the 120 semester hours or whether an alternative average could be utilized calculated on the 60 semester hours taken in the upper years; of which 45 must be upper division courses number 300 or above.

3. Attention is drawn to Page 47 of the 1968-9 Calendar as follows:

Graduation

* General Degree

The minimum requirement for graduation on the General program is a Grade Point Average of 2.0, computed on the courses used for credit towards the degree.

* Honors Degree

Faculty of Arts: For graduation on the honors program a student will normally be expected to achieve a cumulative Grade Point Average of not less than 3.0 at all levels in the honors field or a cumulative Grade Point Average of not less than 3.0 in all courses covering the 72 hours of upper level work.

Faculty of Education: For graduation on the Honors program a student will normally be expected to meet the requirements as specified by the Faculties of Arts and Science and in addition obtain a cumulative Grade Point Average of not less than 3.0 in the Professional Development Program.

Faculty of Science: For graduation on the honors program a student will be expected to achieve a cumulative Grade Point Average of 3.0.

* Honors First Class Degree

Faculty of Arts: For the award of the Honors First Class degree the Grade Point Average should normally be not less than 3.5. Some departments may set greater emphasis on the Honors essay.

Faculty of Education: For the award of the Honors First Class degree a student will normally be expected to meet the requirements as specified by the Faculties of Arts and Science and in addition obtain a cumulative Grade Point Average of not less than 3.5 in the Professional Development Program.

*Grading
Honors*

Faculty of Science: For the award of the Honors First Class degree a minimum Grade Point Average of 3.5 is required.

Each candidate for a degree must make formal application for graduation at least seven weeks before the end of the semester in which he will complete the requirements for the degree. Special forms for this purpose are provided by the Registrar's Office. Final dates for submission of applications are shown on the Academic Calendar of Events (pages 9 to 12).

The list of successful candidates will be released upon approval by the Senate.

4. Page 63 of the 1968-69 Calendar for the B.A. Degree indicates that for the General Program "a total of 120 semester hours of credit is required" and that for the Honors program "a total of 132 semester hours of credit is required". It further indicates "for the award of the Honors First Class Degree the Grade Point Average should normally not be less than 3.5. Some Departments may set greater emphasis on the Honors essay."

5. The credit requirements for the B.A. Degree are outlined on Page 65 as follows:

Credit Requirements for the B.A. Degree

First Four Levels	General and Honors Program Sixty semester hours of which no more than 15 may be in courses numbered 300 and above. 1. Pre-requisites to majors are included in this total. 2. No more than 24 hours may be required by any department. 3. No student may register for courses for credit totaling more than 16 hours without permission of the Dean of Arts.
	General Program At least 60 semester hours of which at least 45 must be in courses numbered 300 and above. 1. At least 30 hours must be in one subject. 2. No student may register for courses for credit totaling more than 18 hours without permission of the Dean of Arts.
	Honors Program At least 72 semester hours of which at least 60 must be in courses numbered 300 and above. 1. At least 50 hours must be in one subject.

Course Requirements

In the interest of assuring that students in the Faculty of Arts have a reasonably well rounded program of courses, the disciplines in this and other Faculties have, for advisement purposes, been divided into four groups:

- Group A — Departments of English
History
Modern Languages
Philosophy

6. Similar types of statements appear for the Bachelor of Education Degree and for the Bachelor of Science Degree.

7. I am assured that insofar as the office of the Registrar is concerned the average which has been used in determining the student's average for graduation purposes has been that based on the passing grades of the courses used for credit towards the degree, as outlined on Page 47 of the Calendar with reference to the General Degree. The same procedure has been utilized insofar as the Registrar's Office is concerned in calculating the average for the Honours Degree and for Honours First Class -- namely the average based on courses needed to complete graduation requirements. In those instances where a student has failed a course, or passed a course and the course is later taken and passed, the highest passing grade has been utilized in calculating the Grade Point Average for graduation purposes.

In order to graduate a student must have fulfilled the appropriate Majors or Honours requirements and elective requirements and the courses needed for these purposes only would be used in determining whether or not requirements for graduation, for Honours graduation or for first class Honours graduation have been fulfilled.

I am further informed that the previous Registrar had Data Processing runs completed to give information based on the Grade Point Average only on courses passed and that these were discussed where necessary with Departments. Apparently there were but few persons graduating at that time.

Information has also been provided that such a Data Processing run was not prepared in the Spring Semester 1968. Reference has been made to a case from one of the faculties specifically referred to Senate wherein the Cumulative Grade Point Average based on all courses undertaken, whether passed or failed, was significantly less than 2.0 but that the candidate on the basis of the minimum 120 semester hours needed for the degree did achieve a Grade Point Average of 2.0 or higher. Graduation was awarded.

8. Under the interpretations of the Calendar as has been applied by the Registrar's Office a student who has taken 120 semester hours of work or more, with passes in the necessary subjects needed to fulfil major and elective requirements who obtains a Grade Point Average of 2.0 or higher counting only courses passed would fulfil graduation requirements.

Similarly a student who undertook 132 semester hours or more of on Honours program, who completed the necessary Honours courses and electives and who achieved a Grade Point Average of 3.0 or higher would be considered as having fulfilled the requirements for Honours standing.

A similar process pertains to Honours first class standing.

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9. Under these conditions Grades of 'F' and 'N' would not be included in determining whether or not graduation requirements had been completed, unless certain special courses needed for graduation had not been passed.

10. The alternative suggestion and interpretation to which reference was made at the Senate Meeting of October 7th apparently would be based on a cumulative Grade Point Average based on all courses undertaken, whether or not such courses might be extra to the minimum requirements of the Degree.

A further alternative could be suggested which would consider only the minimum courses needed for the degree but in the event a course were used and a student had failed the course but later passed it, both the failure grade and the passing grade would be included in calculating the Grade Point Average or alternatively, if a student passed a course with a relatively low grading and later raised the grading both gradings would be utilized in calculating the Grade Point Average for Graduation or Honours or Honours First Class purposes.

NOT

This would be in keeping with the interpretation and practice which I have been assured has been followed within the Registrar's Office. It seems possible that it may have been followed within certain Departments but full data is not currently available.

11. It will be noted with the utilization of a cumulative grade Point Average including 'F's' and 'N's' and lower passing gradings, (where higher gradings later have been achieved), would reduce the Grade Point Average obtained by a student if compared with the Grade Point Average based solely on passing marks (or higher passing marks) in the minimum subjects needed to fulfil graduation requirements, or Honours, or First Class Honours requirements -- in the case of any single student.

12. A number of universities utilize the interpretation as applied by the Registrar's Office to the Simon Fraser University Calendars -- and a number of universities elsewhere utilize the cumulative Grade Point Average including passes and failures based on courses undertaken.

Clear decision is required of the interpretation to be used.

13. Attention is again drawn to Page 47 of the University Calendar "General Degree -- the Minimum requirement for graduation on the General Program is a Grade Point Average of 2.0 computed on the courses used for credit towards the degree". The principle established for General graduation in calculating averages has been followed through in calculating averages for Honours standing or for First Class Honours standing -- using the gradings obtained on courses needed to fulfil minimum requirements for the particular degree.