



University Senate TRANSMITTAL FORM

Senate Document #:	14-15-29
PCC ID #:	N/A
Title:	Suggested Revision to Clemency Policy
Presenter:	Charles Delwiche, Chair of the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee
Date of SEC Review:	April 4, 2016
Date of Senate Review:	April 20, 2016
Voting (highlight one):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On resolutions or recommendations one by one, or 2. In a single vote 3. To endorse entire report 4. For information only
Statement of Issue:	<p>In February 2015, the Associate Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies submitted a proposal regarding III-1.30(A) UMCP Policy and Procedures on Academic Clemency. The proposal called for a major revision to the current 1991 policy. The main goal of the changes is to clarify that the policy is meant to help a student get on solid footing for graduation, and therefore that only grades from 'F' to 'D+' should be available to be removed. The proposal stated that grades removed should not positively affect a student's opportunity for Latin Honors. In addition, the proposal clarified that the option for academic clemency should be automatic and guaranteed, not subject to a decision by a department or college. The proposed policy submitted with the proposal was developed in consultation with the Undergraduate Programs Advising Committee (UPAC), which includes the Assistant Deans for advising. The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) charged the Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee with review of the proposed revision to the policy.</p>
Relevant Policy # & URL:	III-1.30(A) UMCP Policy and Procedures on Academic Clemency http://umd.edu/policies/2014-iii-130a.html
Recommendation:	APAS recommends that the Senate approve the recommended revised version of policy III-1.30(A) University of Maryland Policy and Procedures for Academic Clemency, which immediately follows this report, as a replacement for the current policy III-1.30(A) UMCP

	<p>Policy and Procedures on Academic Clemency. If approved by the Senate and the President, all reference documents, including the Undergraduate Catalog, should likewise be updated to reflect the revised policy.</p>
<p>Committee Work:</p>	<p>APAS began reviewing the charge in during the spring 2016 semester. APAS reviewed the current policy from 1991, as well as the University System of Maryland (USM) Policy on Academic Clemency (III-1.30). In consulting with the Office of Undergraduate Studies, APAS determined that the University’s current policy is ambiguous and open to different interpretations; APAS learned that many advising colleges have not allowed clemency. In some cases, students returning after five years have been allowed to take advantage of academic clemency only if their advising colleges allowed it and only under the conditions that these colleges set forth. This is complicated by the fact that returning students often change majors soon after returning to the University, so decisions on clemency are often made within a unit that is different than the student’s ultimate home. APAS learned that, as a result of these factors, some students have had a difficult time determining whether returning to the University was in their best interest.</p> <p>APAS reviewed a sampling of similar policies and procedures for granting academic clemency at peer institutions and other institutions in the USM. APAS carefully reviewed the text of the proposed policy and met with representatives of the Registrar and Undergraduate Studies to discuss the current process and the issues that exist with current implementation of the policy. APAS considered many aspects of the process in its review, including how excluding courses and grades for which clemency is granted affect a student’s eligibility for Latin Honors.</p> <p>APAS developed a number of modifications to the proposed policy. These edits were discussed in depth by the committee, and were also reviewed by the Office of General Counsel. On March 24, 2016, APAS voted in favor of forwarding its recommended revised version of the policy to the Senate for consideration.</p>
<p>Alternatives:</p>	<p>To not approve the APAS Committee’s recommended revised version of the University of Maryland Policy and Procedures on Academic Clemency.</p>
<p>Risks:</p>	<p>There are no associated risks.</p>
<p>Financial Implications:</p>	<p>There are no financial implications.</p>
<p>Further Approvals Required:</p>	<p>Senate approval, Presidential approval.</p>

Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee

Report on Senate Document # 14-15-29

Suggested Revision to Clemency Policy

March 2016

2015-2016 APAS Committee Members

Charles Delwiche, Chair
Britt Reynolds, Ex-Officio, Undergraduate Admissions Rep
Mark Shayman, Ex-Officio, Graduate School Rep
William Cohen, Ex-Officio, Provost's Rep
Ann Smith, Ex-Officio, Undergraduate Studies Rep
Adrian Cornelius, Ex-Officio, University Registrar Rep
Robin Pike, Faculty
Marilee Lindemann, Faculty
Charles Mitter, Faculty
Eric McKenzie, Faculty
Richard Klank, Faculty
Douglas Roberts, Faculty
Linda Moghadam, Faculty
Brian Barker, Faculty
Daniela Wagner-Loera, Faculty
Lelyn Saner, Faculty
Emily Heavin, Exempt Staff
Mark Rivera, Graduate Student
Stephanie Gill, Undergraduate Student
Kevin Adams, Undergraduate Student
Lindsay Strehle, Undergraduate Student

BACKGROUND

In February 2015, the Associate Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies submitted a proposal to the University Senate regarding III-1.30(A) UMCP Policy and Procedures on Academic Clemency (Appendix 1). The proposal called for a major revision to the current academic clemency policy, which was approved by the University President in 1991.

The proposal explained that the main goal of the changes to the policy is to clarify that the policy is meant to help a student get on solid footing for graduation, and therefore that only grades from 'F' to 'D+' should be available to be removed. The proposal stated that grades removed should not positively affect a student's opportunity for Latin Honors. In addition, the proposal clarified that the option for academic clemency should be automatic and guaranteed, not subject to a decision by a department or college. The proposed policy submitted with the proposal was developed in consultation with the Undergraduate Programs Advising Committee (UPAC), which includes the Assistant Deans for advising.

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) met in March 2015 and reviewed the proposal from Undergraduate Studies. The SEC decided to charge the Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee with review of the proposed revision to the policy. The charge deadline was set for March 30, 2016 (Appendix 2).

COMMITTEE WORK

The APAS Committee began reviewing the charge in during the spring 2016 semester, following other large reviews for various charges. As instructed by the charge, the committee reviewed the current policy from 1991, as well as the University System of Maryland (USM) Policy on Academic Clemency (III-1.30) (Appendix 3).

In consulting with the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the committee determined that, as it exists now, the policy on academic clemency is ambiguous and open to different interpretations; the committee learned that many advising colleges have not allowed clemency. In some cases, students returning after five years have been allowed to take advantage of academic clemency only if their advising colleges allowed it and only under the conditions that these colleges set forth. This is complicated by the fact that returning students often change majors soon after returning to the University, so decisions on clemency are often made within a unit that is different than the student's ultimate home. As a result of these factors, the committee learned, some students have had a difficult time determining whether returning to the University was in their best interest.

The committee also reviewed a sampling of similar policies and procedures for granting academic clemency at peer institutions and other institutions in the USM, including Rutgers University, Purdue University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, the University of Iowa, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (see Appendix 4). The committee found that many other institutions, including those in the Big Ten, have policies similar to the proposed policy that provide clear guidance and are uniformly enforced.

The APAS Committee carefully reviewed the text of the proposed policy over the course of a few months. The committee met with representatives of the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Undergraduate Studies to discuss the current process and the issues that exist with current implementation of the policy. The committee considered many aspects of the process in its review, including how excluding courses and grades for which clemency is granted affect a student's eligibility for Latin Honors.

Throughout its review, the APAS Committee developed a number of modifications to the proposed policy. These edits were discussed in depth by the committee members, and were also reviewed by the Office of General Counsel. On March 24, 2016, the APAS Committee voted in favor of forwarding its recommended revised version of the Policy and Procedures on Academic Clemency to the Senate for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The APAS Committee recommends that the Senate approve the recommended revised version of policy III-1.30(A) University of Maryland Policy and Procedures for Academic Clemency, which immediately follows this report, as a replacement for the current policy III-1.30(A) UMCP Policy and Procedures on Academic Clemency.

If approved by the Senate and the President, all reference documents, including the Undergraduate Catalog, should likewise be updated to reflect the revised policy.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – UMCP Policy and Procedures on Academic Clemency (III-1.30[A])

Appendix 2 – Charge from the Senate Executive Committee (SEC), dated March 30, 2015

Appendix 3 – University System of Maryland (USM) Policy on Academic Clemency (III-1.30)

Appendix 4 – Sampling of Peer Institution Research, conducted during AY 2015-2016

III-1.30(A) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON ACADEMIC CLEMENCY

(Approved by the President August 1, 1991)

Undergraduate degree-seeking students who have reenrolled at the University of Maryland in pursuit of their initial baccalaureate degree are eligible, after a separation of at least five calendar years from the University (determined by the last day of the last attended semester), for academic clemency. Academic clemency is granted one time only, and subsequent requests will be denied.

Application for academic clemency must be filed with the Office of Undergraduate Studies (or designee) as soon as possible, and before the end of the first semester of the student's return to the University. Clemency will be recorded on the student's record following the completion of the student's first semester of reenrollment. Under clemency, up to 16 attempted credits of D+, D, D-, and F grades from courses previously completed at the University of Maryland will be removed from the calculation of the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA).

Attempted credits and grades for which clemency is granted will:

- 1) remain on the student's transcript;
- 2) not be used to satisfy degree requirements;
- 3) be excluded from the student's cumulative GPA calculation;
- 4) remain included in the calculation of Latin Honors; and
- 5) adhere to the institution's repeat guidelines and be included in the student's repeat limits.

The granting of clemency is contingent upon the student's satisfactory completion of the initial semester of reenrollment, and will be recorded by the university at that time. If the student's first semester of registration upon reenrollment is canceled, or the student withdraws from the semester, clemency will not be granted (and the student will retain the option of filing for clemency in the future).