

SPECIAL REPORT

of the

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

concerning

**CHANGES IN THE REPEATED COURSES POLICY
TO CONCUR WITH CHANGES IN THE GRADING SYSTEMS**

Presented at the
654th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
May 18, 2006

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

**William Richards Adrion
Mokhtar Atallah
Martha Baker
Robert Bernatzky
Stephanie Chapko
John C. Cunningham
Jeffrey Eiseman
Ginger Etinde
Kirby Farrell
Edward Golding
Dennis Hanno
NaNa Hwang**

**John Jenkins, Chair
Moon Kim
M. Christine King
Pamela Marsh-Williams
Ernest May
Jennifer Normanly
Gerald Platt
Eric Robbie
Dennis Searcy
Craig Sinclair
Linda Slakey
Cecilia Trachy**

RATIONALE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2004, the Faculty Senate approved the AMC's recommendations to change the policy on [Grading System and Credit Guidelines] part E. [Repeated Courses], stated in the Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities 2003-2004, section VI., to be consistent with the grading system (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, etc.) that started in Fall 2004 (Sen. Doc. No. 04-046).

In that document, repeating a course with "grade replacement" was allowed if the student had previously earned a grade of D+ (1.3 points) or lower and met all the remainder of the stipulations of that policy.

Since then, it became apparent that this grade cut-off level has created difficulties under several circumstances. For example:

- a) Students must attain a GPA of 2.0 or better in courses required for their major. A Student who earned grades of C- (1.7 points) in some of these courses could not repeat the course(s) to replace the C- grade. If the course is repeated, it does not count for graduation credits nor in calculating the GPA.
- b) Many majors are requiring that students earn grades of C or better in all the courses required for the major. Such standard creates similar difficulty as above.
- c) Students are required to attain a GPA of 2.0 or better for each semester. Otherwise, they are placed under warning, probation, or dismissal, depending on the conditions of each case. Repeating a course where the student earned a grade of C- for the purpose of improving the GPA is not allowed under the current policy. Enigmatically, it is better to get a D than a C-.

AMC recommends the following:

1. That the maximum grade for allowing students to repeat a course be changed from D+ to C-, and that the text of the current policy be changed to read as follows: (*Changes are indicated in bold italics and are shaded.*)
2. That these changes be made retroactive to September 2004.
3. That student records since September 2004 be corrected to reflect these changes, i.e., students who repeated a course under this policy and earned a grade of C- should be granted the grade earned when the course was repeated, their GPA re-calculated for each semester affected, and that any academic action imposed be re-valuated to reflect any changes.

Changes to Original Text

E. Repeated Courses.

Students may repeat courses in which they have earned grades of **C-**, D+, D or F. In the first five courses repeated, the second grade earned will be automatically substituted for the first (see number 1). A student who has repeated fewer than five courses ~~and~~ **but** wishes to repeat a course without grade substitution must notify the Registrar's Office of this intent *within the Add/Drop period* of the semester in which the course is repeated. If the student withdraws from the second enrollment, the second enrollment will not count as a course repetition.

Sen. Doc. No. 04-046A

1. Grade Substitution: For the first five courses which a student repeats, *in calculating the GPA*, the second course grade earned will be substituted for the first grade earned. The credits attempted and grade earned in the repeated enrollment will be used for determination of credit earned toward satisfaction of graduation requirements and in the calculation of the grade point average. The ~~grade earned~~ *first enrollment* including the grade earned will remain ~~noted~~ on the student's transcript, as will the original notations regarding the student's academic status, but will not affect the student's cumulative grade point average.
 - a) If a student originally passes a course with a grade of ~~C-~~, D+ or D, and fails the course on a repeated enrollment, the student will lose the credit previously earned toward graduation requirements (including degree credit, and satisfaction of General Education, college, or major requirements).
 - b) Grade substitution is automatic only ~~with~~ *for* one repeat per course. Grade substitution for a third or subsequent enrollment in a course requires permission of the undergraduate dean.
 - c) A student's undergraduate dean may approve the replacement of an original course with a different course, as long as the new course fulfills the same academic requirement as the first course and the replacement is appropriate because the student has significantly changed his or her course of study.
 - d) Grade substitution is available only for repeated enrollment on the UMass Amherst campus. Repeating a UMass Amherst course at another of the Five Colleges, at another campus of the University, or at any other institution will not result in grade substitution.
 - e) The grade substitution option became effective in Fall 1993, and cannot be retroactively applied to courses repeated prior to that semester.
2. Courses that are repeated without grade substitution: Credits attempted and grades earned in both enrollments of a repeated course will be included in the computation of the student's semester and cumulative grade point averages. Degree credit will be awarded only once. This applies to any repeated courses beyond five, any course repeated more than once without approval, and any course intentionally repeated without grade substitution.
3. A course in which a student earns a grade of ~~C-~~ *C* or higher may not be repeated for either credits or a grade *substitution*. In unusual circumstances, students who re-enter after an extended period may, with the approval of an undergraduate dean, repeat courses originally graded ~~C-~~ *C* or better and receive a *new* grade, *i.e., grade substitution* but no additional graduation credit.

MOVED:
52-04

That the Faculty Senate approve the Changes in the Repeated Courses Policy to Concur with Changes in the Grading Systems, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 04-046A.