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9-13-2018

## Academic Policy Committee Report - September 13, 2018

Graduate Council

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**MINUTES OF ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Thursday, September 13, 2018, 3:30 P.M.**  
**111 Student Services Building**

Committee members present: Maria Stehle (Chair); Eric Boder, Julie Bonom, Freida Herron, Mohammed Mohsin, Reza Seddighi, and Cara Sulyok, GSS President.

Committee members attending by Zoom: Reza Abedi (UTSI), Lars Dzikus

Other attendees: Mary Albrecht, Sara Bradberry, Yvonne Kilpatrick and Catherine Cox, Graduate School Liaison.

Maria Stehle called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Dr. Stehle welcomed the new members to APC and explained how the APC committee works within the Graduate Council.

**Proposal 1: revise Admissions Standards text (submitted by Dixie Thompson)**

The problem is that we sometimes get applicants who graduated from colleges or universities accredited by entities other than one of the regional accrediting bodies. Under the leadership of Assistant Dean and Director of Graduate Admissions Yvonne Kilpatrick, research was conducted to understand how other universities handle this issue. Our peer and aspirational peer schools were examined. (*Attachment 1*).

**Current catalog text for: *Application Procedures and Admission Policies***

Anyone with a bachelor's degree from a \*regionally accredited institution or foreign equivalent who wishes to take courses for graduate credit, whether or not the person desires to become a candidate for a degree, must submit a formal online application (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/>) for admission to graduate study or apply for transient status.

**Revise current catalog text: edit text to include language of other accredited entities as shown below:**

\*Anyone with a bachelor's degree from a *regionally accredited institution, an institution accredited by another organization recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), or an equivalent degree from a similarly recognized or accredited foreign institution* who wishes to take courses for graduate credit, whether or not the person desires to become a candidate for a degree, must submit a formal online application (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/>) for admission to graduate study or apply for transient status.

\*and all other references in the *Graduate Catalog*

**After discussion, and with a minor edit to the wording, APC voted and unanimously approved the proposal to revise the language for the Application Procedures and Admission Policy.**

## **Proposal 2: Academic Standing (submitted by Dixie Thompson)**

At the end of each semester, we assess the academic standing of all graduate students. We process necessary changes as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.

An issue that often leads to problems is the following policy: “Upon completion of 9 credit hours of graduate coursework, a graduate student will be placed on academic probation when their cumulative GPA falls below 3.00.”

We often have students who start programs with fewer than 9 hours and perform poorly. We have no way of putting them on probation until after they complete 9 hours, and this could mean that they might finish the vast majority of their graduate coursework before we can dismiss an unsuccessful student.

### Example:

John Wayne enters a MS program and takes two 3-credit hour graduate courses in his first semester. Assume he makes a C in one class and a D in the other. GPA = 1.5, but we cannot put him on probation because he has not completed 9 hours. The next semester he takes three, 3-credit hour courses and earns a B, a C, and a D. GPA = 1.8. We put him on probation. The next semester he takes three, 3-credit hour courses and again makes a B, C, and D. GPA = 1.875. We can now dismiss Mr. Wayne – but he has taken 24 hours of graduate courses with nothing to show for it.

### **Current catalog text for: Academic Probation**

Upon completion of 9 credit hours of graduate coursework, a graduate student will be placed on academic probation when their cumulative GPA falls below 3.00. A student will be allowed to continue graduate study in subsequent semesters if each semester's grade point average is 3.00 or greater. Upon achieving a cumulative GPA of 3.00, the student will be removed from probationary status and returned to good standing.

### **Recommended change: revise hours from 9 to 3 or more**

“Upon completion of **3 or more** credit hours of graduate coursework, a graduate student will be placed on academic probation if the cumulative GPA falls below 3.00.”

This allows us to put students on probation earlier, gives departments earlier insight into those students who are struggling, and potentially prevents students from spinning their wheels in programs where success is unlikely. It is a disadvantage to the student to let them think they are in good standing when actually they are below the required 3.0 for good standing.

### **Revise current catalog text: revise text from 9 hours to 3 or more credit hours.**

#### **Academic Probation**

Upon completion of **3 or more credit hours** of graduate coursework, a graduate student will be placed on academic probation when their cumulative GPA falls below 3.00. A student will be allowed to continue graduate study in subsequent semesters if each semester's grade point average is 3.00 or greater. Upon achieving a cumulative GPA of 3.00, the student will be removed from probationary status and returned to good standing.

**After discussion, APC voted and unanimously approved the proposal to revise the language for the Academic Probation policy.**

Dr. Stehle communicated that these two policies will go before Graduate Council at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox  
Graduate Council Liaison

## ATTACHMENT 1

### **Graduate Admissions Requirement: Degree Earned From Regionally Accredited Institution Discussion**

#### 1. UT's Current Policy

*Graduate Catalog Language (2018-2019):*

#### **Application Procedures and Admission Policies**

Anyone with a bachelor's degree from a \*regionally accredited institution or foreign equivalent who wishes to take courses for graduate credit, whether or not the person desires to become a candidate for a degree, must submit a formal online application (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/>) for admission to graduate study or apply for transient status.

\*example—other sections of the *Graduate Catalog* use this or similar language in the context of admission requirements

#### 2. Current Peer and Aspirational Peer Policies

##### Accreditation Requirements Language

1	Specifies regional accrediting bodies	9	Virginia Tech, Iowa State, U of Kentucky, U of Missouri, U of Alabama, U of Minnesota, U of Florida, U of Wisconsin-Madison, U of Georgia
2	Other specifications	8	NC State, Auburn, U of SC, Clemson, LA State, U of Nebraska-Lincoln, Michigan State, Purdue University

#### Row 2: Sample Language

- a. Accredited as determined by regional or general accrediting agency
- b. Accredited U.S. institution
- c. Accredited college or university
- d. \*Regionally accredited or accredited by another organization recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
- e. Colleges or universities of recognized standing
- f. Graduate of this university or of another institution having substantially the same requirements for a bachelor's degree may apply for admission to a graduate program
- g. Degree from an approved institution whose scholastic rating is satisfactory
- h. Degree from institution of recognized standing

3. Recommendation to Consider:

Change Graduate Catalog language as follows:

**Application Procedures and Admission Policies**

\*Anyone with a bachelor's degree from a **regionally accredited institution, an institution accredited by another organization recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), or an equivalent degree from a foreign institution** who wishes to take courses for graduate credit, whether or not the person desires to become a candidate for a degree, must submit a formal online application (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/>) for admission to graduate study or apply for transient status.

\*and all other references in the *Graduate Catalog*

Organizations Recognized by CHEA (2018-19) are:

Regional:

- [Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges \(ACCJC\) Western Association of Schools and Colleges](#)
- [Higher Learning Commission \(HLC\)](#)
- [Middle States Commission on Higher Education \(MSCHE\)](#)
- [New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education \(NEASC-CIHE\)](#)
- [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\)](#)
- [WASC Senior College and University Commission \(WSCUC\)](#)

Faith Based:

- [Association for Biblical Higher Education \(ABHE\)](#)
- [Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools \(AARTS\)](#)
- [Association of Theological Schools The Commission on Accrediting \(ATS\)](#)
- [Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools \(TRACS\)](#)

National Career-Related:

- [Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools \(ACICS\)](#)
- [Distance Education Accreditation Commission \(DEAC\)](#)