**Academics First: BOG Policy 400.1.5 -- Fostering Student Success**
**Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs Committee**
**UNC Board of Governors**
**November 2012**

**Workgroup**

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**Workgroup Charge**

In February 2012, Dr. Suzanne Ortega, UNC Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, charged the Academics First Workgroup with the task of advancing the work initiated by the UNC Faculty Assembly. The goal of the Workgroup was to recommend system-wide policies that would support campus efforts to enhance access, excellence, and undergraduate degree completion in as timely and efficient a manner as possible. Dr. Ortega asked that the Workgroup's recommendations include consideration of:

- A system-wide minimum standard for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and Good Academic Standing; and
- System-wide minimum standards on core academic processes, such as drop/add, course repeat, grade replacement, and withdrawal.

**What did Academics First try to accomplish?**

As per its charge, the Academics First workgroup examined BOG Policy and its associated regulations with the purpose of recommending system-wide policies to support campus efforts to enhance access, excellence, and undergraduate degree completion in as timely and efficient a manner as possible. The workgroup determined that "policy," the pieces that require BOG action, should be broadly defined, while "regulation," which is under the control of the President, should carry the more detailed elements.

**BOG Policy 400.1.5: Fostering Student Success**

- The existing policy is a series of retention and graduation standards written in 1992.  It was last amended in 2007 and the corresponding regulations have not been revised since 1993.

- The Workgroup observed that the policy and regulations were duplicative and consisted primarily of a list of best practices.  The Workgroup recommends that the best practices material be eliminated from the policy statement and that both documents be refocused on the academic policy issues, namely a uniform definition of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), Good Academic Standing, and the Course Adjustment Period and conditions for course withdrawal and course repeat.

- The proposed policy revisions and regulations recommend how to set academic integrity thresholds to promote student success (including retention and graduation), while allowing campuses some opportunity to address their specific campus needs.  The intent was to greatly reduce the wide variation across campuses in their academic process regulations so UNC can better explain what UNC values to our multiple constituents.

- The Workgroup declined to set uniform limits for course withdrawal or repeat or for grade replacement or exclusion, believing the details of these policies must be left to the judgment of faculty on each campus.  The proposed regulations do, however, recommend standardizing other aspects of the withdrawal and repeat policies across the system.

- The major proposed changes are:
    - SAP and Good Academic Standing is defined as a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA (with some provision allowing students who fall below this a defined future opportunity to attain it)
    - Limited windows for Drop/Add and Course Withdrawal
    - Limited opportunities for  Course Repeats and Grade Exclusion/Replacement
    - Guidelines for Financial Aid and Review of Campus Processes related to course scheduling, advising, etc.

The UNC Policy Manual
400.1.5

**Fostering Student Success**

The University of North Carolina's policies on student success adopted by the Board of Governors direct constituent institutions to:

- set academic progress and degree attainment as primary outcomes
- promote academic quality, rigor, and integrity;
- make possible "seamless" educational opportunities across the UNC campuses, with the North Carolina Community College system, and early college high schools

Improving retention, graduation rates, and time to degree are important aspects of such policies. However, the Board of Governors also recognizes that students come into the system from a number of different life circumstances and their paths to success vary accordingly. Policies, therefore, set parameters within which a campus can best meet the needs of its diverse student populations.

**University-Wide Policies**

The Board of Governors has adopted the following policies for all institutions comprising the University of North Carolina except the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics.[1]

1.  Campuses will follow the credit hour limits determined by the Board of Governors for four-year and five-year baccalaureate degree programs in BOG 4.1.5[R]

2.  Campuses will develop academic policies within the regulations established by the UNC General Administration on:
    a.  Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
    b.  Course Adjustment Periods ("Drop/Add")
    c.  Course Withdrawal
    d.  Grade Exclusion or Replacement
    e.  Minimum, Maximum, and Average Course Load

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[1] The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics shall track data on student attrition, completion rates of its high school curriculum, and high school graduation. See G.S. 116-235.

3.  Campuses will establish a student success and support structure to review and to issue regular reports on:
    a.  retention, academic progression, graduation, and time to degree
    b.  course scheduling as it relates to whether courses required for graduation are offered on a timely basis and with an adequate number of sections and seats
    c.  course offerings and grade requirements to assess if any undue additions to general education requirements exist or if such requirements unintentionally lengthen time to graduation
    d.  the academic advisement system to ensure students receive appropriate assistance in proceeding toward graduation in a timely manner

4.  Campuses will be compliant with Title IV regulations that define student eligibility for and receipt of federal financial aid.

5.  Campuses will be compliant with the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement with the NCCCS and are encouraged to develop policies that promote seamless transfer among schools in the University of North Carolina system.

These policies are designed to ensure that campus and system-wide policies and practices facilitate behaviors that support retention and timely graduation.

The President shall establish regulations to implement the requirements of this policy.