

IF ANY Sooner alumni imagine that the so-called "flunk fee" which is being put into effect by the University this year means that a rich student can flunk with impunity while a poor student will have to leave school if he flunks, they can cease worrying.

Any such idea is entirely erroneous and the University administration is doing its best to explain to the public that the new fee, which is correctly described as "a fee for repeating instruction," will be administered in such a way as to cause no unfair hardship on the working student or one who is trying to go to school on a shoestring.

There are two important angles to be remembered:

1. The fee is *not* a fine or penalty designed to punish the student who fails in a course, but is designed to help pay part of the extra expense the state incurs when a student flunks a course and has to repeat work, and to finance a program for removing the *causes* of failures.

2. The fee will not be collected if the flunking student can show that there were extenuating circumstances.

The policy outlined by the Board of Regents and to be followed by a student-faculty committee that will be in charge of administering the program, provides that the fee can be waived if it is found that circumstances beyond the control of the student caused his failure.

The procedure to be followed gives the student every possible consideration.

Suppose Bill Smith flunks three hours of mathematics in the first semester of his freshman year. Early in the second semester when grades are complete, he receives a notice from the registry office that he has failed in the three-hour course and that he owes a fee of \$9 (\$3 per credit hour) to the treasurer's office unless he can show there were extenuating circumstances.

Bill is told, in effect, "if you feel you should not be required to pay the fee, obtain the proper form from the registry office, fill in the information required, and you will be given a personal hearing before the chairman of the committee in charge."

Meanwhile, the student's instructor in the failing course has sent to the registry office along with the failing grade report a summary of his opinions on why the Bill failed the course, and the registry office also has prepared a full record of his previous scholastic work.

Thus when Bill is interviewed by the committee chairman, there is a good background of factual information upon which to base a decision. The committee chairman asks about the student's living quarters, his employment conditions if he is a working student, his working hours, his health—everything that might have a bearing on his scholastic failure.

What's A 'Flunk Fee'?

Six thousand students on one campus tend to become statistics in the minds of college administrators, but O. U. officials are treating each failing student as an individual problem.



It is expected that in many cases this interview will result in an agreement between the student and committee chairman as to whether the fee should be paid. But if either student or committeeman desires, the case is presented to the entire committee, consisting of three faculty members and two students appointed by the president of the University, and a full hearing is given.

University officials believe that this system will make it possible to waive the fee in all cases where the student is not clearly to blame, and to collect it where the student was obviously negligent in his work.

But the program goes farther than that. It will rapidly build up a valuable fund of information that will show the real causes for scholastic failures. It should point the way for a remedial program to reduce the number of failures by removing the causes as far as possible.

Revenue from the fees is expected to make possible the development of a tutorial system that will give students individual help on their scholastic problems. After Bill fails once in his mathematics course, if he enrolls in it again it is quite possible that he will fail a second time unless the cause of the previous failure is removed. Having failed once, he will be *required* to consult a tutor and if his background for the course is faulty they will concentrate on getting him into condition to pass the course.

Thus the program is intended to give a student every fair chance to pass a course, and *not* just punish him when he fails.

On the other hand, this new plan will have no effect whatever on the elimination of students who are found incapable of benefitting from college work, or unwilling to meet the required standards. The rule for elimination of students who fail in more than a certain proportion of their work will continue to operate just as in the past.

The new remedial program is not designed to keep inferior students in school, but only to give a fair chance to those who are willing to work and show that they can make passing grades if their handicaps are removed.

There is to be no lowering of scholastic standards.

A number of University students, particularly the League of Young Democrats, attacked the new fee, and an Oklahoma City newspaper criticized it editorially. However, the criticisms were substantially refuted when full details of the new program were explained.

Members of the University administration are enthusiastic about the possibilities. They believe that the plan will prevent many failures and prove of great benefit to a large number of students.