

Curriculum and Policies Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2024

Voting Members Present: John Leafgren, Karin Nolan, Ally Roof, Dereka Rushbrook, Christopher Sanderson, Amanda Soka, Travis Spence, Joost Van Haren, Jeremy Vetter

Non-voting Members Present: Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Cassidy Bartlett, Abbie Sorg, Alex Underwood

Voting Members Absent: Caleb Simmons

Chair Joost Van Haren called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. A quorum was established with 7 voting members; two additional members joined after the meeting was called to order.

I. Approval of Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee meeting minutes, 10/22/2024

Christopher Sanderson motioned to accept the meeting minutes from 10/22/2024.

Travis Spence seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 votes in favor.

II. Discussion Items

A. Repeating a Course & Grade Replacement

Presenters: Alex Underwood

Questions remaining from the previous month:

- How should the repeated course impact the student's GPA?
- For how many courses should a student be allowed to use grade replacement?
 - Should the limit be based on the grade received?
- How many times should a student be allowed to attempt a single course?
 - Advising has requested additional usages of grade replacement, not to increase the maximum number of attempts on an individual course.

Discussion began:

- Currently, the University does not often increase the amount of grade replacements a students can have. Instead, students may retroactively withdraw the first failed grade in extenuating circumstances. Since the unit cap on GRO was updated to a course limit, the General Petitions committee does not see many petitions related to GRO (largely due to the way petitions are screened).
- The current GRO policy is confusing for students. Many assume that retaking the course will automatically replace the grade, unaware that they need to apply for GRO.
- How many students are reaching the 3-course limit on GRO?

- Many students have a difficult transition period in university, keeping their grades just high enough to ‘scrape by.’ When they reach graduation, some are below a 2.0 GPA and have already utilized all 3 GROs. It is very difficult to raise the GPA once a student has ~120 credits, so how can the institution support students in completing their degree with this policy?
- Other institutions allow more than 3 GROs; the University’s students are competing against students with more lenient grade forgiveness when they go on to pursue graduate programs.
- Students from the College of Medicine often use GRO for a ‘C’ grade because they are concerned about admission to graduate school. Is this typical in other colleges?
- How often do students improve their grade on the second attempt?
- Three GROs may be insufficient, but it also should not be unlimited. There should be some barrier to prevent students from digging themselves in a financial hole.
- To address concerns of grade manipulation: the number of GROs allowed wouldn’t change the behavior for a single course, because it is a limit across all courses.
- The University’s grading and academic amnesty programs are strict in some spaces and liberal in others. For example, a student pursuing second start can wipe away all non-passing grades from their transcript, while a student who persists is forced to keep the Ds and Es on their GPA.
- Is the concept of GRO still aligned with what students should be able to do?
 - Limiting repeats on any non-passing grade is strict.
 - GRO as a concept could be eliminated; when a student doesn’t pass a course the first time, only the subsequent, passing attempt is used in the GPA.
- Which grades should be eligible for grade replacement?
- The policy could be amended so that students with a C grade cannot repeat the course.
 - There are circumstances where a student may need to use grade replacement on a ‘C’ grade, such as for programs or scholarships with a 3.0 minimum GPA requirement.
- There were differing opinions on how many times the same course should be repeatable.
 - Sometimes students attempt and re-attempt courses while going through personal hardships, but if a time comes where they are better situated to take the course again, the University shouldn’t be the barrier preventing them from that.
 - Others felt more than three attempts should not be allowed on the same course.
 - For certain classes that tend to be full already, allowing students additional attempts could create a bottleneck in the program.

- Having data on how often students improve their grade in a repeat attempt could help inform what changes need to be made.
- Automatic GRO would help students that don't correctly utilize it themselves, but would there be a way to 'turn off' the GRO if the student wants to retake the course without replacing the grade?
 - As long as there is a limit on GRO, it will not be applied automatically, because the institution can't assume why the student is retaking the course (i.e., a student may retake the 1-credit UNIV 101 after earning an E, but choose to save their GRO for a course worth more credits).
 - Even if not automated, the process of filing a GRO could be improved. It could take place at the time of enrollment, allowing students to select whether they are retaking the course for grade replacement.
 - How many students repeat a course without using GRO?
- Sometimes students re-enroll in a course not realizing they have already taken it (i.e., it's a cross-listed course). Could UAccess include a notification to the student when they enroll in a course already attempted?
 - There is currently a notification students get when they re-enroll in a course they have already taken, but they can easily exit out of the notification.
- Some courses are allowed repeatable, meaning that students earn credit for each attempt up to a certain amount of units set by the department. Part of updating the policy will involve determining how to address D and C grades for students in allowed repeatable courses.
- Could advisors be sent a notification when a student selects GRO at the time of enrollment?
 - This would be information overload for advising. Though many advisors pull data on students retaking courses and reach out to them, this is not something that can be maintained during peak advising seasons.
 - Advising has a dashboard of all students eligible for GRO who have not filed. Based on various workloads, different colleges may or may not perform outreach to these students.
- GPA is an internal marker, and the University defines its own GPA rules. If a student transfers, the institution is not required to honor our grading rules, but may recalculate the student's GPA based off of its own internal rules.
- Should courses that were withdrawn from or included in a complete withdrawal count as attempts?
- With the removal of the W limit, there may be students partially withdrawing for the same reason that other students take a complete withdrawal (personal hardships, etc.). If students can retain some of their coursework, they should be able to. Because there is now less distinction between a W and WC, they should be treated similarly as course attempts – either both W and WC count as a course attempt, or neither do.
 - It wouldn't be possible to pull data on why students select a complete withdrawal or partial withdrawal; though students report why they are

filing a W or WC, their reasoning is not substantiated or verified by the University. Students are only required to provide supporting documentation for retroactive withdrawals.

- Because there is no longer a W limit, continuing to designate Ws as course attempts would help protect students from digging themselves in a financial hole by repeating a course over and over.
- Because academic advisors do not have student financial information, some students repeating courses could benefit from a holistic experience with advising and the Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid to help understand their options. As data becomes available, it should be discussed whether there is some type of advising that should be required in these select cases.

The Office of the Registrar will retrieve data on how often students:

- **GRO a 'C' grade (compared to D/E)**
- **Improve their grade on the second attempt**
- **Repeat a course without using grade replacement (when they could have used GRO)**
- **Earn a W in a repeated course for one or more attempts**
- **Reach the current 3-course limit on GRO**

Discussion will resume at the December subcommittee meeting.

B. Update on General Education Foundations: Mathematics, Second Language, & Writing

Presenter: Joost Van Haren

At the request of the Provost, a taskforce is currently assessing the University's second language requirement for bachelor's degrees. This will include reviewing other institutions' policies, evaluating the philosophical need for the requirement, reviewing how the requirement aligns with our educational goals, and finally, recommending modification to the policy, if necessary.

Discussion began:

- A possibility being discussed is reassignment of the second language as a major/degree requirement, rather than a general education requirement.
 - If the required proficiency is left up to the individual program, it's possible that some majors will feel pressured not to enforce the fourth-semester proficiency in order to compete with other programs. To avoid this, second language could be required at the degree-level for all Bachelor of Arts programs.
- The College of Engineering has a callout in the current policy that it may determine how its students fulfill the language requirement. As a result, several other academic programs and colleges have requested language in the policy that opts their students out/allows a terminology course to satisfy the

requirement. Rather than granting a series of exceptions in the policy, it was decided to reassess the requirements holistically.

- Could this policy update potentially result in programs being allowed to not require a second language at all?
 - It is more likely that a policy update would result in enforcing a baseline requirement for all students, with select programs (or entire degree types) being able to add their own requirements but not remove the baseline requirement. The policy can be confusing if it is written to allow programs to subtract requirements.
- The goal was originally to update this policy effective Fall 2025, but the taskforce was delayed by a term in getting started.

Once the taskforce has a recommendation for the Second Language Requirement and other Foundations policies, discussion will resume at an upcoming subcommittee meeting.

The meeting was officially adjourned at 4:46 PM. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on December 17, 2024.

Respectfully submitted by Cassidy Bartlett, 11/27/2024