

Highest retaken course grade counts

New state policy may improve GPAs

By CATHY KIRKHAM
Battalion Reporter

University students will be given another chance to improve their grade point averages because of a new state policy which goes into effect in 1982.

The policy of the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, will allow students seeking admission into graduate or professional school to average only the highest grade of a retaken course into their grade point averages.

The policy, adopted on March 9, will eventually allow students to take a course as many times as they want without penalty, Rep. Mary Jane Bode, D-Austin, said.

The original grade and the new grade will both appear on a student's transcript. The GPA, however, will reflect only the student's best effort.

Rep. W.G. "Bill" Coody, D-Weatherford, who was a professor for 15 years, first sponsored a bill in 1977 which allowed the passage of the new policy. That bill says:

"The board shall by rule establish a mandatory uniform method of calculating the official grade point average of a student enrolled in, or seeking admission into a graduate or professional school of, an institution of higher education."

"I proposed the bill out of fairness," Coody said. "There needed to be a consistent policy. The Coordinating Board took it from there."

The main reason Coody said the bill was needed was to help women, who were especially discriminated against by the old system.

Many women go to school, decide to get married and drop out of school, he said. Several years later they decide to go back to school only to find a list of F's still on their record.

He also contrasted the severity of punishment to a criminal charge:

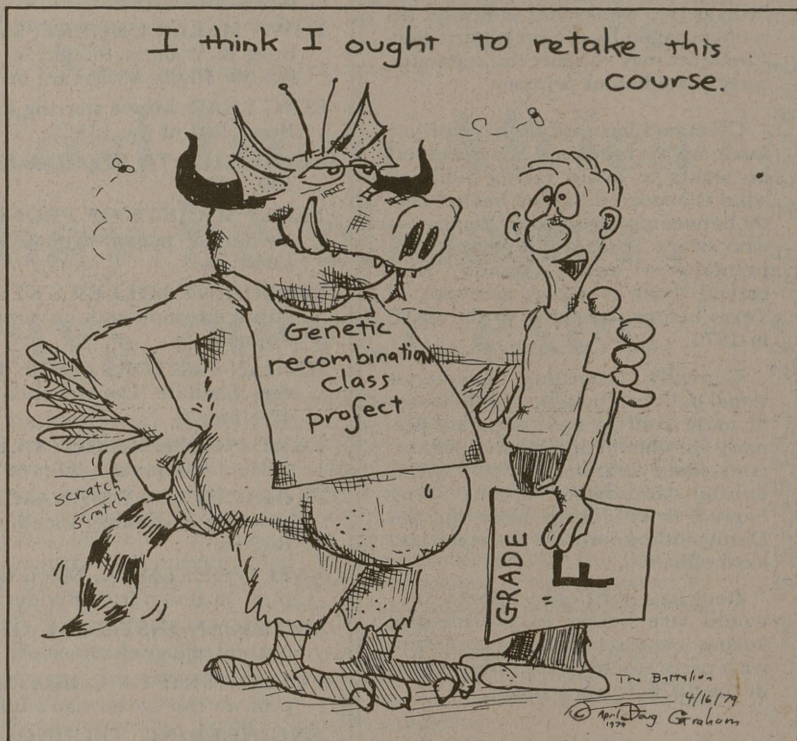
"When a seventeen-year-old is accused of committing murder, it is wiped off his record. When a student makes a bad grade, the thing follows him around. It just isn't fair," he said.

Dr. Haskell M. Monroe Jr., associate vice president for academic affairs at Texas A&M University, said Texas A&M strongly opposes the policy.

"Our philosophy is a GPA should be what it says — a grade point average. All grades should count.

In a case where two students are competing for an opening, the GPAs are shown as the same, while one student may have had to take a course several times to get finally get it."

He said the Coordinating Board was influenced by problems Dallas junior colleges proposed. For example, some students get sick and have to drop out. Others sign up for the wrong course and don't realize it. Monroe said, "We told them, we understand these things happen and



we make allowances. These things come up all the time in a major university. They don't seem to understand that we already have measures set up. We have Withdrew (W), Withdrew passing (WP), and Incomplete (I). We don't just flunk them."

Dr. Robert S. Stone, Dean of the college of medicine at Texas A&M, said the policy won't affect the quality of the students admitted into medical school. "We always have had outstanding applicants to the medical school."

The medical school reviewing board will continue to look at how long it takes a student to get through the curriculum. They also will check the work load the student has taken. "We need to understand why a student drops a course or does poorly," he said.

Dr. G.W. Kunze, dean of the graduate college at Texas A&M, said, "The policy will definitely affect the grade quality of students since only the last grade can be considered and bad grades are easily covered up."

When asked why the policy will only apply to pre-professionals and graduate school applicants, Bode said, "This is where people make the extra effort. Parents and employers aren't concerned with the difference between a final 2.6 and a 3.2. But when getting into graduate school, it is a do-or-die matter."

Tom Kleinschmidt, a second year veterinary medicine student at Texas A&M, said, "I don't like it. It contributes to the grade inflation already going on. I think there are already too many allowances — many

and then change majors. They shouldn't be penalized." He said he liked the present system at Texas A&M.

Coody, however, said the board's decision was reached due to the desperate need for a uniform state grade policy.

A problem arises when a student first goes to one college, drops out and then decides to come back, he said. That college allows the student to retake courses. All grades are present on his transcript, but the GPA represents only the best effort.

Then another student from another college goes back to his school and retakes courses. But he is penalized by the old low grades still on his transcript that were also figured into his GPA.

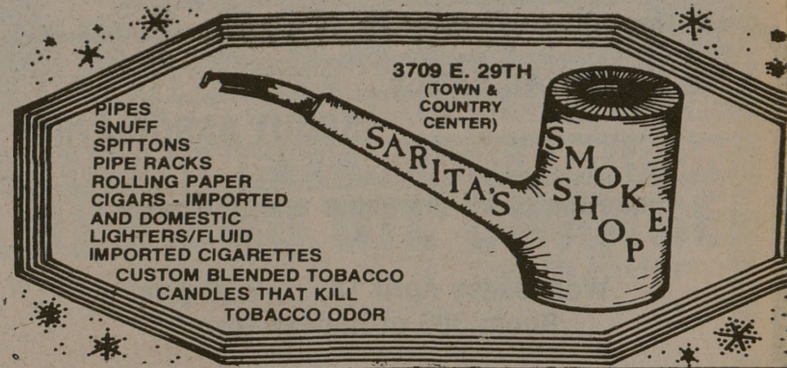
Students at Texas A&M aren't given a second chance, he said.

"The state schools are still strongly opposed to the board's decision," he said. "They don't understand."

As a defense, they predicted the cost for carrying out the new policy to be about \$1 million. That is absurd. All it will cost them is changing a little wording in the new catalogs, which are rewritten yearly anyway.

Ashworth explained why the policy won't take effect until 1982.

"First, to be certain that none of the students presently enrolled will



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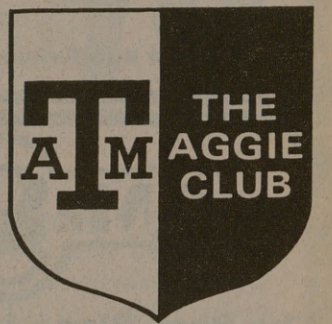
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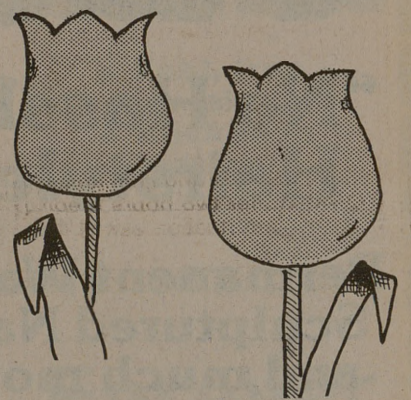
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