

Academic Council Agenda
Friday, Oct 3rd, 2014
2:00 PM
Macfeat House

- I. Approval of the Minutes for the Meeting of 29 August, 2014 – approved via email
- II. Remarks from the Chair (Janice Chism)
- III. Comments from Acting President and Provost (Debra Boyd)
- IV. Committee Reports
 - A. CUC (Will Thacker)

 - B. General Education (Laura Glasscock)
- V. Remarks from Council of Student Leaders Chair (Ian Deas)
- VI. Old Business
 - A. Status report on General Education Working Groups on the Activity, Technology and Quantitative Requirements
- VII. New Business
 - A. Referral of Items from Undergraduate Petitions Committee for Academic Council consideration
 - i. Honors at graduation (see attachment 1)
 - ii. Course repeat policy (see attachment 2)
- VIII. Announcements
- IX. Adjournment

Attachment 1

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 14, 2014

TO: Academic Council c/o Chair Jo Koster

FROM: University Petitions Committee
Kristin Kiblinger (Chair)

RE: policy regarding calculating honors

The University Petitions Committee wishes to call Academic Council's attention to the existing policy regarding how honors eligibility is calculated when students graduate. Currently, *all* past college grades affect the calculation that determines eligibility for honors, no matter how old the grades, and this applies whether the grades were earned at Winthrop or at another institution.

We received multiple petitions related to this issue. The petitions asked that very old grades (e.g., ten or more years old) not affect calculations for honors. There were cases of students who had very poor college grades as teenagers. Later in their lives, when they were more mature, they returned to college and did very well. However, they could not qualify to graduate with honors because of very poor grades from a decade or longer ago. The argument was that such students should be granted forgiveness for grades made long ago in very different circumstances, because those grades no longer reflected the kind of students they are today.

There was disagreement among our committee members about whether it was appropriate to exclude such grades for the purposes of calculating honors eligibility. Some members wondered whether there might be a particular kind of honors (other than cum laude, magna cum laude, and summa cum laude) that might be awarded in such circumstances. There was also some concern about keeping our policy in line with those of peer institutions, discipline-based honor societies, and accrediting bodies. We do not necessarily mean to endorse the need for a policy change, but just wanted to call Academic Council's attention to this matter, so that the policy might be reexamined and either affirmed or revised, given that it has generated multiple petitions.

Attachment 2

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 16, 2014

TO: Academic Council c/o Chair Janice Chism

FROM: University Petitions Committee

Kristin Kiblinger (Former Chair)

(This is unfinished business carrying over; Marge Moody is Chair this year.)

RE: concern about rule regarding repeating courses for grade replacement

In an effort to flag issues that come up as a result of reviewing petitions, the University Petitions Committee wishes to call Academic Council's attention to an issue regarding the grade exemptions rule for repeated courses (which can be found on p. 12 of the 2014-2015 catalog in the Academic Regulations section). The rule says that a student may repeat a course and replace the grade with the more recent grade, that a student may do this up to four times (under certain conditions), and that the grade exemptions will be automatically applied to the first four repeated courses as they are taken. A petition at our July 22, 2014 meeting was a case in which a student had already repeated four one-credit-hour courses and so had exhausted his allowable number of exemptions but asked to have his fourth exemption applied to a three-credit-hour course rather than to one of the one-credit-hour courses.

As a result of discussing this petition, we realized that, as the rule is written, there could arise a scenario in which one student could be exempting as many as sixteen hours (four four-hour courses) while another student is only allowed to exempt four hours (four one-hour courses), a discrepancy which might be perceived as unfair. This made us think about the fact that the limit is defined in terms of courses as opposed to credit hours.

Furthermore, if a student takes his or her fourth and fifth repeated courses in the same semester, the Registrar is already forced to choose which course to use for the fourth and final grade exemption. If the two courses have different original grades and/or different credit hours, there seems to be an assumption that the exemptions should be used to the student's best advantage, which may not otherwise happen when the rule is merely applied automatically to whichever four courses are repeated first.

It is not the place of our committee to recommend a revision of the rule. We were not elected for that task. However, we feel that we should communicate concerns that become apparent in the course of reviewing petitions.