

Community College of Philadelphia

October 13, 2008

Proposed Revision to Existing Academic Standards and Progress Policy

Submitted by:

Bhavesh Bambhrolia
Samuel Hirsch
Leah Hollis
Bea Jones
Gim Lim
Bridget McFadden
Marge Niven
Tom Ott
Melissa St. Pierre

Rationale:

The establishment of academic standards is an essential element in providing meaningful and quality higher education to all students. These standards must be set high enough to render to students the necessary knowledge and skills that can assist them in meeting lifelong challenges, transitioning to four-year institutions, and gaining employment. Conversely, the institution's policy should not be so punitive that it causes a precipitous departure of students who may benefit from the education we offer. Finally, it is important that the college community, students, faculty, and staff are able to easily understand and apply the policy for positive student outcomes.

Over the years it has been said that the College's policy for assessing academic standing was not to be negotiated by the faint of heart. Complex course completion calculation rates coupled with a complicated repeat policy (when do MP's count as progress?) are among the variables that make the current policy difficult to understand. However, seldom discussed was whether the policy itself was in the service of helping students succeed or unintentionally framed to punish academic difficulty with precipitate dismissal.

Attached is a proposed revision of our present Academic Standing Policy, which we believe is more accessible to staff and students alike. More importantly, we believe it supports the sound notion that early academic difficulty should be met by significant academic support rather than swift punishment. In combination with a solid early alert system and continued academic support, we believe this policy will improve student

success and place the College in the position of encouraging retention rather than pushing students out the door.

We believe the proposed policy meets the necessary academic standards while providing added opportunity for students who meet with academic difficulty to remain at the College. Partnered with vigorous outreach efforts consistent with the Achieving the Dream initiative to provide both early alert and continuing academic support, the institution may say with conviction that we have done all that is possible to help our students achieve their educational goals.

Featured Changes to Existing Policy:

The two most prominent changes proposed are specific to a student's minimum grade point average relative to credits attempted and when a student is dismissed from the college for poor scholarship or failure to make progress.

The GPA requirements have been reduced in an attempt to prevent early dismissal from the college, especially at the beginning of a student's career when we know that a great many struggle with adjusting to the rigors of collegiate expectations. We believe this reduction will provide the latitude for a student to use available resources and implement success strategies to build an acceptable GPA for graduation.

While the reduction in required GPA should have a positive effect on keeping more students at the College as they adjust to expectations, the most significant change in our proposal is that students will be mandated to reduce their course load before being dropped from the College. There has been no evidence that sitting out a semester is key to reinforcing good academic behavior. Indeed, of the 734 students who were dropped at the conclusion of the spring 2007 semester, 619 (84%) never returned, and of the 115 who did return, only 20 (3% of total dropped) eventually returned to good standing. Given that many students who perform poorly do so because they are unable to manage competing responsibilities, the reduction of course load will provide them an opportunity to give more attention to a smaller number of classes and have more time to use the College's resources to develop skills that will enhance academic performance.

As an example, under the current policy, a student in the fall term who earns one 'C' and withdraws from her three courses would be placed on full-time academic probation for the spring term. If the student then returns for the spring and earns a 'B' and withdraws from two or more classes she would then be dropped from the College and lose her financial aid. Under the proposed policy, a student who attends CCP in the fall and earns one C and withdraws from her three other courses and then returns in the spring on full-time probation and earns a B while withdrawing from her three remaining courses, would **not** be dropped for insufficient progress but rather be permitted to register (after consultation with a Counselor) for a maximum of 7 credits. Students may then continue on part-time academic probation status, as long as they are earning grades of MP, P, D or higher in all coursework each term, until they have returned to good standing.

In addition to the above, the proposed changes to the existing policy accomplish the following:

- Make the academic progress policy more accessible to students and staff by removing ambiguous language.
- Separate information specific to financial aid from the academic requisites for satisfactory progress. This change helps clarify both the academic progress policy and the stricter policy for allocation of financial aid.
- Remove the so called illegal repeat “policy”, which confused financial aid practice with College policy.
- Make the summer term a period that students may use should they be dropped from the College. In the existing policy summer is not counted, which means that a student dropped for poor scholarship in the spring semester is not eligible for reinstatement until the following spring. In the proposed change, that student would be eligible to return to the College in the fall.

Proposed Policy Revision Alignment with College Strategic Plan:

The proposed policy revision is consistent with the College’s Enrollment Management Plan and academic support initiatives under the Achieving the Dream umbrella in that it targets improved student retention and success. In addition, the proposed change is consistent with the following goals specified in the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan:

Goal A1: The College will enhance quality, innovation, and effectiveness in the delivery of academic, administrative, and student support services.

Goal A2: The College will establish a more student oriented culture.

Goal D1: The College will increase the academic success of students placing particular emphasis on the success of student groups that have been underserved by higher education.

Goal H1: The College will enhance and create new systemic support structures designed to encourage student enrollment and student academic success and persistence at the College until their educational goals are achieved.

Evaluation and Assessment:

Beginning with implementation, students placed on academic probation will be monitored on a semester by semester basis. Included in this monitoring will be a mandatory meeting with a counselor before each probation term, as well as ongoing support initiatives utilizing the 20% attendance and 50% grade reporting tools. This support is essential to the revision of the policy, as the intention is to move away from a

policy that is merely punitive and toward one that actively helps students to achieve academic success. Ultimately, assessment of the effectiveness of the policy will be the demonstrated increase in student retention and academic success as compared with the spring 2007 baseline cohort of student who were dropped from the College under the existing policy.

Implementation:

Discussions have begun with Information Technology Services, and it is proposed that the changes to the existing policy would go into effect fall 2009.

In addition to the revised policy being readied for the next College Catalog and Student Handbook, user-friendly student documents will be developed to insure that all students are made aware of the changes to the existing policy.

Proposed Policy Revision

Proposed Revision to the Academic Standards and Progress Policy

I. **Academic Standards and Progress Policy** (Note: Students receiving financial aid are held to additional satisfactory academic progress regulations found in section VI.)

A. **GPA Policy:** Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average for all college credited courses according to the following College schedule. GPA will be assessed after a student has attempted 12 college credited hours. (Note: Developmental courses will not count toward GPA calculation.)

| Minimum Required Cumulative GPA | Cumulative GPA Credit Hours Attempted |
|--|--|
| 1.40 | 12-17 |
| 1.50 | 18-24 |
| 1.60 | 25-36 |
| 1.75 | 37-48 |
| 1.85 | 49-59 |
| 2.00 | Graduation |

B. **Progress Policy:** Students must maintain satisfactory progress for all courses. Satisfactory progress will be based on a cumulative successful completion of 67% of all credits attempted and will be assessed after a student has attempted 12 credit hours. For the purposes of calculating satisfactory progress, withdrawals made within the refund period will not count towards the calculation of progress. A grade of P, MP, A, B, C, or D will be considered a successful completion. However, a grade of MP cannot be given in the same course more than two times. On the third attempt, a grade of MP will be converted to a grade of F.

C. Students who do not maintain satisfactory course completion and/or GPA will:

1. Be put on full-time (13 credits maximum) academic probation. Students on academic probation of any kind must meet with a counselor before registering for any term.
2. At the end of any full-time academic probation term, a student will be evaluated as follows:
 - a. If the student has met the cumulative 67% completion rate and the GPA requirements, he/she will be removed from academic probation.
 - b. If the student is either below the cumulative 67% completion rate or the GPA standard but has earned grades of MP, P, D or higher in 67% of the credits attempted for that term, he/she will continue on full-time academic probation. When the student

- achieves the cumulative 67% completion rate and GPA requirements he/she will be removed from academic probation. Students may not register until they have met with a counselor.
- c. If the student fails to earn a grade of MP, P, D or higher in 67% of the credits attempted for the term, he/she will be placed on part-time (7 credits maximum) academic probation. Students on part-time academic probation during any summer term will be limited to three (3) credits or six (6) credits for offerings spanning 14 weeks. Students may not register until they have met with a counselor. Students wishing to appeal their part-time academic probation status may do so through the Counseling Department. Final adjudication will rest with the Reinstatement Committee.
3. At the end of the first part-time academic probation term, a student will be evaluated as follows:
 - a. If the student has met the cumulative 67% completion rate and the GPA requirements, he/she will be removed from academic probation.
 - b. If the student is either below the cumulative 67% completion rate or the GPA standard but has earned grades of MP, P, D or higher in all credits attempted for that term, he/she will be permitted to continue on part-time (7 credits) academic probation until such time that the student achieves the cumulative 67% completion rate and GPA requirements and is removed from academic probation. Students may not register until they have met with a counselor.
 - c. If the student fails to earn a grade of MP, P, D or higher in all credits attempted for the term, he/she will be dropped from the college for poor scholarship and/or insufficient progress.
 4. After a student is dropped for poor scholarship and/or insufficient progress for the first time, he/she will be required to sit out for one term, with summer counting as one term, before applying for reinstatement. Students wishing to appeal the requirement to sit out for one term may do so through the Counseling Department. Final adjudication will rest with the Reinstatement Committee.
 5. After a student has sat out the minimum of one term, he/she may return to the college on part-time (7 credits) academic probation but cannot be registered until he/she has met with a counselor. Students who return to the College after dismissal will be assessed at the end of each term in accordance with the part-time academic probation sequence described above.

6. Students who are dropped for either insufficient progress or poor scholarship following reinstatement may not be reinstated until they appeal successfully to the Reinstatement Committee. All students who are reinstated based on appeals will be placed on part-time (7 credits) academic probation and will be assessed at the end of each term in accordance with the part-time academic probation sequence described above.

The following chart shows sample calculations of necessary course completion rates based on the 67% completion rate and minimum GPA requirements.

| Attempted Credits | Minimum GPA | Calculation Applied | Required Completion Rate |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 12 | 1.40 | 12 X 67% = | 8 credits completed |
| 18 | 1.50 | 18 X 67% = | 12 credits completed |
| 25 | 1.60 | 25 X 67% = | 17 credits completed |
| 37 | 1.75 | 37 X 67% = | 25 credits completed |
| 49 | 1.85 | 49 X 67% = | 33 credits completed |
| 60 | 2.00 | 60 X 67% = | 40 credits completed |
| 72 | 2.00 | 72 X 67% = | 48 credits completed |
| 84 | 2.00 | 84 X 67% = | 56 credits completed |
| 90 | 2.00 | 90 X 67% = | 60 credits completed |

II. Policy on Repeated Courses*

- A. Students may repeat courses to improve an initial grade of B, C, D or F.

The following conditions apply:

1. When a student repeats a course for the first time (second attempt), the higher grade earned (either initial grade or grade of second attempt) will be the grade counted in the calculation of the GPA.
 2. When a student repeats a course for the second time (third attempt), the highest grade earned (either initial grade or grades of second or third attempt) will be the final grade counted in the calculation of the GPA.
 3. Courses repeated three or more times (fourth attempt or greater) are not calculated in the GPA.
- B. A grade of MP will not be given for a third time in the same course. The MP grade may be awarded no more than twice. Any MP for a third subsequent attempt will be converted to an "F".
 - C. Credit for a course is given only once. Each attempted grade will appear on a transcript. Note: Some colleges to which students may wish to transfer do not accept this method of calculating grade point averages.

Note: Financial Aid eligibility is limited to 150% of the credits needed to graduate for each program, regardless of whether a student received financial aid during previous periods of enrollment. Credits transferred into the College are counted toward the 150% maximum limit. There is a maximum limit of 30 remedial or developmental credits.

*The Academic Progress Policy for CAP A-Level students supersedes this policy.

III. Incomplete Work

- A. The letter “I” on a student's grade report or transcript indicates that a student has not completed all the requirements for a grade in a course.
- B. The instructor will inform the student of the work to be completed and the date that it is due. Notification of the incomplete grade will be forwarded to the department head through the use of the incomplete grade card.
- C. An incomplete grade becomes a failing grade (F) if the work is not completed within six weeks from the end of the final exam period in which the “I” grade was assigned.
- D. An “I” will not be counted in the student's grade point average and academic progress in determining academic standing.
- E. Since only completed work can be counted as making progress towards the degree, the student needs to understand that an incomplete grade may have implications for qualifying for financial aid. In addition, incomplete grades will not satisfy requirements for prerequisites.

IV. Withdrawals from Course

- A. Students may withdraw from a course(s) but must do so by the deadline published for the session in which the student is enrolled. After this date, which can be found in the Course Listing booklet for that term, students must take the grade they have earned. Students who withdraw after the refund period for that session will earn a grade of “W” on their transcript. Note that excessive withdrawals will affect academic progress.
- B. Students dropping a class must complete the necessary form, available from the Office of Student Records and Registration, and submit the form to this same office. Students are strongly encouraged to consult a counselor, if on academic probation, or an academic advisor prior to dropping courses.
- C. Students completely withdrawing from a term must complete the necessary form, available from the Office of Student Records and Registration, and submit the form to this same office. Students must consult a counselor prior to withdrawing from an entire roster of classes for any term.

- D. The date when the Office of Student Records and Registration accepts the appropriate drop or withdrawal form is the official date of withdrawal. A student who cannot appear in person to fill out a withdrawal form must send a letter stating the date and reason for the withdrawal. Absence from class or merely notifying the professor does not constitute withdrawal. In the event of an emergency where the student cannot submit the form in person or by mail, a telephone call will be accepted but a written request must follow. An instructor may initiate a withdrawal (according to Policies and Procedures No. 5). (Note: Students should not assume that an instructor will initiate such withdrawals.)
- E. Students who are unable to complete a course(s) because of serious illness or other emergency may apply for an excused withdrawal within two (2) years of the occurrence to the Office of Student Records and Registration. Excused withdrawals are not counted in determining academic progress; however, excused withdrawals are counted as an attempt when awarding financial aid. Satisfactory documentation of the illness or emergency will be required.

V. Reinstatement

Students applying for reinstatement to the College must submit an “Application for Reinstatement Form” to the Reinstatement Committee. Applications may be obtained in the Division of Educational Support Services Office. Forms must be submitted no later than the deadline dates stated in the calendar in the College catalog. Applications received after the deadline dates will be rolled over and considered for the following academic term. Students will be notified in writing of the Committee’s decision.

VI. Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements for Students Receiving Financial Aid

A student receiving financial aid is required to make progress towards his or her program of study each term. For financial aid purpose, the course completion rate is two-thirds successful completion (67%) and maintaining minimum GPA requirements. However, financial aid’s academic progress standards are stricter than the College’s Academic Standards and Progress Policy:

- A. Both academic and time amnesty that the College approved do not apply for purposes of computing financial aid academic progress.
- B. All excused withdrawals are counted as attempted credits.
- C. Financial aid eligibility is limited to 150% of the credits needed to graduate for each program of study. All attempted credits are counted towards this maximum, regardless of whether or not a student received aid during previous periods of enrollment. Credits transferred into the College are counted toward the 150% maximum limit.
- D. There is a maximum limit of 30 developmental course credits.
- E. Incomplete (I) or unreported (NR) grades are counted as attempted credits.

- F. All attempted credits are counted whether or not a student received financial aid;
- G. Students reinstated after being dropped for poor scholarship and/or insufficient progress will be ineligible for financial aid until he/she returns to good academic standing.

The Office of Financial Aid will review financial aid academic progress after each term. Students deemed not to be making satisfactory academic progress will be placed on financial aid probation. Students not meeting the probationary conditions as described in the Academic Standards and Progress Policy will be ineligible for financial aid. A student who failed to make academic progress may submit to the Financial Aid Academic Appeals Committee a request to have his/her financial aid eligibility reinstated based on:

- A. a death in the family;
- B. an injury or illness; or
- C. other extenuating circumstances.

Appeals must be supported with appropriate documentations. The decision of the Financial Aid Academic Appeals Committee is final.

Existing Policy

**COLLEGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
MEMORANDUM NO. 8**

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND PROGRESS

Revised: September 1, 2005

Original Number: 104

Original Date of Issue: February 14, 1978

Reissued: 104A - June 8, 1979 104E - September 1, 1997
 104B - December 12, 1983 104F - September 1, 1998
 104C - February 26, 1985 104G - September 1, 2005
 104D - June 1, 1995

A. Normal Progress, Academic Probation, Provisional Status, and Dropped for Poor Scholarship

1. Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average as follows:
 After attempting 12 semester hours: 1.60
 24 - 1.70
 36 - 1.80
 48 - 1.90
 graduation - 2.00

Developmental courses and withdrawals made during the refund period for any term as stipulated in the academic calendar are not included in semester hours attempted.

If students are receiving federal financial aid, additional criteria must be met: At the end of the second academic year (the equivalent of four semesters with combined summer sessions counting as one semester), students receiving federal financial aid must have a 2.0 cumulative grade point average, consistent with graduation requirements.

2. Students must maintain a satisfactory course completion rate (cumulative and based on credit hours, including all credit and developmental courses)

of two-thirds (67%) of the courses for which they have registered. Assessment of completion rate shall begin when students have registered for a minimum of 12 credit hours. Satisfactory completion is indicated by grades of A, B, C, D, P or MP; however, for purposes of academic progress, the grade of MP is an indication of satisfactory course completion only when received in a course being taken for the first time. (A W after the full refund period shall be considered unsatisfactory course completion.)

Fall, Spring, and combined Summer Sessions (I & II) shall each be counted as one semester. Academic progress (completion rate of courses) will be monitored each semester for all students.

3. Students who do not maintain a grade point average and satisfactory course completion rate according to the above schedule will be placed on probation for the next semester for which they register.

Students who are on probation will be allowed to register for no more than 13 credit hours. (Exceptions may be made by Department Heads and Curriculum Supervisors in programs for which the minimum load is greater than 13 credit hours.)

4. At the end of the probation semester, either:
 - a. Students achieve the minimum cumulative grade point average and satisfactory course completion rate(See A1 and A2), and are removed from probation, or
 - b. Students do not achieve the minimum cumulative grade point average and satisfactory course completion rate but do complete a minimum of 75% of the credit hours for which they are registered during that semester, with grades of A, B, C, P or MP; however, for purposes of academic progress, the grade of MP is an indication of satisfactory course completion only when received in a course being taken for the first time. These students are placed on provisional status (PL). They are allowed to continue with the maximum of 13 credit hours.
 - c. Students who do neither of the above are dropped for poor scholarship (DS) or dropped for insufficient progress (DP).
5. Students dropped for poor scholarship or insufficient progress must sit out and will not be permitted to register for one full academic semester. (Combined Summer Sessions I and II will not count as one full academic semester for this purpose.) Letters notifying students that they are being dropped for poor scholarship or dropped for insufficient progress will also inform them of action required to return to the College In their return semester, students will be placed After reinstatement on provisional part-

time status (PP), students and may register for no more than 7 credit hours. At the end of the return semester, either:

- a. Students achieve the minimum cumulative grade point average and satisfactory course completion rate and are removed from provisional part-time status, or
- b. Students may request reinstatement as full-time students on provisional status (PL) if they have earned A, B, C, P or MP in each course; however, for purposes of academic progress, the grade of MP is an indication of satisfactory course completion only when received in a course being taken for the first time, or
- c. Students may re-register part-time on provisional status provided that they earn A, B, C, P or MP in each course for which they are registered; however, for purposes of academic progress, the grade of MP is an indication of satisfactory course completion only when received in a course being taken for the first time.
- d. Students who do not meet any of the above conditions or have been dropped more than once from the College may not be reinstated until they either appeal successfully to the Academic Appeals Committee (see F. Academic Appeals) or meet criteria for time amnesty. All students who are reinstated based on appeals or amnesty will normally be placed on part-time provisional status.

Note: Financial Aid

Students must continue to make progress as stipulated under section 4b (PL) to remain eligible for receiving financial aid.

Students enrolled for class after sitting out for one full academic semester (Section 5) and who return on provisional part-time status (PP) are not eligible to receive financial aid for the return semester and not until the minimum grade point average (GPA) associated with the appropriate attempted semester hours, as outlined in Section A, has been attained. When this requirement has been attained, students may request financial aid reinstatement through the financial aid appeals process. Forms are available at the Financial Aid counter.

B. Policy on Repeated Course*

1. Repeat to Improve Grade of B, C, D or F.

* The Academic Progress Policy for CAP A-Level students supercedes this policy.

Students may repeat courses to improve an initial grade of B, C, D or F. The following conditions apply:

- a. When a student repeats a course for the first time (second attempt), the higher grade earned (either initial grade or grade of second attempt) will be the grade counted in the calculation of the GPA.
 - b. When a student repeats a course for the second time (third attempt), the highest grade earned (either initial grade or grades of second or third attempt) will be the final grade counted in the calculation of the GPA.
 - c. Courses repeated three or more times (fourth attempt or greater) are not calculated in the GPA.
2. A grade of MP will not be given for a third time in the same course. The MP grade may be awarded no more than twice.
 3. Credit for a course is given only once. Each attempted grade will appear on transcript. Note: Some colleges to which students may wish to transfer do not accept this method of calculating grade point averages.

Note: Financial Aid

Students who repeat a course for which they previously received a grade of A, B, C, or P will not receive financial aid for that course.

Financial aid can only be awarded up to three times for the same course in which an MP, D,F, or W was earned.

C. Incomplete Work

1. The letter I on a student's grade report or transcript indicates that a student has not completed all the requirements for a grade in a course.
2. The instructor will inform the student of the work to be completed and the date that it is due. Notification of the incomplete grade will be forwarded to the department head through the use of the incomplete grade card.
3. An incomplete grade becomes a failing grade (F) if the work is not completed within six weeks from the end of the final exam period in which the I grade was assigned.
4. An I will not be counted in the student's grade point average and academic progress in determining academic standing.
5. Since only completed work can be counted as making progress towards the degree, the student needs to understand that an incomplete grade may have implications for qualifying for financial aid. In addition, incomplete grades will not satisfy requirements for prerequisites.

D. Withdrawals from Course

Students have the privilege of withdrawing from a course(s) through the eleventh week of a regular semester and through the fourth week of a summer session. (Note: Excessive withdrawals will affect academic progress.)

Students dropping a class or completely withdrawing from a semester must obtain the appropriate forms and submit them to the Office of Student Records and Registration. They should see a counselor before submitting these forms.

The date when the Office of Student Records and Registration accepts the appropriate drop or withdrawal form is the official date of withdrawal. A student who cannot appear in person to fill out a withdrawal form must send a letter stating the date and reason for the withdrawal. Absence from class or merely notifying the professor does not constitute withdrawal. In the event of an emergency where the student cannot submit the form in person or by mail, a telephone call will be accepted but a written request should follow. A teacher may initiate a withdrawal (according to Policies and Procedures 5). (Note: Students should not assume that the instructor will initiate such withdrawals.)

Students who are unable to complete a course(s) because of serious illness or other emergency may apply for an excused withdrawal within 2 years of the occurrence to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. Excused withdrawals are not counted in determining academic progress; however, excused

withdrawals are counted as an attempt when awarding financial aid. Satisfactory documentation of the illness or emergency will be required.

E. Maximum Credits

After registering for 150% of the credits needed for a degree program or for a certificate program, students will no longer be eligible for federal financial aid. Developmental courses, English as a second language courses and excused withdrawals are not counted as part of the maximum credit limit. However, current federal financial aid regulations limit students to 30 developmental credits for receiving financial aid. Exceptions to the maximum credit limit may be requested through the financial aid appeals process, by those who claim extenuating circumstances. Forms are available at the Financial Aid counter.

F. Academic Appeals

Students applying for reinstatement to the College must submit an “Application for Reinstatement Form” to the Academic Appeals Committee. Applications may be obtained in the Division of Educational Support Services Office. Forms must be submitted no later than the deadline dates stated in the calendar in the College catalog. Applications received after the deadline dates will be rolled over and considered for the following academic semester. Students will be notified in writing of the Committee’s decision. (Reinstatements are not granted for summer sessions.)
