Proposals from the Academic Standards Committee
January 16, 2013

Registration Issues

1. Registration Credit Limit
   
   **Current Policy:** No limit on credit hour registration. (nb: about 100 students registered for more than 18 credits last term)
   
   **Problems:**
   - This policy leads to students occupying courses they don’t intend to finish, thus blocking access to other students.
   - Leads to some academically weaker students taking on more than realistically possible (and hence poor grades or poor academic progress).
   
   **Proposal:** No student may register for more than 18 credits unless approved by the advisor of record.

2. Optional Disenrollment Policy
   
   **Current Policy:** If a professor explicitly includes a disenrollment policy in her syllabus, she may initiate paperwork to dis-enroll a student for nonattendance at the first class.
   
   **Problems:**
   - No one knows about this policy since it is not in the catalog
   - Students won’t know about the disenrollment possibility if they miss the first day (and hence don’t get the syllabus)
   - Inconsistent policies across professors
   - Cumbersome procedure (e.g. multiple slips of paper, etc.)
   - Poorly advertised and enforced policy prevents waitlisted students from timely addition to the class and promotes uncertainty among waitlisted students
   
   **Proposal:** Instructors would have the option (but not the obligation), to disenroll students who do not show up to any class before midnight, Thursday of the first week of classes. This would be done electronically via WebOPUS.

GPA Issues

3. College-wide Withdrawal deadline
   
   **Current Policy:** Withdrawal deadline is set by instructor’s discretion up until (and including) the last day of classes.
   
   **Problems:**
   - Inconsistent policies across campus
   - Dis-incentive to stick a course out and work hard
   - Waste of faculty time and resources
   
   **Proposal:** Any student may withdraw from an individual course if and only if (a) the student is below the maximum lifetime of W’s (see below) and (b) the student withdraws before the college-wide deadline of 4:00 pm Friday after midterms. (nb: on this policy, instructor permission for a W is not necessary)

4. Lifetime Limit on Student-Initiated Course Withdrawals
   
   **Current Policy:** Withdrawals are only allowed when a student is passing a course, and there is no limit on W’s a student may accumulate. (e.g. about 1,500 courses were W’d last year)
   
   **Problems:**
   - At odds with key goals in the Strategic Plan (namely graduation rates)
• Rigging of GPA via withdrawals
• Dis-incentive to stick a course out and work hard
• Waste of faculty time and resources
• Slowing progress to graduation via consistent withdrawals
• Blocks access to seats in courses that are needed by other students
• Creates demand inflation for certain courses (e.g. the “test-drive” phenomenon)
• Withdrawing courses puts financial aid at risk

Proposal: All students have a limit of three (3) individual course withdrawals for the duration of their time as FLC students. (nb: the number of W’s will be tracked by the registrar’s office. This policy is NOT retroactive. This policy does NOT affect the current policy on faculty or administrator initiated course withdrawals.)

5. Lifetime Limit on Entire Semester Withdrawals

Current Policy: There is no limit to entire term withdrawals and the procedure is entirely self-directed without consultation.

Problems:
• At odds with key goals in the Strategic Plan (namely graduation rates)
• Rigging of GPA via whole term withdrawals
• Dis-incentive to stick a course out and work hard
• Slowing progress to graduation via term withdrawals

Proposal: All students have the right to one and only one entire term withdrawal after the approval by the VP of Academic Affairs. The VP of Academic Affairs may grant exceptions to this policy upon appeal.

6. Alter Grade Policy for Course Repeats

Current Policy: There is no limit on how often a course may be repeated but only 12 credits of coursework with grades of C- or lower may be replaced in the cumulative GPA. For repeated courses, only the most recent attempt within those twelve credits is calculated in the GPA.

Problems:
• Confusing policy (e.g. difficult to forecast GPA, grades are sometimes replaced but sometimes averaged, etc.)
• Rigging of GPA calculation via replacements
• Dis-incentive to stick a course out and work hard

Proposal: Continue to allow students unlimited course repeats but factor each attempt into cumulative GPA (i.e. grade averaging).

7. Change Quality Point Definitions for GPA Calculation

Current Policy: Plusses are calculated at +.25 and minuses are calculated at -.25, e.g. a B+ is calculated as a 3.25 whereas a B- is a 2.75.

Problems:
• Standards are inconsistent with virtually all other schools

Proposal: Plusses are calculated at +.33 and minuses are calculated at -.33, e.g. a B+ is calculated as a 3.33 whereas a B- is a 2.67. (nb: this policy will NOT be retroactive)

Recognition Issues

8. Create New Grade Types for Non-Punitive Grades

Current Policy: W (ANY form of withdrawal), I (incompletes), and NG (no grade)

Problems:
9. Establish New Thresholds for Latin Honors

Current Policy: Students must earn a 3.6 (on at least 15 college-level attempted hours) for Dean’s List. For Latin honors, students must earn a 3.4-3.59 (on at least 60 completed hours) for cum laude, 3.6-3.79 for magna cum laude, and 3.8+ for summa cum laude.

Problems:
- Standards for Latin honors are too low (e.g. over a third of graduating seniors last year earned Latin honors).
- Standards are inconsistent between Dean’s list and Latin honors.
- Standards are inconsistent with our peer schools.

Proposal: Make Latin honors thresholds consistent with Dean’s List and elevate thresholds to accurately recognize superior achievement: 3.6-3.74 cum laude, 3.75-3.89 magna cum laude, 3.9+ summa cum laude.

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Still under discussion because of implications for financial aid and scholarship satisfactory academic progress. Last year, the Office of Financial Aid directed RO to enter nothing (not even “NG”) if the grade was not submitted.