

REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Brief History of Issue - why the issue is being considered:

Academic Affairs, in collaboration with academic associate deans, academic deans, and leaders in records and registration and admissions, propose a change to the academic standing policy. The major changes to the policy include: 1) students with semester GPA below 1.0 are not automatically suspended but are instead placed on probation; 2) students will enter the university with no academic standing, so no students will be admitted on probation; 3) wording was changed from Academic Warning to Academic Concern and wording was updated on where students should seek support. When students are placed on Academic Concern, they will receive systematic contacts at key time points from associate deans and/or academic advisors (e.g., before the semester starts, after week 4 and week 6, and after midterm grades are posted). Students on Academic Probation will receive contacts prior to the semester and at key points (i.e., after midterm grades are posted) to provide guidance and support. Students returning from Suspension will also receive additional guidance and support from associate deans, similar to the current policy/process. These changes are intended to give students ample opportunity to make academic progress following a single poor semester, but not excessive time where they end up with an unrecoverable GPA or accumulated student debt. A pilot of the policy change was completed, primarily with first year students, from spring 2022-spring 2023, with outcomes generally equivalent between students who were suspended and students who would formerly be suspended but not were suspended under the pilot policy.

Points Discussed by Committee:

1. What can faculty do when they notice a struggling student? Utilize Navigate to report concerns – notification is an option for any student; progress reports are now requested by Academic Affairs for certain groups of students.
2. Will more sections of GEN 201 be needed and how are instructors selected for those? More sections have been added and have been taught by a variety of instructors; ongoing monitoring will occur with these, with more sections added as needed.
3. Support offered is more proactive than reactive; during the pilot, students receive contact from associate dean or ARCC advisor early, when on probation, rather than upon return from suspension. Early intervention has been successful so far.
4. Students on probation are required, at least by policy, to connect with their ARCC advisor or the associate dean; this policy, even if difficult to enforce, gives advisors and associate deans more authority to get students in for support.
5. In what situations are students admitted on probation? Typically, these are transfer students, but they still have at least a 2.0 GPA in order to be admitted. Occasionally these are high school students who had a poor final semester but had a good academic record prior to that.
6. Some students may benefit from a semester break. Is this policy going to work against those students' best interests? The associate deans work with individuals in each category (e.g., probation, suspension), and requiring a meeting between the student and associate dean might be the necessary step to counsel the student on the best option. Rather than one size fits all, this allows associate deans flexibility to help students identify the right choice for them but errs on the side of giving students a second chance.

7. Rapid Response Team worked with first semester freshmen needing additional support during Fall 2022, offering resources; the progress report helped them identify students who needed follow-ups and extra support this spring.
8. The goal of this policy revision is to find a balance between supporting student growth and not letting them get themselves into a position from which they cannot recover.

Pros of Recommendation:

Updates to this policy will emphasize supports available to students and be a proactive process to help students get support before they get to suspension. Because many students who were suspended after one semester successfully appealed, this reduces barriers to students who didn't understand the appeal process. Changes to academic standing upon admission will allow students to make a fresh start, but also has mechanisms in place (e.g., Navigate progress reports) to ensure success.

Cons of Recommendation:

Requirements to meet with associate deans and/or ARCC advisors will be difficult to enforce. Language is helpful, however, to provide associate deans some authority to request meetings with students who are on probation to make a plan.

Technology/Human Resource Impact:

No technology impact; Navigate is already utilized. Faculty may need to learn the Navigate process (hopefully that is already underway, as it is used for more than just this policy). Overall demands on associate deans and ARCC are likely to remain fairly consistent with current levels of need.

Committee Recommendation:

The committee approved the revision of the Academic Standing Policy.

MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

by a vote of 8 for to 0 against on February 21, 2023 (Date)

Recommends that:

The Academic Standing Policy be revised, as specified in attached memo, starting 2023-2024 AY:

Implementation Date: 23/24 catalog

Signed: _____
Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office