

MEMORANDUM

January 4, 2016

TO: Dr. Neville Pinto
Interim Executive Vice President and University Provost

FROM: Dale B. Billingsley
Professor of English
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

ABOUT: Undergraduate Council recommendation for university-wide academic policy changes

In legislative discussions leading to the enactment of 2010 HR 160, the public universities of the Commonwealth were instructed to identify and mitigate policy impediments to baccalaureate completion. The Undergraduate Council, charged to review and recommend changes to university-wide undergraduate policies in order to promote student success and achievement in baccalaureate programs, identified six such policies where in which unit variations have the greatest negative impact, especially where these variations are most likely to contribute to student confusion, loss of credit toward degree or unsatisfactory academic progress:

- Academic forgiveness (comprising current unit and general policies on course withdrawal, late and compassionate withdrawal, academic bankruptcy and Fresh Start for students returning to the university after an extended absence)
- Course registration (add, drop and withdrawal)
- Final examinations
- Incomplete course work
- Pass/fail grades
- Repeated courses

To accomplish the aim of the recommendations, the Office of Undergraduate Affairs proposes that these policies be placed in the general information section of the catalog, returning to its organization prior to 2002.

The Council submits these recommendations for your review and your charge to the deans to work with their faculties so that the policies can be included in the 2016-17 catalog, the reference copy for the 2017 SACS review. This change will substantially reduce the policy section's 103-page length, which in itself explains the General Assembly's concern over impediments to student success.

Attachments: Six, as bulleted above
Copied: Undergraduate Council

Proposed catalog policy statement: Academic Forgiveness

Recommended by the Undergraduate Council 12/04/2015

Academic Forgiveness policies allow a student to remedy weaknesses in their GPA by replacing individual grades with course repeats, withdrawing from entire semesters through course repeats, late withdrawal, bankruptcy or Fresh Start. Students considering these options must consult with an academic advisor for guidance.

Course repeats

Students may seek to replace the final grade in a course by registering for and completing another offering of the course. The options under this provision are described in the [\[link\]](#)Course Repetition catalog section[\[end link\]](#).

Late Withdrawal:

A student may withdraw at will from a course at any time before the withdrawal deadline for the term in which the course is offered. A student may petition for withdrawal after the withdrawal deadline for the term in which the course is offered; this petition may refer to a course in progress or to a course taken in any previous term. If the petition is approved, the grade "W" (withdrawal) will replace the course grade on the student's official transcript.

Proper documentation of special circumstances must accompany the petition for a late withdrawal. Under certain circumstances (for example, extended or severe illness, traumatic experience), the Office of the Dean of Students [\[contact info\]](#) will assist the student in seeking a late withdrawal, as described in the [\[link\]](#)Compassionate Withdrawal policy[\[end link\]](#).

Students should seek the advice of an academic advisor before petitioning for any late withdrawal. Students who seek late withdrawal from selected courses during a single term must petition the instructional unit(s) offering the course(s). Students who petition for late withdrawal from all courses taken during a single term must address their enrollment unit, which shall consider all instructors' recommendations in deciding on the petition. The petition form is [\[link\]](#)available online[\[end link\]](#).

Academic Bankruptcy:

To be eligible for Academic Bankruptcy, students may petition the university to return on probation in the next (or any subsequent) semester with the condition that they complete an intentional academic remediation program specified by the academic unit in which they propose to re-enroll during the semester of their return.

For bankruptcy to be approved, students must maintain at least the minimum semester grade-point average designated by their enrollment unit in all degree applicable courses while attempting the first 12 hours after readmission. All courses taken during the term in which the twelfth-hour minimum is attained will be considered in determining eligibility for bankruptcy.

After these 12 hours have been attempted, students must petition the appropriate committee of the enrollment unit to which they intend to return for academic bankruptcy, designating the term or consecutive sequence of terms to which the bankruptcy process is to apply.

The voided grades and credit hours will not be considered for degree requirements or quality-point computations, but will remain on the student's transcript. Academic actions, such as probation or dismissal, recorded at the end of the voided terms, will also remain.

No student may declare bankruptcy more than once. Bankrupt semesters will not apply toward enrollment semesters when determining catalog year. No course taken during a bankrupted semester can be used to satisfy a requirement.

Students are advised that while bankrupted course grades are removed from the calculation, the course work does remain a part of their permanent record and may thus be considered for financial aid purposes, NCAA purposes, and may be evaluated if students are applying for honors or graduate study. No person using these bankruptcy procedures shall be eligible to participate in any intercollegiate competition until the specified grades and courses have been declared void.

Additionally, students must be aware that academic bankruptcy is an internal policy. The University of Louisville cannot guarantee how the work will be viewed by another university upon in transfer.

Fresh Start:

Undergraduate students who re-enroll in the university after an absence of two or more consecutive calendar years from the date of last enrollment and without enrollment in a regionally accredited institution of higher education may request the university to reset the cumulative grade point average and hours earned during the period of previous residency. Student who have met the absence requirement of two calendar years but whose absence has been extended may have been enrolled elsewhere without losing eligibility for Fresh Start.

If the Fresh Start is approved, students resume an academic program with no cumulative grade point average for the period to which the Fresh Start applies. Courses repeated during the period covered by a Fresh Start will not be counted against the maximum of four such repeats allowed under university policy. A student must take at least 30 hours of course work at the university after re-admission and before graduation, the minimum required for degree residency, for Fresh Start to be applicable.

All courses taken remain on the permanent record. Only those courses with grades of A, B, C, D or P are counted for credit. To preserve the integrity of academic programs, these conditions may apply: (a) students may not meet a general education requirement with a course in which a "P" was earned; (b) students may be required to retake courses from academic terms covered by Fresh Start if the content-currency or major-GPA rules of a degree program, department or unit so dictate. Students returning under Fresh Start who are affected by either of the preceding conditions will be notified at the time of readmission and in writing by the department or unit of the condition and the additional requirements to be fulfilled in remedying the condition. Any student applying for Fresh Start may also elect to participate in the intentional academic remediation program offered by the academic unit to which they apply.

Financial aid regulations regarding receiving aid for repeat courses will still be administered according to federal regulations. Financial Aid recipients must adhere to the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy administered by the Student Financial Aid Office. Students who are granted a Fresh Start but who were previously held for SAP will need to contact the Student Financial Aid Office and will be responsible for submitting required SAP appeal and/or clearance documentation.

All courses taken at the university will be used in the calculation of the cumulative grade point and hour ratio considered for financial aid purposes. GPA calculations for graduation honors will follow the rules established by the student's enrollment unit.

Any individual student is eligible for only one Fresh Start. Students who have earned a baccalaureate degree are not eligible for Fresh Start. No student may use both Fresh Start and academic bankruptcy so consultation with an academic advisor is useful and necessary when either of these academic forgiveness processes is considered.

Notes:

This policy (see "Academic Bankruptcy," para. 1) recommends the abandonment of the two-year unsupervised punitive suspension in favor of completion of an intrusive academic-success intervention course. Pilot versions of such courses have been offered in the College of Education & Human Development and the College of Arts & Sciences. Offering such courses in sufficient sections to meet the demand must be reckoned as a cost of the policy change.

The bankruptcy and Fresh Start proposals expect the students to return to a unit for which their record qualifies them, rather than seeking to return to a unit from which they were previously suspended or dismissed. The students still have the option then to change majors and units after their records improve to meet the threshold standards of another unit.

Proposed catalog policy statement: Adding, dropping and withdrawing from courses

Recommended by the Undergraduate Council 04/03/2015

Students ordinarily register for courses during announced periods before the beginning of a semester. The registration calendar for any term is published online by the Office of the Registrar.

Students may adjust their course schedule during a semester by these means, described below:

- Adding courses during an announced period at the beginning of semester;
- Dropping courses during the same announced period; or
- Withdrawing from a course after the announced add/drop period has ended.

Except as indicated below, initial registration and any of these registration changes are usually completed by the student through the registration link of the ULink online portal.

Under certain conditions, students may also change the grade basis for courses from credit to audit and from letter-grade to pass/fail during the announced period at the beginning of a semester.

Adding courses

Students may *add* courses to their schedules during the first week of each semester through the date specified by the Registrar in the registration calendar. No signature or other authorization is required if the added course is open for enrollment, if the student meets any established prerequisites for registration and if such additional courses do not raise the student's credit-hours for the term above the maximum allowed by the student's enrollment unit or academic standing.

If the addition increases the tuition cost for the semester, the additional payment must be settled with the university Bursar by the end of the first week of classes.

Until the third day of classes for regularly scheduled Fall and Spring courses, students can place their names on the waitlist for a course that is closed. Students are moved from the waitlist to registration in the course as spaces open until the end of the first week of classes.

Students who wish to add a course that is closed at its enrollment maximum as indicated online in the schedule of courses or who wish to add a course after the first week of each semester must use a paper form, available online or in the Office of the Registrar, to secure ~~the approval~~ **the endorsement** of the course instructor and **the approval** of the dean of the instructional unit before submitting the form to the registrar.

Dropping courses

Students may *drop* a course from their schedule during the first week of each semester through the date specified by the Registrar in the official registration calendar, available online and in the Registration Information newspaper published for each semester. Courses that are dropped during the official registration period are not listed on the transcript. Students should consider how dropping a course will affect their Flight Plan status, their progress toward their degree and their financial aid eligibility. Students who fail to complete the drop process, regardless of the date when they stopped attending the course, will be given the grade of “F” for the course.

Withdrawing from courses

For each semester, the Registrar sets an *effective withdrawal date* after the official registration period. After the drop period and through the effective withdrawal date, students may withdraw from courses through the registration link of the ULink online portal, and their participation in the course is recorded on the transcript as the grade “W” (withdrawal), which does not affect the student’s grade point average. No signature or other authorization is required if the change is made by the effective withdrawal date, but students should consider how withdrawing from a course will affect their Flight Plan status, their progress toward their degree and their financial aid eligibility. Students who cease attendance without withdrawing will be given the grade of “F” for the course.

When drops or withdrawals change the student’s enrollment status from full-time to part-time, tuition refunds or reductions or changes in financial aid may also be required. The Bursar’s refund calendar is outlined in a section below.

Late withdrawal

In extraordinary circumstances, students may petition to withdraw from a course after the effective withdrawal date. Students who intend to continue in other courses during the semester must petition the course *instructional unit* (the academic school or college in which the course is taught). Students who intend to withdraw from all courses for which they are registered (*late complete withdrawal*) must petition their *enrollment unit* (the academic unit in which they are enrolled for their degree work). Students should contact the advising office in the appropriate unit for guidance in the petition process.

Proper documentation of special circumstances must accompany the petition for a late complete withdrawal when it is submitted to the appropriate official or committee of the enrollment unit. The enrollment unit shall request and consider all instructors’ recommendations in deciding on the petition for a late complete withdrawal.

Compassionate late withdrawal [*Latest version approved by the provost 09/08/12 and to be added to this section of the catalog*]

When emergency circumstances cause a student to be unable to attend class or complete academic requirements, the late withdrawal process is an additional difficulty for all concerned, sometimes resulting in processing delays, academic hardship, revictimization, and other complications. In addition, because complete withdrawal at any time may have campus business consequences, a delay in presenting the petition is often the beginning of a long series of business adjustments that are also difficult to manage.

To avoid these unnecessary consequences, the university has established an emergency late complete ("compassionate") withdrawal process. This process is not intended to replace the ordinary late withdrawal process that is available to every student, regardless of the circumstances alleged, provided that appropriate documentation is available.

The compassionate leave process will be managed by the Office of the Dean of Students, which will act confidentially at the student's request, with the student's permission and on the student's behalf. (When the student is unconscious or otherwise gravely incapacitated, the request and permission come from the student's spouse, family or legal surrogate.) When an administrative, advising or campus business office is the first to learn of a circumstance that may qualify under this policy, the office should immediately notify the Office of the Dean of Students, which will initiate the process by contacting the student (or surrogate).

The dean (or designee) of the student's enrollment unit makes the decision to grant a late complete withdrawal, whether ordinary or compassionate. The Office of the Dean of Students advises the student (or the student's surrogates) of the availability of the compassionate process; the office may also recommend that the student follow the ordinary late-withdrawal process. Except for the enrollment unit dean, no office may guarantee that the compassionate late withdrawal will be granted.

In the case of medical emergency and with the assistance of the student's family or health-care surrogate, the Office of the Dean of Students will gather from healthcare providers the medical or other necessary documentation, which should be on clinic letterhead and may use a Release of Information form for confidential disclosures, including statements of the following information:

- General nature of student's medical condition and how/why it prevented completion of course work (to ensure confidentiality a provider may use a Release of Information form in order to document the condition)
- Date of onset of illness or condition
- Date student first sought medical/clinical care
- Dates student was subsequently seen and was under subsequent medical care

- Comments (where possible) on the potential consequences if withdrawal is not granted
- Comments on the student's compliance with recommended follow up and/or treatment
- Comments on care plan and/or anticipated date or time to reach treatment goals.

In non-medical compassionate withdrawals (for example, because of abrupt changes in personal or family circumstances that prohibit a student from coming to campus in order to transact any business; family illness that prevents completion of the usual academic requirements), consultation with the Office of the Dean of Students will determine the appropriate process for the student's situation. The Office of the Dean of Students will assist or direct any student who requires assistance with a late withdrawal process that cannot be managed through conventional channels including academic units and university business offices.

The Office of the Dean of Students will present the case and documentation to the enrollment unit dean (or designee) for final disposition.

If the complete withdrawal is approved, the Office of the Dean of Students will work with assigned contacts in campus offices (for example: registrar, bursar, financial aid, housing administration) to see that consequential business changes are made in order to complete the student's withdrawal for the term.

Changes in registration status or grade type (credit/audit, PF/letter)

The deadline for changing from credit to audit status (or from audit to credit status) in a course is the University deadline for adding courses. Any request to change credit/audit status must be approved by the instructor.

The deadline for changing from letter grade to pass/fail (or pass/fail to letter grade) is the same as for withdrawing from courses. Any request to change grade type must be presented to the registrar on a drop/add form signed by the course instructor and the designated officer of the instructional unit. Information on designated officers is available through the office of the dean of the instructional unit.

Tuition adjustments

When a student officially withdraws from any course or courses for which hourly rates apply, tuition will be adjusted in the following manner:

- Drop during the first week of semester: 0% charge / 100% credit
- Withdrawal during second or third week of semester: 50% charge / 50% credit

- Withdrawal during fourth week of semester: 75% charge / 25% credit
- Withdrawal after fourth week of semester: 100% charge/ 0% credit

Summer terms and some regular semester courses vary in length and the percentages of refunds are modified. Effective dates are printed for special terms and courses in the online Registration Information are available from the Registrar's Office. ~~Special~~ Course fees are refundable only with 100% adjustment.

Students who appeal for refunds in more than one semester will be expected to offer different reasons for successive appeals. The Office of the Registrar should be consulted for further information about this special circumstance.

Proposed catalog policy statement: Final Examinations

Recommended by Undergraduate Council, 4/3/2015

Final examinations are comprehensive assessments of student mastery of material covered throughout a course. If a final exam is required for a course, the date and time are determined by a University-wide schedule based on the days of the week and times the course meets. The final examination may not be given during regular class days in term or at a time in the examination period other than that prescribed in the university schedule, which can be found on the Registrar's Office home page at <http://louisville.edu/registrar/finals.html>. No final examination period will be scheduled to run longer than two hours. Deans of academic units are required to maintain the discipline and schedule of final examinations.

Instructors may require other kinds of assessments during the final examination period, but those assessments must be administered only within the university-wide schedule as set by the registrar; due notice of such additional requirements during the final examination period shall be provided by instructors in the course syllabus. Instructors may set examinations for the last class meeting before the beginning of the final examination period, but an examination set outside the final examination period may not be comprehensive in content or coverage.

No student may be required to take more than two final examinations within a single exam day. Students facing such conflicts should inform one or more of their instructors of the situation as early in the semester as possible. Students have a right to expect their instructors will accommodate them by scheduling a make-up examination in one of the courses. In the event of difficulty in making such arrangements, students should contact the office of the dean of their enrollment unit for assistance.

Note that the recommendation is for a reduction in the length of examination period to two hours in order. The deans were invited to speak to this change, and those responding favored the reduction in length over extending exam week in order to accommodate all of the exam periods necessary to avoid any time conflicts owing to the increase in the number of irregularly scheduled courses.

Proposed catalog policy statement: Incomplete course work

Recommended by the Undergraduate Council 10/02/2015

Incomplete course work

The grade “I” (incomplete) may be assigned at the discretion of the course instructor if the following conditions are met:

- The majority of the course work (including work due after the withdrawal deadline) is complete, and on the basis of this work, the student is in good standing to pass the course upon successful completion of the remaining work.
- The final portion of the course work cannot be completed for reasons beyond the student’s control (such as serious illness or death of an immediate family member). If requested, the student must supply the instructor with documentation of the extenuating circumstances.

The grade “I” does not enter into the student’s point standing. For each “I” grade assigned, the instructor of record is encouraged to provide to the student written documentation of the expectations and requirements for completing the course work. A [\[hyperlink\]](#)form for the purpose~~[end]~~ indicates the kinds of information useful to the student.

Students must submit the incomplete course work by the instructor’s deadline, usually no later than the last day of final examinations of the next regular (spring or fall) semester unless the instructor grants an extension. When the instructor submits a new grade, the registrar posts a permanent grade and quality points; otherwise, the “I” converts to a grade of “F” and becomes part of the point standing.

The instructor submits a change of grade from “I” to the letter grade earned. The change of grade form must be completed by the instructor (or department representative if the instructor is no longer at the institution) and sent to the instructional unit dean’s office. The change of grade form will not be accepted by the Registrar’s Office if delivered by the student.

Students not enrolled in the next regular semester are still required to complete the work by the instructor’s deadline. Students may not graduate with an “I” grade on the transcript. Students with an “I” in a course should not register for the course a second time.

**UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE
CONTRACT FOR COMPLETION OF GRADES OF INCOMPLETE**

Student: _____ **Student ID#:** _____

Course: _____ **Semester/Year :** _____

Statement of Reason(s) for requesting an incomplete:

I agree that by receiving a grade of "I" in the above course, I must submit satisfactory or above satisfactory work by the following deadline(s) as negotiated between myself and the instructor in order to have a permanent and passing grade recorded for the course.

I will complete and turn in to the instructor the following assignments by the specified dates below:

_____ by date: _____
_____ by date: _____
_____ by date: _____

I am aware that if I am unable to meet any deadline(s) specified above, it will be necessary to seek a renegotiation with the instructor and receive the approval of the dean of the instructional unit. However, if a new grade is not entered by _____* the grade of "I" will be converted automatically to "F."

_____ Date: _____
(Signature of Student)

I agree to the above named terms for this student. Other comments I wish to make are:

_____ Date: _____
(Signature of Instructor)

The student is responsible for making and distributing copies of the signed agreement to the course instructor and instructional unit dean's office.

Proposed catalog policy statement: Pass/Fail Grades
Recommended by the Undergraduate Council 10/02/2015

An undergraduate student in good academic standing may enroll in one undergraduate course each semester on a pass/fail basis, provided that the course is not used to meet a general education requirement, a program requirement, a prerequisite requirement for admission to a degree program, or a foreign language requirement for a degree program. If the course is letter-graded, the instructor's agreement must be secured by the student for pass/fail grading to be applied to the course, and the student's enrollment unit must review the request for approval. Courses completed on a Pass/Fail basis will not be assigned any quality points, but credit will be given if the grade assigned is a "P." If the grade assigned is "F," it will be calculated as such in the student's grade point average. No changes from letter grade to P/F, or vice versa, may be made after the university's deadline to withdraw from a course. No letter-grade equivalent for a "P" grade will be assigned or reported.

DRAFT

Proposed catalog policy statement: Repeated Courses

Recommended by Undergraduate Council, 04/03/2015

Students may elect to repeat courses to meet graduation requirements or to improve their cumulative grade-point standing. Students should consult their academic advisors to be sure that any repeated course will affect their grade-point standing as desired.

All grades earned for a course will be shown on the transcript.

It is not necessary for students to repeat courses they have failed unless those courses are specifically required for graduation. Courses repeated count only once as credit toward graduation unless the catalog description of a course explicitly allows credit for repetitions.

The university's repeat-to-replace option permits each student to repeat courses and to use the highest grade earned in the calculation of grade point standing (typically, the repeated grade will replace an original grade). This option may be exercised up to four times during an undergraduate career. Students elect this option by filing a notice in their unit advising office for review and transmission to the office of the university registrar.

Students may also repeat courses at will. All grades for courses repeated outside the repeat-to-replace option will be used in the grade point calculation. The highest grade earned outside the repeat-to-replace option will count towards degree requirements.

Financial Aid Recipients should refer to the financial aid website (<http://louisville.edu/financialaid/consumer-information>) for information regarding Financial Aid and repeated coursework. (10-16-15 paragraph added at the request of Sandy Neel)

Notes:

These current provisions in various unit policies are recommended for omission:

- Repeat-to-replace is not limited to F/D/C grades.
- Repeat-to-replace is not limited to one repetition per course.
- No reference to graduation with honors or calculation of GPA for that purpose. Statements about graduation honors, which are set by the academic units, should appear in the appropriate unit section.
- No prohibition of retaking a lower-level course after a higher-level course in the same sequence (whatever that is) is passed.

Other points:

- Revised the concept that the repeated grade replaces the original grade even if the repeated grade is lower than the original grade.

- No mention of approval authorities OR of deadlines to file the form. UG Council consensus from previous meeting was to address both matters via Academic Advising. (?)

DRAFT