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New Policy for Limited Grade Forgiveness

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Approved by the Senate: 11/27/2017

Approved by the President: 11/29/2017

New Policy for Limited Grade Forgiveness

Submitted by: Kelly Sullivan/Academic Standards Committee

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478-7902

11/14/2017

Motion:

The Academic Standards Committee recommends that the University adopt a policy for limited grade forgiveness. The SEC moves to accept the recommendation of the Limited Grade Forgiveness Policy.

Rationale:

OWG 6-6 recommend that the new Institution adopt a policy on repeating courses that is modeled after the current Armstrong State University policy on repeating courses. OWG 6-6 also recommended the new Institution formulate recommendations for a limited grade replacement policy. The Academic Standards Committee along with our counterparts from Armstrong was charged with drafting these policies for the new Georgia Southern. The attached policy drafts have been co-created with our colleagues and passed by at least a majority voted by both voting bodies as policy drafts to move forward to our respective Faculty Senate.

Response.

Minutes 11/27/2017

b. New Policy for Limited Grade Forgiveness
Attachment: Limited Grade Forgiveness Policy

“The Academic Standards Committee recommends that the University adopt a policy for limited grade forgiveness.” The rationale: “OWG 6-6 recommend that the new Institution adopt a policy on repeating courses that is modeled after the current Armstrong State University policy on repeating courses. OWG 6-6 also recommended the new Institution formulate recommendations

for a limited grade replacement policy. The Academic Standards Committee along with our counterparts from Armstrong was charged with drafting these policies for the new Georgia Southern and its attached policy draft.”

Robert Costomiris (CLASS) said he hadn't been able to download the attachment and asked Moderator Pirro to read it, which he did:

“Under the conditions outlined below, undergraduate students who have retaken courses and earned a higher grade may request to have the first grade excluded from their institutional GPA. If the request is approved, the Office of the Registrar will make appropriate notations next to the original course and the retaken course on the student's official transcript. Grades for all attempts at the course will appear on the student's official transcript regardless of whether or not the grade has been excluded from the student's GPA.* This policy has no effect on any GPA requirements set by state or federal laws/regulations (such as the GPA requirements set by the HOPE scholarship program). A copy of the request and approval will become part of the student's permanent record file. The attempt to repeat must be made in Spring 2019 or thereafter. Students who have repeated courses prior to this date will not be allowed to delete earlier attempts from their GPA calculation.

An undergraduate student may request to have a grade excluded from GPA computation under the following conditions:

- Only courses in Areas A through E of the University CORE are eligible for grade forgiveness.
- Only courses taken at Georgia Southern University are eligible for grade forgiveness.
- No more than a total of five course grades (from five different courses) may be replaced and excluded from the student's GPA calculations.
- Before requesting to apply the limited grade forgiveness policy, a student must have either retaken the same undergraduate course (or the renumbered substitute for that course) or taken a course that satisfies the same CORE requirement and earned a higher grade in the course retaken.
- Once a request has been approved the request cannot be revoked or reversed.
- Only grades of D, F, and WF may be forgiven.
- This policy does not apply if the original grade was assigned as a result of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
- The Limited Grade Forgiveness Policy applies only to degree-seeking students pursuing their first undergraduate degree at Georgia Southern University.

*Courses that do not count towards GPA calculations cannot count towards degree requirements. Financial Aid Implications: The granting of limited grade forgiveness does not supersede financial aid policies regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress.”

Janice Steirn (CLASS) asked if this meant that those who did not pass a particular course could replace that grade by passing a different course in the same area.

Both Mark Edwards (COSM) and Moderator Pirro said that was correct.

Heidi Altman (CLASS) understood this to mean that students could fail almost a quarter of their core and replace it.

Edwards noted that failed courses are not erased from the transcript; they are still there.

Moderator Pirro added that this impacts only calculation of the GPA. Costomiris asked where this was coming from, Armstrong or GSU. Moderator Pirro said the motion says it is based on an Armstrong template.

Christine Ludowise (Provost's office) noted that Georgia Southern used to have an unlimited grade forgiveness policy, which we jettisoned. Armstrong has some version of it that uses a Georgia State or a Georgia Tech model, so this recommendation is not what we used to have, and it's not what Armstrong has, but is a hybrid. In response to a question from Moderator Pirro, Ludowise noted GSU's old policy was unlimited: Students could replace any grade in any course at any time, and we went from that to no grade forgiveness at all. Pirro said that the recommendation would allow five.

Steirn (CLASS) noted that currently if they retake a course, it has to be the same course, and both courses now are considered in the GPA. This would not be so under the new proposal, and for many places we report GPA, not full transcripts. She thought this was an unfair representation of the kind of work the student does. If she were somebody thinking of hiring the student she would want to know that they've got to do everything twice in order to get it.

Marc Cyr (CLASS) said he had been part of the group that fought to get that adjusted GPA thrown out for the very reasons stated. But this recommendation was limited to the core, not to major classes, and limited in number. Students' graduation GPA will have two more years of grades where they can't do that kind of grade replacement. He thought the recommendation was a kind of a middle ground. He had hated our previous adjusted GPA policy, but thought we could work with this one because it gives struggling students a chance to get themselves grounded as University students.

Alice Hall (CHHS) noted she had been on Academic Standards when the old policy was changed, and it was to improve the rigor of the institution and less about shopping: Students were withdrawing over and over, and we were just taking their money, and their GPAs were inaccurate. She didn't know if the current recommendation was a bad thing or not.

Heidi Altman (CLASS) noted that in terms of RPG, this policy would add an extra semester just for the forgiveness courses, and if they now have 11 withdrawals, this means adding a lot of time to their core and even major program. She thought we were compounding problems.

Mark Welford (COSM) wanted to emphasize the money: One of the reasons we got rid of the old policy was that students who really couldn't make it in college were spending lots and lots of

money. Even with just five potential classes, that is a whole semester and a significant financial burden we should not be putting on our students.

Edwards noted that no one will force students to do this. It will be up to them.

Haberland echoed Hall's concern about increasing student debt, especially given our population.

Alisa Leckie (COE) seconded Cyr's comments about how some students stumble as freshmen, and it takes a little bit to get their legs under them. She noted that COE has had students apply who can't get in because of their GPA, so they have to take additional courses to raise it to COE standards. She thought that allowing students the opportunity to retake courses in the core as they're figuring out their world as university students might be beneficial overall. Steirn noted that we have early alerts and a last day to withdraw without academic penalty, and if those and other factors don't get them to withdraw before penalty, she wondered when such students would ever "find their feet." She didn't think we needed all that plus forgiveness of six withdrawals.

Provost Cone noted that when she was on the System-wide Academic Renewal Committee, they were talking about giving students a fresh start and about withdrawals and grade forgiveness. The members from the other System schools were appalled: Georgia Southern was the most rigid of all the schools in the System on academic forgiveness. They couldn't believe that we didn't allow students to do that, and noted that most of our sister institutions allow some type of grade forgiveness.

Chris Brown (CLASS) asked whether we had to approve or disapprove the motion, or whether we could recommend changes.

Moderator Pirro thought it was either approve or not approve because these same recommendations were being voted on by Armstrong's senate as well. He called for a vote: 25 in favor, 8 opposed.

The motion was Approved.