

Academic Policies Committee

Meeting: Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 4 pm

Attendees: Michel Pleimling, Keith Goyne, Susan Sumner, Dan Thorp, Keith Thompson, Jen Pike (minutes)

Absent: Kim Smith

Continued discussion on revision of policy 6305

A final discussion took place regarding changes to Policy 6305 that should be proposed to CUSP.

2.1 Discussion: Continued Enrollment

From the draft of a revision of Policy 6305 discussed at APC meeting

Continued enrollment in the University is a privilege that is granted as long as the student is making satisfactory progress toward a degree.

All students must meet the following minimum criteria to be certified as making satisfactory progress toward a degree.

1. Upon having attempted 72-semester credits (including transfer, advanced placement, advanced standing, and credit by examination) students must:
 - a. Be enrolled in a degree-granting program, and
 - b. Be certified at the close of the academic year by their department as making satisfactory progress toward a degree based upon pre-established minimum criteria (from departmental program requirements) that must be met for departmental certification.
2. Upon having attempted 60-semester credits (including transfer, advanced placement, advanced standing, and credit by examination), students must have an in-major GPA of 2.0000 or above. They need to maintain an in-major GPA of 2.000 or above until graduation.

Students who have not met these conditions for eligibility for continued enrollment will be declared by their academic dean to be ineligible to register or return at the end of any academic semester for a specified period of time to be determined by the academic dean. Under extenuating circumstances, exceptions to these policies may be made by the student's academic dean.

CUSP wished to have a simple way to track progress, and in-major GPA is the most straightforward way to do that.

The committee felt that 72 hours for the GPA check was better than 75 so that transfer students who took less than 15 hours in their first semester would not be missed since transfer students can come in with 60 credits.

Some units aren't doing anything with in-major GPA and would need to spin up processes.
(Note added on 2/28/2023: In a meeting with the University Registrar it was mentioned that a process is currently implemented that will allow easy requests of in-major GPAs through Data Warehouse)

What contributes to the in-major GPA is defined by different units in vastly different ways. It was suggested that being specific about what can count toward the in-major GPA would be useful.

The group discussed at what point probation vs. suspension was appropriate and if suspension meant suspension from their major or suspension from the university. The determination was that probation should be the first step if the in-major GPA falls below 2.0 and then suspension from their major if the situation is not remedied the next semester. The language in the policy needs to be very clear about the meaning of suspension.

It was determined that these potential policy changes should be reviewed by advising leads to make sure that any policy changes can be monitored and enforced.

2.1.1 discussion: Other Policies

From the draft of a revision of Policy 6305 discussed at APC meeting

Any college or department may develop, adopt, publish and adhere to continued enrollment policies that are in addition to this policy with the approval of the Commission on Undergraduate Studies & Policies. College and departmental policies need to be consistent with other university policies and graduation requirements. College and departmental policies therefore need to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Statements requiring overall GPA and in-major GPA to be higher than needed for graduation (2.0000 for overall GPA and 2.0000 for in-major GPA) are not permitted.
2. Statements restricting the number of attempts at any given course to less than three are not permitted.
3. Statements are not allowed to require specific grades for courses. It is permissible to include that a course needs to be "passed with the required grade," thus referring to the graduation requirements.
4. Statements that provide guidance to students and allow them to gauge their progress in the major should be formulated as recommendations. For example: "It is recommended that students complete successfully xx credit of in-major courses upon attempting yy credits." Similarly, statements/checkpoints that mention specific courses should also be formulated as recommendations. Students should not be removed from their major if they fail to achieve a recommended checkpoint.

Significant discussion took place regarding the nature of some programs requiring a higher grade for some classes than what the university requires. Graduation requirements require the passing of courses, not passing with a certain grade. The group liked aligning progress to degree requirements with graduation requirements.

2.2 discussion: Associate and Undergraduate Academic Eligibility

From the draft of a revision of Policy 6305 discussed at APC meeting

Students who maintain the required minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 and do not have two consecutive semesters with term GPAs below 2.0 (back-to-back academic warnings) are considered to be in good academic standing with the university and are eligible for continued enrollment at Virginia Tech absent any violations of policies outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

An academic warning shall be imposed when a student earns less than a 2.0 term GPA, but with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher. No notation will appear on the academic transcript. Students on academic warning will be required to sign an academic contract acknowledging that their performance is not meeting University standards and stating what actions they are committed to taking to improve performance. Students who fail to successfully complete an academic action plan may be prohibited from future enrollment by the appropriate academic dean.

Academic probation shall be imposed when cumulative GPA is less than 2.00. A student on probation:

- May take no more than 12 credits per semester;
- May be required (at the discretion of individual Colleges) to
 1. consult with an advisor before beginning a probationary semester, and
 2. to sign an academic contract acknowledging that their performance is not meeting University standards and stating what actions they are committed to taking to improve performance.

In case of extenuating circumstances, a student on probation can appeal to their academic dean to have the maximum hours per semester raised to 15.

Academic probation will be lifted when cumulative GPA is at least 2.00.

Changing the maximum number of credits for students on probation from the originally proposed 12 to 14 was discussed and the group was in agreement that 14 credits give students a little wiggle room between the floor (12 credits for some students like international students) and the maximum number of credits so that if something goes wrong students may be able to drop a class or advantageously rearrange classes without losing required status.

Students who sign up for more credits than allowed often have the last class they added dropped unless the student acts by a specified date.

(Note added on 2/28/2023: Feedback received on this consistently included concerns with a restriction to 14 credits. 15 credits were consistently preferred as this would allow a student to drop a three-credit course and remain a full-time student. The proposal

going forward will include a maximum of 15 credits for Spring and Fall semesters for students on probation. The proposal will also include capping the number of credits for students on probation to 12 for Summer terms and 3 for Winter terms.)

2.3.2 Discussion: Suspension Based on Consecutive Academic Warnings

From the draft of a revision of Policy 6305 discussed at APC meeting

Suspension will also be imposed when a student has two consecutive semesters (Fall and Spring) with a term GPA below 2.0 (two consecutive terms with Academic Warnings). A student who is placed on suspension because of consecutive Academic Warnings at the end of a fall or spring semester will be suspended from continued enrollment through the end of the subsequent fall or spring semester.

What happens when the students come back from suspension? One should specify what is expected upon return.

(Note added on 2/28/2023: In a meeting with the University Registrar it was mentioned that adding a second way to determine academic standing based on consecutive major (Spring and Fall) semesters with term GPAs below 2.0 should be possible.)

2.3.3 Discussion: Readmission

From the draft of a revision of Policy 6305 discussed at APC meeting

A student whose GPA is below 2.0 must obtain his dean's approval before returning to school.

The committee thinks that this isn't being enforced and that it is also outdated. There are too many students for this to be practical. The group would like Michel to discuss this section with Rick and Rachel to find out about the practicality of removing it.

Action Items

- Michel Pleimling to revise the document and distribute it for feedback.
- Committee members to consult with advising leads on the proposed policy changes.
- Michel will discuss Exploring majors or creating a university-wide alternative for students who need a little time to find a new major with Rick Sparks and Rachel Holloway.
- Michel will ask Rick Sparks to see if the Registrar's Office can send necessary reports to colleges (re: consecutive semesters, etc) so colleges can track progress.
- Further discussion with Rick Sparks, Rachel Holloway, and Diane Zahm, about the implementation details of the proposed changes.