

SPECIAL REPORT
OF THE
ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL
concerning
REVISIONS TO
HONORS DESIGNATIONS POLICY

Presented at the
812th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
March 10, 2022

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Carol Barr, Carolyn Bassett, Bryan Beck, William Brown, Allison Butler, Marcy Clark, Morgan Donovan-Hall, Sharon Dormier, Laura Francis, Janet Fink, Kate Green, Keisha Green, Jennifer Heuer, , Matthew Komer, Lt. Col. David Lemery, Mark Liberatore, Linda Lowry, Andrea Malaguti, Sarah Pfatticher, Jennifer Randall, Caleb Rounds, Sylvia Salas, Tigran Sedrakyn, Barry Spence, Patrick Sullivan, Laura Vandenberg, Jack Wileden, Kate Woodmansee

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

The Academic Matters Council recommends revisions to the Honors Designations Policy.

PREAMBLE:

A Special Report of the Rules Committee concerning a New Honors Designations Proposal was approved by the Academic Matters Council on December 3, 2008. Two minor revisions to the original proposal were incorporated into Sen. Doc. No. 09-016 and Sen. Doc. No. 09-016A. Further revisions to this document were approved by the Academic Matters Council and are as follows.

PROPOSAL:

This proposal is to reduce the number of credits completed in residence at the University of Massachusetts Amherst required to receive Latin honors from 54 to 45. This revision would align Latin honors with the university's overall graduation requirements, which require 45 credits to be completed in residence. The current discrepancy precludes some high-achieving transfer students from receiving Latin honors on their transcripts. On March 4, 2020, this revision was approved by the Academic Matters Council, which concluded that it was inconsistent to hold that 45 credits was sufficient coursework to award a baccalaureate degree, but insufficient to determine Latin honors.

In the Academic Regulations, section *XIII. Honors*, part B states:

All graduating seniors are eligible for Latin honors designations on diplomas and transcripts if his/her complete academic record shows at least 54 calculable credits at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. If a student's GPA places him/her among the top 5% of the graduating class of his/her school or college, then he/she will receive the degree summa cum laude.
2. If a student's GPA places him/her among the top 10% of the graduating class of his/her school or college, but not among the top 5%, then he/she will receive the degree magna cum laude.
3. If a student's GPA places him/her among the top 25% of the graduating class of his/her school or college, but not among the top 10%, then he/she will receive the degree cum laude.

The Registrar will annually post on their website the GPA needed to secure a place in the top 5%, 10%, and 25% in each school or college for the current year, based on the average of the previous three years' graduating classes.

NOTE: For all students admitted Spring 2009 or earlier and who graduate within 5 years, cum laude will be based on a 3.200 GPA and 45 calculable credits. Students admitted after Spring 2009, cum laude will change to the top 25% GPA as stated above.

This proposal revises the first sentence to state:

All graduating seniors are eligible for Latin honors designations on diplomas and transcripts if his/her complete academic record shows at least 45 calculable credits at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and meets one or more of the following criteria:

The rest of the policy will not be changed.

**MOTION: That the Faculty Senate approve Revisions to the Honors Designations Policy, as
31-22 presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-016B.**