

Changes in Academic Regulations for Undergraduate Students

Effective Fall 2001

April 30, 2001

MEMORANDUM

TO: Hank Lazer

FROM: Nancy S. Barrett, Provost

RE: Changes in Academic Regulations for Undergraduate Students

I approve the implementation of all items included in the proposed *Changes in Academic Regulations for Undergraduate Students* ([see attached](#)).

These items have been discussed, revised, and reviewed over the past four months. You have solicited and received significant input from faculty and students. The proposed changes have been reviewed and approved by the Undergraduate Programs and Service Committee (a standing University committee), the Faculty Senate (including the Academic Affairs Committee of the Senate), the Assistant and Associate Deans, and, most recently (April 25, 2001), by the Council of Deans.

All of these proposals take effect with the Fall 2001 semester. Please work closely with Roger Thompson to implement the new regulations and to notify all students of the changes in academic policies. I would also ask you to work with the Faculty Senate to inform faculty of the new Five-Week Progress Report for freshmen.

c: Norm Baldwin, Faculty Senate
Pat Bauch, Faculty Senate
Don DeSmet, Faculty Senate
Steve Miller, Faculty Senate
Jonathan Macklem, President, SGA
James Perrien, Vice President for Academic Affairs, SGA
Mark Nelson, Chair, Undergraduate Programs and Services Committee
Roger Thompson, University Registrar
Sybil Todd, Vice President for Student Affairs
Council of Deans

[Attachment](#)

Changes in Academic Regulations for Undergraduate Students

At present, we have a number of academic regulations that, for various reasons, require review and revision. In fact, overall, we need to establish a comprehensive, holistic strategy that provides for clear, logical regulations; flexible regulations that hold students accountable but that also provide a reasonable safety net for students making the transition from high school to the University; and rules that have a consistency of application.

Proposals

1. During freshman orientation (the summer prior to the start of the freshman year),

forge a strong parent-student partnership. Incoming "traditional age" students will be asked to sign a waiver of confidentiality that will allow the University to keep parents informed of a student's progress during the freshman year. For parents that do not attend the orientation, we will mail information so that they can participate in the parent-student partnership. This information-sharing program mail also be used to include information about poor class attendance, midterm and semester grades, as well as to provide information on support services available on campus (through the Center for Teaching and Learning and through advising units in the colleges).

2. Midterm grades (or Five Week Progress Report) for all freshmen These grades (see #1) will be sent to the student, to advisors in the student's college, and to parents. The student services/advising areas in the colleges will devise programs for working with students whose midterm grade reports indicate academic difficulties. A proposal under discussion would be to have a Freshman Advising week in conjunction with the release of the Five Week grades so that all freshmen students would have some contact with advisors and would learn about available resources for assistance. Midterm grades will be assigned at the end of the fifth week of the semester. Grades will be assigned using the standard ABCDF (+/-) grading scale. (Rationale: while the midterm grades will be of greatest value as an early warning to students who are in danger of failing a course, the grade reports are also important to students on scholarship who must maintain a 3.0 GPA in order to retain the scholarship.) Faculty teaching courses with large freshman enrollments-particularly 100-level courses, should (whenever possible) include some significant course work that is graded and returned by the end of the fifth week of class.
3. Withdrawal from a class: [Note: Information regarding withdrawal from class would appear as a standard item on all course syllabi.] · Change from the current 4-week period to drop a course with a grade of "W" to a 10-week drop date. Students who drop a course up to the 10-week deadline would automatically receive a grade of "W" in the course. (Rationale: in a 15-week semester, 7 ½ weeks is the midpoint. Many midterm exams or midterm assignments are due in the eighth week. A 10-week withdrawal deadline gives the faculty member one week beyond the eighth week to grade and return the midterm exam, and it gives the student a few days to decide whether or not to drop the course.) · Under normal circumstances, students would not be able to drop a course after the 10-week deadline. Under extraordinary circumstances, students may petition the dean's office in the college where the student is enrolled to drop a course with a designation of "W" after the 10-week deadline. Such requests are initiated in the dean's office where the student is enrolled and must be accompanied by significant supporting documentation to verify extraordinary circumstances. The dean's office will verify the claims in the petition. Then, the dean's office will contact the faculty member of the course to determine whether or not the student is passing the course and is thus eligible for the granting of a "W" after the 10-week deadline. · During orientation and in subsequent advising sessions, the financial aid ramifications of students dropping courses must be made clear. Similarly, students who anticipate applying to graduate and professional schools will be advised about the potential negative impact of a transcript with many grades of "W" and about negative impact of the appearance of "grade-jockeying." · NOTE: See also items #4 and #8. The proposed withdrawal date has serious implications for the forgiveness and for a possible course repeat policy.
4. Academic Forgiveness Eliminate Academic Forgiveness entirely. It is a policy that has been misunderstood (by students and parents), applied without any consistency from college to college, abused, and, due to changes in grading policies, is no longer needed. Coupled with a 10-week withdrawal deadline (at which point the

student receives a "W"), and a more sensible Withdrawal from the University policy, the need for Academic Forgiveness disappears.

5. Eliminate the grades of WP and WF. (If a student fails a course, the student receives an F.) In practice, the WF is rarely given. (Of W, WP, and WF grades for the period 1998-4 through all terms of the year 2000, only 597 "WF" grades were given of the 24,739 "withdraw" grades given.)
6. Withdrawal from the University. Proposal: create a two-stop withdrawal involving the Office for Academic Records and a student's college (academic advising). The student receives a grade of W in all courses. Students will also be given the option of visiting the Dean of Students office to discuss any outstanding issues and concerns at the time of withdrawal from school. Students who withdraw from the University (and who are not on academic suspension) will be eligible to return the following semester without filing a new application.
7. Academic Bankruptcy - a policy (see p. 21 of current catalog) which allows a student to petition to withdraw retroactively from one academic term of work (all courses) due to "extreme personal, emotional, or financial circumstances so devastating..." - will remain as is.
8. Course repeat (and grade replacement) policy. · As is the case at present, a ZERO course repeat/replacement policy. (You took the course-you keep the grade.) For additional information about the current policy, see page 22 of the Undergraduate Catalog. Students at present must repeat required courses in which a grade of "F" is earned. Each enrollment counts and each grade counts in the computation of the grade point average. As stated in the catalog: "In some academic divisions, a student who has obtained the dean's permission may repeat a course for which he or she has already earned credit."

4/30/01