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Recommended changes to the “Academic Renewal Policy” and “Academic Standing Policy”

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Approved by the Senate: 2/12/2015
Not Approved by the Senate:
Approved by the President: 2/13/2015
Not Approved by the President:

Recommended changes to the “Academic Renewal Policy” and “Academic Standing Policy”

Submitted by Diana Sturges/Academic Standards Committee

1/22/2015

Motion:

The ASC moves that the following changes are made in the current GSU Academic Renewal Policy

- 1) that Academic Renewal shall be granted after a 3-year period of absence (5-year period in current policy)
- 2) that students may request Academic Renewal within one year of re-enrollment (“by the end of second semester of re-enrollment or within one calendar year, whichever comes first” in the current policy)
- 3) that Academic Renewal granted at any USG institution be honored by GSU (“The student must re-enroll at the same institution in which he/she experienced the problem” in current policy)
- 4) that “overall GPA (all GSU and transfer) will be used to determine if students are eligible for honors at graduation” (Academic renewal GPA in current policy)

And

- 5) that Exclusion 2 period of absence in the Academic Standing Policy be changed to 3 years (5 years in current policy)

Implementation date: upon approval by the Faculty Senate

Rationale:

The Board of Regents implemented changes to the Academic Renewal Policy at the University System level that went into effect on August 20, 2014. The Academic Standards Committee was charged with reviewing the GSU's Academic Renewal Policy and its compliance with the USG Policy. The recommendations included in the motion (above) are meant to align the GSU policy with the USG policy.

Response:

Minutes: 2/12/2015: One by the Academic Standards Committee in term of changes to Academic Renewal and Academic Standing policies. My understanding is this is prompted by BOR Policy changes so that we have to change our policies to match there's.

Motion: Recommended Changes to Academic Renewal and Academic Standing Policies, Academic Standards Committee (John Brown, COBA for the committee)

John Brown (COBA): As Pat, I think, noted, we have a policy called Academic Renewal, that's mandated by the BOR. For those of you who are unfamiliar with it, someone who has been excluded and comes back can ask to basically have their slate wiped clean. They were a poorly performing student, so poorly performing that in fact, they were excluded. They are now back, hopefully, with more maturity and I don't know what other word to use. More maturity I guess will serve. And they want a clean slate. And the BOR has recently changed their policy. They gave individual units of the USG discretion about how long someone had to sit out before they could apply for, could re-enroll and apply for academic renewal. There was a range of three to five years and that of course invites a race to the bottom. So the Academic Standards Committee recommends the adoption of the three-year minimum, hang on just a second, while I, if you have not read the document, it's very brief, again, there are five points. First of all:

- 1) that Academic Renewal shall be granted after a 3-year period of absence (again the current policy is 5-years)
- 2) that students may request Academic Renewal within one year of re-enrollment (again that's a little more generous than what we have currently)
- 3) that Academic Renewal granted at any USG institution will be honored by GSU (currently you can only get the renewal by being enrolled at Georgia Southern). Now you could come from Kennesaw or Georgia College.

- 4) that “overall GPA (all GSU and transfer) will be used to determine if students are eligible for honors at graduation” (which if I’m remembering in my poor old brain is basically only grades after your clean slate are counted toward honors) And, of course,
- 5) the Exclusion 2 period which is currently 5-years will be reduced to 3 years.

Again that’s in line with System minimums which we assume everyone’s going to adopt. So again coming from a standing committee it;s our motion, or a standing committee it’s our motion doesn’t need a second. So

Pat Humphrey (COSM), Chair: Correct. As John just said this is a committee recommendation, a committee motion so it does not require a second. So that said, is there any discussion on this?

Jim LoBue (COSM): Could I ask when you say the slate is wiped clean, that means you said grades, but credit hours as well? The number of drops that a student is allowed for us those are kind of ongoing.

John Brown (COBA): I actually don’t recall a discussion about the drops in an academic career even coming up in our discussions in the committee. We’ve got grades, and your credit hours would not be counted towards graduation.

Jean Bartels (Provost): I can clarify a little bit of that. The only thing that’s wiped clean is a “D” or an “F”. And if a “D” or an “F” is wiped clean it must be a repeated course, if it is part of the major. So you don’t just automatically get some other grade, you have to actually repeat the course. But its only for “Ds’ and “Fs”. Not for “C” or above and any other things like that, if you’ve, once you’ve used it up, you’ve used it up. It doesn’t pretty much matter which way you lost it. If you earned a grade or are repeating, so it would impact your credit hours from that 12 perspective in that you wouldn’t get additional ones. They would show up. Also what will appear on the transcript is what’s been renewed. So that documents still holds those even though they are not counted in part of the cumulative grade point average. Again, if someone gets a “D” or an “F” and they ask for academic renewal and it is a request they have to make, if they ask for it, only the “Ds” and “Fs” go away. And those courses would need to be repeated. Again, it wouldn’t fall to a different phenomenon.

Lucy Green (COE): Does this apply both undergraduate and graduate? It’s for both.

John Brown (COBA): I don’t know. Our discussion was strictly about the undergraduate rather than the graduate level education.

Lucy Green (COE): I just wonder if it applies to graduate, how that would affect programs and GOMEL, especially when you are talking about students being forgiven at other institutions, and being able to bring that clean slate to Georgia Southern. Jean

Bartels (Provost): The Academic Renewal the way that the Board of Regents put forward this new policy only pertains to undergraduate.

Lucy Green (COE): Okay.

James Woods (CLASS): Point of clarification. How many times are we allowed to be renewed?

Pat Humphrey (COSM) Chair: Once.

James Woods (CLASS): Once, okay, thank you.

Pat Humphrey (COSM) Chair: Any other questions or comments?

Janice Steirn (CLASS): I was just wondering if anybody had done any research to determine whether students are more successful at the five-year end than the three-year end. Like how the choice was made other than well, most people would rather do it after three than five. Would you get more students back? But I was wondering in terms of the students, and their success following renewal, whether anybody had looked at how long they stayed out and whether that was related to chance of success.

John Brown (COBA): It wasn't a part of our discussion in Academic Standards. I see Provost Bartels' indicating an interest. Jean Bartels (Provost): What I can tell you is this: our records, we've gone back quite a ways to look at these indicate that if you are out five years you do not come back at all. There's none.

Janice Steirn (CLASS): But were the records, I understand that part -- five years they drift off and do something else. What about, like when does academic success, I guess I'm wondering if it, you know, a year a student matures especially if they are told well, if you are not in school get a job, you know, they may mature real fast. But, yes, I was just wondering if anybody had just done the correlation between how long they were actually out and I don't know, GPA when they came back. Would that be possible to do? Jean Bartels (Provost): I think that would be a fabulous research project.

Pat Humphrey (COSM) Chair: for point of information from my four-years on the Academic Standards committee, I could tell you that back in the day when it was one semester on exclusion 1 and a year on Exclusion 2, a whole lot of people came back after both of them including a whole lot of students who didn't realize that they had been excluded for say summer semester, and then oops now we're facing Exclusion 2 because they goofed up again, so that one semester was not enough, especially when it happened over a summer. The one versus three, I don't know because we haven't had a three-year exclusion, so we couldn't really say that its going to be better or worse.

Jim LoBue (COSM): Another point of clarification. On a student's transcript in renewal is there any record that the person had, was renewal or that Jean Bartels (Provost): It will be recorded that they requested renewal, so that will show up on the transcript, the final transcript.

Sally Brown (COE) It's my understanding that on the transcript there will be a # sign and this will go across all universities in Georgia and any course that has a # sign next to it is one that was counted in that academic renewal, so that will be clear on there.

Jim LoBue (COSM): I'm not sure I understand what you mean by clear. Those are the classes, the # sign is where you will take any numbers away that are used in calculating GPA and that sort of thing and credit hours is that what you mean by clear?

Sally Brown (COE): Yes, it will be an indicator but I mean clear in terms of if we get a student from Kennesaw when they come and on their transcript if you pull it up you'll clearly be able to see which courses counted in the academic renewal, and so all the registrar's offices will be doing it in a uniform manner across the System.

Pat Humphrey (COSM) Chair: Any other comments, questions, discussion? Seeing none, the motion before us is to change the period for academic standing renewal from five years to three years to change the Exclusion 2 period from five years to three years. Excuse me, I forgot the other points. John you want to rehash?

John Brown (COBA): students may request Academic Renewal within one year of reenrollment; that Academic Renewal granted at any USG institution be honored by Georgia Southern; and "overall GPA (all GSU and transfer) will be used to determine if students are eligible for honors at graduation," So someone who had totally screwed up their first time around, but got their act together could conceivably get honors if they succeed and finally graduate.

Pat Humphrey (COSM) Chair: Thank you, John. That's the motion before the floor/ All in favor please say aye, All opposed? The motion is carried.

Attachment:

**Academic Standards Committee (ASC) meeting
January 8, 2015 at 10:10am
Minutes**

The ASC convened at 10:10am and had two items on the agenda: review of appeals and discussion of the recently changed BOR Academic Renewal Policy.

Changes to the BOR Academic Renewal Policy went into effect on August 20, 2014. The ACS was charged with reviewing the GSU's Academic Renewal Policy and making the necessary changes to align GSU's policy with the USG changes.

Diana Cone presented a summary of the changes to the USG policy. The ASC discussed the changes to the ARP based on the recommendations of the ARP workgroup (Academic Renewal Policy and Procedure. Policy and Procedure overview. USG, May 2014, pg. 5)

Recommendation One: Establish a flexible period of absence to be no less than three (3) years and no more than five (5) years. The institution may choose a time period in this window that is appropriate for its mission, population of students being served, and other relevant factors. The current five-year period of absence was based on what was common at other institutions across the nation at the time. However, this figure is not based on data or research that indicates that five years is the necessary amount of time a student should be absent. This change provides institutions with more flexibility for determining the period of absence.

Current GSU policy: 5-year period of absence (p. 1b in Academic Renewal policy)
Motion to change the 5-year period of absence to a 3-year period of absence. John Brown. Second: John King. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion to adjust the Academic Standing Policy Exclusion 2 period of absence to 3-years to correspond with the change in the Academic Renewal Policy. John Brown. Second: John King. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion to make changes to the 3-year period of absence instead of 5-year period of absence in the entire Academic Renewal Policy. John Brown. Second: Sally Ann Brown. Motion approved unanimously.

Recommendation Two: Students should be encouraged to apply for Academic Renewal as soon as possible at the time of re-enrollment or enrollment. The institution can determine the deadline to apply but that deadline should be no less than one calendar year after enrollment. Current procedure states that a student has three semesters or one calendar year, whichever comes first, to apply for Academic Renewal. However a student may not be aware that Academic Renewal is an option or may decide later to pursue Academic Renewal. This change provides more discretion to those institutions that may want to provide students a longer window to apply.

Current GSU policy: If a student does not request Academic Renewal status at the time of re-enrollment after a five year or greater period of absence from any post-secondary institution, the student may do so by the end of the second semester of reenrollment or within one calendar year, whichever comes first. The Academic Renewal GPA begins with the first semester following re-enrollment (p. 2 in Academic Renewal Policy)

Motion to change GSU policy and remove the reference to semester deadline and leave the one calendar year deadline to match the one calendar year deadline in the BOR policy. Marshall Ransom.

Second: Diana Cone. Motion approved unanimously.

Recommendation Three: Allow transfer students from regionally accredited institutions of higher education to be eligible for Academic Renewal. Students in this category should be held to the same period of absence. However, because these students are not returning to their home institution, the period of absence should apply to their coursework. Only coursework completed prior to the period of eligibility would be considered for Academic Renewal.

and

Recommendation Five: If Academic Renewal is granted at one USG institution, it should be honored at another USG institution to ensure system consistency.
Current GSU policy: The student must reenroll at the same institution in which he/she experienced the problems and must not have attended any post-secondary institution for at least five calendar years prior to re-enrolling(second sentence in Academic Renewal Policy).

Motion to remove the sentence above from the GSU policy to allow Academic Renewal granted at any USG institution to be honored by GSU. Sally Ann Brown. Second: Danda Rawat. Motion approved unanimously.

Recommendation Four: Allow students to be eligible for a renewed grade point average and earn transient credits for courses taken during the period of absence or from other institutions.
Current GSU policy. Academic credit for previously completed course work including transfer course work will be retained only for courses in which an "A", "B", "C", or "S" grade has been earned. Retained grades are not calculated in the Academic Renewal GPA, but are counted in the Academic Renewal Hours Earned (1d. GSU Academic Renewal Policy)

The catalog states that no transfer credit will be assigned while students are on E1 or E2. Catalog needs to be changed to reflect changes in the Academic Renewal Policy upon approval. Diana Cone will address this issue with Enrollment Management.

Recommendation Six: Institutions should determine a process for approving and denying Academic Renewal applications as well as a process for students to re-apply for Academic Renewal if they have been denied. Institutions should determine, as part of the application process, if a student has demonstrated readiness and has the potential to be successful if granted Academic Renewal.
Current GSU policy: Policy already specifies that students have to apply for Academic Renewal and GSU has an Academic Renewal Application (attached). Registrar's office

will adjust the Academic Renewal Application to reflect changes in Academic Renewal Policy.

Recommendation Seven: Institutions should determine if a student with Academic Renewal is eligible for honors at graduation according to their institutional policies particularly given that these policies vary widely.

Current GSU policy: The Academic Renewal GPA will be used for determining academic standing and eligibility for graduation. At least 50% of work toward a degree must be completed after the granting of Academic Renewal for a student to be eligible for honors at graduation (1c)

Motion to add an additional sentence that “overall GPA (all GSU and transfer) will be used to determine if students are eligible for honors at graduation”. Sally Ann Brown. Second: John King. Motion approved unanimously.

Time for implementation of changes to Academic Renewal Policy and to E2 in Academic Standing

Policy: as soon as approved by the Faculty Senate

Motion to adjourn – John Brown. Second: John King. Meeting adjourned at 11:55am.
Submitted by Diana Sturges