Proposal to Lower the University's GPA Cutoff for Latin Honors Eligibility

PRESENTED BY	**William Reed, Chair, Senate Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee**
REVIEW DATES	**SEC – February 21, 2020	SENATE – March 3, 2020**
VOTING METHOD	**In a single vote**
RELEVANT POLICY/DOCUMENT	**NA**
NECESSARY APPROVALS	**Senate, President**

ISSUE

In summer 2019, a proposal was submitted to the Senate Executive Committee related to the University's procedures for calculating Latin Honors. The proposal suggested that the University should do more to recognize its high-achieving students, and noted that the University's threshold for Latin Honors is much higher than the thresholds at some peer institutions. In August 2019, the SEC voted to charge the Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee with review of the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The APAS Committee recommends that all eligible students who earn a cumulative GPA of 3.900 or above should earn a Latin Honor.

The APAS Committee recommends that the proposed University of Maryland Policy on the Awarding of Latin Honors, as shown immediately following this report, be approved.

COMMITTEE WORK

The APAS Committee began its review of the charge at its meeting on September 19, 2019. It reviewed the provisions on Latin Honors in the Undergraduate Catalog, as well as the current GPA level specifications for Latin Honors in each College. The committee consulted with the proposer, and with representatives of the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the Office of the Registrar, and the Senior Vice President & Provost throughout its review. The committee also reviewed peer institution practices and consulted with the Office of General Counsel (OGC).

During its review, the APAS Committee carefully considered whether Latin Honors should be calculated based on a percentage or a set GPA threshold. APAS felt that disciplinary differences must be honored, and therefore a GPA threshold applied University-wide would not be appropriate. However, APAS also acknowledged the importance of communicating the Latin Honors levels clearly to students, to encourage them to strive for excellence and allow them to plan their coursework accordingly. APAS developed a hybrid solution that retains the current percentage model, to ensure that the honors are reserved for the top percentages of the graduating class while

accounting for disciplinary differences, and incorporates a provision to ensure that all students who earn a 3.900 cumulative GPA will earn at least the honor of cum laude. In Colleges and Schools where the percentage model would set the cum laude threshold above 3.900, the Office of the Registrar will lower the threshold as it sets the cutoffs for the coming year.

APAS determined that there would be value in establishing the Latin Honors provisions as a University policy, since Latin Honors affect the transcript. The committee developed its proposed policy based on the existing language in the Undergraduate Catalog, and incorporated details on the process for calculating Latin Honors in consultation with the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of the Registrar. After due consideration, the APAS Committee voted to approve the change to the University's process for Latin Honors and the proposed policy at its meeting on February 7, 2020.

ALTERNATIVES

The Senate could choose not to approve these recommendations. However, the provisions on Latin Honors would remain in the Undergraduate Catalog rather than policy and the University would lose an opportunity to enhance clarity about the thresholds for earning Latin Honors.

RISKS

There are no risks to the University in adopting these recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no known financial implications in adopting these recommendations.

PROPOSAL TO LOWER THE UNIVERSITY'S GPA CUTOFF FOR LATIN HONORS ELIGIBILITY

2019-2020 Committee Members

William Reed (Chair)
William Cohen (Ex-Officio Provost's Rep)
Adrian Cornelius (Ex-Officio Registrar Rep)
Shannon Gundy (Ex-Officio Director of Admissions Rep)
Lisa Kiely (Ex-Officio Undergraduate Studies Rep)
Ryan Long (Ex-Officio Graduate School Rep)
Progyan Basu (Faculty)
Nicole Coomber (Faculty)
Lee Friedman (Faculty)
Patricio Korzeniewicz (Faculty)
Marilee Lindemann (Faculty)
Tianzhou Ma (Faculty)
Kellie Rolstad (Faculty)
Dylan Selterman (Faculty)

David Straney (Faculty)
Monica VanKlompenberg (Faculty)
Alice Donlan (Staff)
Paula Nasta (Graduate Student)
Jason Tan (Undergraduate Student)
Kaylee Towey (Undergraduate Student)
Eleanor VanVraken (Undergraduate Student)

Date of Submission
February 2020

BACKGROUND

In summer 2019, a proposal was submitted to the Senate Executive Committee related to the University's procedures for calculating Latin Honors. The proposal suggested that the University should do more to recognize its high-achieving students, and noted that the University's threshold for Latin Honors is much higher than the thresholds at some peer institutions. In August 2019, the SEC voted to charge the Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee with review of the proposal (Appendix 1).

CURRENT PRACTICE

At the University of Maryland, the Latin Honors of summa cum laude, magna cum laude, and cum laude are bestowed to recognize academic excellence among graduating seniors. The University of Maryland Undergraduate Catalog explains the current practice for calculating and awarding Latin Honors. Latin Honors are awarded to the top 10% of the class in each College, with students who earn a cumulative GPA in the top 2% of the graduating class earning summa cum laude, the next highest 3% earning magna cum laude, and the following 5% earning cum laude. These thresholds were established by the University Senate, effective in the 1975-1976 academic year (Senate Document #72-73-8).

While the thresholds for Latin Honors are set to award the honors to the top 10% of the class, the University calculates minimum required GPAs for each Latin Honor level by individual College or School (Appendix 2). The Office of the Registrar determines the Latin Honors GPA levels for summa cum laude, magna cum laude, and cum laude annually before the start of the fall semester to make students aware of the minimum GPA level required to earn a Latin Honor. The Latin Honors levels are based on the cumulative GPA averages of the previous academic year's three graduating terms in each College or School. While the minimum GPA cutoffs for Latin Honors may

change from year to year, once they are calculated for a given year, they will remain static for all graduating terms during that academic year.

In order to be eligible for Latin Honors, a student must have a final cumulative GPA that meets or exceeds the minimum required GPAs for that year. The student must also have:
- at least 60 credits earned at the University or through a program where credit is counted as University of Maryland resident credit;
- no more than 6 credits within the 60 credit minimum that were taken pass/fail or satisfactory/fail; and
- a final, cumulative GPA of 3.300 or higher.

Latin Honors are calculated after graduation, so as to incorporate grades from a student's final semester, and they are noted as pending in the Commencement program (Senate Document #12-13-03). Once calculated, Latin Honors are officially annotated on the transcripts and diplomas of the students who have graduated.

COMMITTEE WORK

The APAS Committee began its review of the charge at its meeting on September 19, 2019. It reviewed the provisions on Latin Honors in the Undergraduate Catalog, as well as the current GPA level specifications for Latin Honors in each College. The committee consulted with the proposer, and with representatives of the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the Office of the Registrar, and the Senior Vice President & Provost throughout its review. The committee also reviewed peer institution practices and consulted with the Office of General Counsel (OGC).

The committee worked with the Office of the Registrar to understand the effect of the current Latin Honors procedures on the number and percentage of students earning Latin Honors, as well as to consider various alternate scenarios. Data from 2013 to present on Latin Honors show that there has been no significant increases or decreases in the GPA cutoffs and that the number of students receiving the honors are relatively stable. Throughout its consideration of the charge, APAS received data simulations from the Office of the Registrar showing what the impact of a change in the calculation method would be under various scenarios, including scenarios where the percentages were retained but changed to the top 5%, the next 5%, and the following 5% of the graduating class, or where GPA thresholds were used instead, at various levels.

The APAS Committee reviewed information on Latin Honors at Big 10 and other peer institutions (Appendix 3). The committee found that there is a wide range of variability on whether the honor is awarded based on a percentage or absolute threshold; applied uniformly across the institution or varied by college; and if the calculation of cutoffs are associated with the prior year's cohort or based on a percentage of the current class. The majority of peer institutions apply Latin Honors uniformly across the university, but six peers apply Maryland's approach of differentiating by college. The majority of peers reserve the distinction for the top percentage of the graduating class each year. Some institutions define a lower bound where a Latin Honor cannot be received, or indicate that students who are within a small buffer range for each level could still earn that honor.

In discussions with the committee, the proposer raised concerns that the Latin Honors levels are too high and may prevent students from advancing professionally or academically when compared with their peers at institutions with more generous Latin Honors thresholds. APAS searched for scholarly literature on this point, and found one study indicating a slight advantage in the job market for students with a Latin Honor in the first five years out of college. After the five-year mark, employers

tend to value skills and experience over accolades. APAS also consulted with the University Career Center, which reported that a student's GPA is a stronger indicator that they will be a competitive applicant in the job market than a Latin Honor, as the GPA is a more concrete comparison tool for employers.

The proposer also raised concerns that using percentages to determine the GPA levels for each Latin Honor creates confusion for students, in that the GPA they need to earn is not clear to them until the fall of their senior year. During its review, the APAS Committee carefully considered this concern as it discussed whether Latin Honors should be calculated based on a percentage or a set GPA threshold. The current method of using percentages allows students to be compared to their peers within their field, and accounts for variations by College and disciplinary differences. It also increases the distinction of receiving a Latin Honor, as the honor is clearly limited to a small number of students. However, when the percentages are based on a prior cohort of students and calculated on an annual basis, the thresholds can be difficult to predict and thus difficult for students to plan for. If the University were to move to a set GPA threshold for each honor level, students would be better able to plan to meet a certain honor level, and students and employers would both have a better understanding of what a Latin Honor from the University of Maryland means. However, GPA thresholds cannot account for disciplinary differences, and are less able to accommodate shifts in GPAs over time while ensuring the honor is reserved for the top students.

APAS felt that disciplinary differences must be honored, and therefore a GPA threshold applied University-wide would not be appropriate. However, APAS also acknowledged the importance of communicating the Latin Honors levels clearly to students, to encourage them to strive for excellence and allow them to plan their coursework accordingly. APAS developed a hybrid solution that retains the current percentage model, to ensure that the honors are reserved for the top percentages of the graduating class while accounting for disciplinary differences, and incorporates a provision to ensure that all students who earn a specific cumulative GPA will earn at least the honor of cum laude. In Colleges and Schools where the percentage model would set the cum laude threshold above the chosen GPA, the Office of the Registrar will lower the threshold as it sets the cutoffs for the coming year.

In considering where to set the specific GPA threshold for this hybrid solution, the committee considered whether there is an objective line amongst GPAs that can be drawn to clearly delineate academic excellence. While APAS acknowledges that there is room for disagreement on what constitutes excellence, the committee feels strongly that a cumulative GPA of 3.900 indicates a sustained pattern of excellence in academic work and is deserving of a Latin Honor. While points below 3.900 may also be deserving of recognition when contextualized among a student's peer group, a 3.900 would be represented on the transcript by a clear pattern of high marks in the majority of a student's coursework. The APAS Committee developed language to set 3.900 as the chosen GPA threshold at which all eligible students would earn a Latin Honor.

In the course of the committee's review, APAS considered whether Latin Honors information should remain in the Undergraduate Catalog or if it should be codified into a University policy. Over the past few years, the University has been converting items outlined in the Catalog into policy in order to maintain consistency and codify expectations. APAS noted that information in the Catalog may be interpreted more as guidelines, whereas information set forth in policy tends to have a more binding and consistent understanding across campus. After considering examples of similar items that were converted from Catalog items to policy, the APAS Committee determined that there would be value in establishing a University policy, since Latin Honors affect the transcript.

The committee developed its proposed policy based on the existing language in the Undergraduate Catalog, and incorporated details on the process for calculating Latin Honors in consultation with the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of the Registrar. After due consideration, the APAS Committee voted to approve the change to the University's process for Latin Honors and the proposed policy at its meeting on February 7, 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The APAS Committee recommends that all eligible students who earn a cumulative GPA of 3.900 or above should earn a Latin Honor.

The APAS Committee recommends that the proposed University of Maryland Policy on the Awarding of Latin Honors, as shown immediately following this report, be approved.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 — Charge from the Senate Executive Committee
Appendix 2 — Latin Honors GPA Cutoffs 2019-2020 Academic Year
Appendix 3 — Latin Honors Peer Institution Comparison

XX-X.XX(X)   UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND POLICY ON THE AWARDING OF LATIN HONORS

I.   Purpose

The University of Maryland awards Latin Honors to recognize high-achieving undergraduate students for academic excellence over the course of the student's undergraduate career. Summa cum laude, magna cum laude, and cum laude are the highest honors the University bestows to signify sustained excellence in scholarship.

II.   Policy

A.   The University bestows the Latin Honors of summa cum laude, magna cum laude, and cum laude.

B.   Latin Honors are awarded to the top ten (10) percent of all students graduating in each College or School, and are calculated based on the average cumulative GPAs of the previous academic year's graduating classes from the specific College or School.

1.   Summa cum laude is awarded to students with a cumulative GPA equal to or greater than the highest two (2) percent of the GPAs;

2.   Magna cum laude is awarded to students with a cumulative GPA equal to or greater than the next highest three (3) percent; and

3.   Cum laude is awarded to students with a cumulative GPA equal to or greater than the next highest five (5) percent, as well as to all students with a cumulative GPA of 3.900 or greater who would not otherwise be eligible for a Latin Honor.

III.   Eligibility for Latin Honors

A.   To be eligible for Latin Honors, students must have earned at least 60 semester hours either at the University or through a program in which credit earned is counted as University of Maryland resident credit, as defined by the Office of the Registrar.

B.   No more than six (6) credits with pass/fail or satisfactory/fail grades will be counted towards the 60 semester hours minimum.

C.   Coursework completed in a student's final semester will be included in the calculation of Latin Honors.

D.   No student with a GPA of less than 3.300 will be considered for Latin Honors.

IV.   Implementation of Latin Honors

A.   The Office of the Registrar will calculate and publicize the minimum GPA cutoffs required in the current academic year for each Latin Honors level for each

College or School.

B. While the minimum GPA cutoffs for Latin Honors will change from year to year, once calculated, they will remain static for the entire upcoming academic year and will not be recalculated during that academic year.

C. Since Latin Honors calculations include grades earned in a student's final semester, Latin Honors will be annotated in the commencement program as tentative and unofficial pending the submission and calculation of all final grades for the semester of commencement.

D. Latin Honors will be recorded on the transcripts and diplomas of students who have earned the honors and who have graduated from the University.

Proposal to Lower the University's GPA Cutoff for Latin Honors Eligibility
(Senate Document #19-20-10)
Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee | Chair: William Reed

Senate Chair Lanford and the Senate Executive Committee request that the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee review the attached proposal entitled, *Proposal to Lower the University's GPA Cutoff for Latin Honors Eligibility.*

The APAS Committee should:

1. Review the provisions for Latin Honors in the University of Maryland Undergraduate Catalog.

2. Review the Latin Honors GPA level specifications for each college.

3. Review similar provisions and GPA level specifications at Big 10 and other peer institutions.

4. Review data on the impact of potential changes to existing procedures.

5. Consult with the proposer.

6. Consult with a representative of the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

7. Consult with a representative of the Registrar's Office.

8. Consult with a representative of the Office of the Senior Vice President & Provost.

9. Consider whether the provisions for Latin Honors appropriately recognize top-tier graduates of the University.

10. Consider whether the University's rationale for assessing Latin Honors as percentages instead of absolute GPA thresholds is appropriate.

11. Consider whether the percentage or GPA level thresholds should be revised.

12. Consult with a representative of the Office of General Counsel on any proposed changes to the University's policies or procedures.

13. If appropriate, recommend whether the University's procedures should be revised.

We ask that you submit a report to the Senate Office no later than **February 7, 2020**. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.

Proposal to Lower the University's Latin Honor Eligibility GPA Cutoff

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UNIT	N/A	CONSTITUENCY	N/A

DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE

At the University of Maryland – College Park, hereinafter UMD, the lowest qualifying GPA for graduating seniors to achieve cum laude is 3.5 on a 4.0 scale (College of Information Studies). Currently, 10 out of the 13 (76%) of the colleges at the University have requirements between 3.85 to 3.91 to simply qualify for cum laude, the lowest Latin honor distinction. In addition, UMD only considers the GPAs of the top 10% of graduates when determining the GPA cutoffs for the following academic year.

After researching a myriad of universities including; Ivy Leagues, similarly academic ranked institutions, and peer colleges within the BIG 10 Conference, I found a stark disconnect between the high GPA threshold to achieve Latin honors at UMD in comparison to other comparable institutions. For brevity, I will discuss the schools with the same rank as UMD according to the *2020 U.S. News and World Report* (https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-universities).

Currently, the University of Maryland – College Park is ranked #63 under the National Universities category along with George Washington University and the University of Connecticut (U-Conn). According to their respective Offices of the Registrar, achieving Latin honors requires a GPA of the following:

- The George Washington University: 3.4–3.59 (**cum laude**), 3.6–3.79 (**magna cum laude**), 3.8–4.0 (**summa cum laude**).
- U-Conn: at least a 3.0 total GPA (**cum laude**), 3.4 – 3.69 (**magna cum laude**), 3.7 – 4.7 GPA (**summa cum laude**).

Latin honors distinctions are important to high achieving students, of which the UMD prides itself on. If UMD wants to recruit, retain, and graduate students who excel academically, the University must acknowledge and reward students of high academic performance to a proportionate degree of their peer institutions.

UMD graduates are competing against students from other universities for admission into the nation's most prestigious graduate programs and job opportunities. However, UMD graduates fall short when graduates from other institutions are achieving the prestigious Latin honor titles and UMD graduates are not, simply because of the high GPA threshold. The limited honors

acknowledgement for UMD students creates a disadvantage for them amidst these already difficult and competitive processes.

Due to the GPA cutoff to qualify for Latin honors at UMD, I believe the University is neglecting high achieving students by depriving them of the honored distinction. In its current form, UMD's Latin honors policy is dismissive towards students of high academic excellence and ultimately does an incredible disservice to UMD graduates. Thousands of families and students have paid great sacrifices to attend the University of Maryland - College Park, and as it stands, this high threshold sends a nonverbal message that their academic achievements are not enough to be acknowledged or rewarded.

I believe the University should consider adjusting the University's Latin honors system and GPA threshold to align more closely with other peer institutions.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION

The University's current Latin honor's system needs to be changed to align with universities of a similar rank and/or other universities in the BIG 10 Conference. See the Office of the Registrar's website https://registrar.umd.edu/current/Policies/latinhonors.html for a comprehensive outline on UMD's Latin honors eligibility.

After speaking with Dr. Ann Smith, Assistant Dean in the Office of Undergraduate Studies, it was made clear that the University currently determines its GPA cutoff for Latin Honors by referring to the GPAs of graduating seniors from the previous academic year.

For example, the GPAs of the top 1% (summa cum laude) of graduating seniors of the College of Behavioral Sciences in the 2018-2019 academic year will determine the GPA cutoff for the students graduating in the 2019-2020 academic year who receive the summa cum laude distinction.

It is my goal to have the University abandon the aforementioned system and adopt one that expands the GPA/percentage cutoff to align with other peer institutions.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO IMPLEMENT LATIN HONORS POLICY CHANGE

The majority of universities in the BIG 10 Conference have their Latin honors data published on their Office of the Registrar websites. UMD could use the Latin honor systems of other schools in the Big 10 as a model for an appropriate GPA threshold to receive a Latin Honor title. If the University chooses this approach, UMD's Office of the Registrar can average the GPA cutoffs of other BIG 10 universities to determine a standardized GPA range for each Latin honor title. Information on the GPA ranges for other Big 10 universities can be found under the "Additional Information" section.

However, if UMD wishes to keep the percentage system (i.e. the top X% of students in the class receive a Latin Honor title) and uphold the integrity of the degrees and Latin honors titles awarded, then the University's Registrar should consider expanding the percentage of students who are eligible to receive Latin honors from the top 10% to the top 20-25% (please refer to

Indiana University, Northwestern University, or Purdue University under the "Additional Information" section).

Below is all the Latin Honors data published by universities in the **BIG 10 Conference**:

Indiana University: https://commencement.indiana.edu/what-to-wear/students/honors-criteria.html

University of Michigan (College of Literature, Science, and the Arts): https://lsa.umich.edu/advising/graduation/diplomas-distinction.html

Michigan State University: https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/GradHonor/GraduationHonors.aspx

The Ohio State University
- College of Engineering: https://advising.engineering.osu.edu/current-osu-students/graduation-honors-and-distinction
- College of Education and Human Ecology: https://ehe.osu.edu/ugss/advising-basics/honors/graduating/

Pennsylvania State University: https://www.registrar.psu.edu/graduation/distinction.cfm

Rutgers University (See "Graduation with Honors" tab): https://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/major/additional-academic-programs/honors-opportunities#graduation-with-honors

University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign
- College of Liberal Art and Sciences: https://las.illinois.edu/academics/distinctions

University of Minnesota: https://policy.umn.edu/education/degreeshonors-faq

University of Nebraska
- College of Education and Human Sciences: https://cehs.unl.edu/cehs/deans-list-and-degrees-distinction/

Northwestern University
- School of Communication: https://advising.soc.northwestern.edu/registration-and-policies/honors/

- Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences:
  https://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/enrichment-opportunities/honors-awards/college-honors.html
- McCormick School of Engineering:
  https://www.mccormick.northwestern.edu/students/undergraduate/student-prizes-awards.html
- School of Education and Social Policy (page 33):
  https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/ugrad/files/pdfs/sesp-student-handbook-2018-19.pdf

Purdue University (See Section C "Graduation with Distinction"):
http://catalog.purdue.edu/content.php?catoid=9&navoid=10530

University of Wisconsin: https://registrar.wisc.edu/grading-honors/

Below is all the Latin Honors data published by universities in the **Ivy League Conference**:

Cornell University (for Bachelor's of Science): 3.50 – 3.74 (**cum laude**), 3.75 – 4.0 (**magna cum laude**), 4.00 or greater (**summa cum laude**).

https://cals.cornell.edu/academics/registrar/degree-requirements/academic-honors/

University of Pennsylvania: 3.40 – 3.59 (**cum laude**), 3.60 – 3.79 (**magna cum laude**), 3.80 or higher (**summa cum laude**).

https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/graduation-honors/

Columbia University (College of General Studies): 3.50 – 3.66 (**cum laude**), 3.67 – 3.89 (**magna cum laude**), 3.9 or above (**summa cum laude**).

http://bulletin.columbia.edu/general-studies/undergraduates/academic-policies/academic-honors/

LATIN HONORS CUTOFFS

Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Summer 2020 Graduating Classes

College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Summa	4.000 – 3.960
Magna	3.959 – 3.905
Cum Laude	3.904 – 3.831

School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation

Summa	4.000 – 3.923
Magna	3.922 – 3.771
Cum Laude	3.770 – 3.655

College of Arts and Humanities

Summa	4.000 – 3.984
Magna	3.983 – 3.940
Cum Laude	3.939 – 3.868

College of Behavioral and Social Sciences

Summa	4.000 – 3.976
Magna	3.975 – 3.932
Cum Laude	3.931 – 3.852

Robert H. Smith School of Business

Summa	4.000 – 3.966
Magna	3.965 – 3.912
Cum Laude	3.911 – 3.837

College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences

Summa	4.000 – 3.980
Magna	3.979 – 3.941
Cum Laude	3.940 – 3.895

College of Education

Summa	4.000 – 3.993
Magna	3.992 – 3.986
Cum Laude	3.985 – 3.962

A. James Clark School of Engineering

Summa	4.000 – 3.975
Magna	3.974 – 3.931
Cum Laude	3.930 – 3.846

College of Information Studies

Summa	4.000 – 3.808
Magna	3.807 – 3.674
Cum Laude	3.673 – 3.592

Philip Merrill College of Journalism

Summa	4.000 – 3.943
Magna	3.942 – 3.893
Cum Laude	3.892 – 3.830

School of Public Health

Summa	4.000 – 3.938
Magna	3.937 – 3.850
Cum Laude	3.849 – 3.77

School of Public Policy

Summa	4.000 – 3.892
Magna	3.891 – 3.890
Cum Laude	3.889 – 3.816

College of Undergraduate Studies

Summa	4.000 – 3.929
Magna	3.928 – 3.896
Cum Laude	3.895 – 3.827

University	Uniformly Distributed	GPA or Percentage	Minimum Threshold	GPA/Percentage for each Latin Honors Level
University of California: Berkeley	Yes, but students may enroll in their major's honors program as well which have varying specifications	GPA	Complete at least 50 units in the University of California -43 of those 50 units must be letter graded. -30 of the 50 units must be completed in residence at Berkeley. Meet the GPA requirement for Distinction in General Scholarship. *Each major program has an honors policy and program. Students may enroll in their major's honors program provided they have the required GPA in courses in the major and the approval of the major department. Students participating in the honors program in their major may enroll in fewer than 13 units. Honors in the major is noted on the transcript and diploma as Honors, High Honors or Highest Honors. Visit your undergraduate major adviser (UMA) for details.	General Distinction: 3.747 High Distinction: 3.860 Highest Distinction: 3.953
UCLA	No: differs by college	GPA	Eligible students must have completed at least 90 (98 for the School of Nursing) University of California units for a letter grade.	Varies by college
University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign	Yes	Percentage	Summa Cum Laude GPA 3.96 Magna Cum Laude GPA 3.91 Cum Laude GPA 3.84 Must complete one of the following: 25 honors hours, OR 35 advanced hours (300/400 level), OR LAS James Scholar Graduation Honors, OR Departmental Distinction	Top 3% Summa Cum Laude Top 7% Magna Cum Laude Top 12% Cum Laude
Indiana University: Bloomington	No: differs by college	GPA	Varies by college	Varies by college
The University of Iowa	No: differs by college	GPA	Varies by college	Varies by college
University of Michigan	Yes	Percentage	Highest Distinction: 3.957 – 4.000 High Distinction: 3.865 – 3.956 Distinction: 3.722 – 3.864	Top 3% "with Highest Distinction" Next 10% "with High Distinction" Next 25% "with Distinction."
Michigan State University	Yes	Percentage	The specific minimum grade-point averages required are determined by the Office of the Provost following a review of the standards by the University Committee on Undergraduate Studies. the GPA thresholds are adjusted following each Spring semester for the following calendar year.	Top 20% 6% receive the degree With High Honor 14% receive the degree With Honor
University of Minnesota: Twin Cities	Yes	GPA	Must complete an Honors Thesis consistent with the level of Latin Honors they are attempting. Must meet the residency requirement of 60 graded credits on campus. Students whose GPA is 0.100 or less below one of these three bands may be awarded Latin Honors based on exceptional thesis work as determined by the student's campus honors program	cum laude: 3.50 GPA or higher magna cum laude: 3.66 GPA or higher summa cum laude: 3.75 GPA or higher
University of Nebraska: Lincoln	No: differs by college	GPA	Varies by college	Varies by college
UNC Chapel Hill	Yes	GPA	To graduate "with Distinction" or "with Highest Distinction" a student must have completed at least 45 academic hours at UNC-CH and have obtained a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.5 and 3.8 respectively.	Distinction: 3.5 Highest Distinction: 3.8
Northwestern University	Yes	Percentage.	The GPA cutoffs for each level of honors based on the stated percentages are not made public	Top 25% of the students in each school 5% of the school's class are awarded summa cum laude Next 8%, magna cum laude Next 12%, cum laude
Ohio State University	Yes	GPA	No	Cum laude: 3.50 to 3.69 Magna cum laude: 3.70 to 3.89 Summa cum laude: 3.90 GPA
Penn State	No: differs by college	Percentage	Must have at least 3.5 GPA and 60 credits	Top 12% of a college's graduating class, GPA standard varies by college

Purdue University	No: differs by college	GPA, except for Highest distinction honors	No		Three-tenths of the graduates having the highest overall GPA shall be designated as graduating with highest distinction, irrespective of the schools from which they graduate. Regular Honors decided by individual colleges
Rutgers University	Yes	GPA	No		Summa Cum Laude: 3.850 or better Magna Cum Laude: 3.700 to 3.849 Cum Laude: 3.500 to 3.699
University of Wisconsin-Madison	Yes	Percentage	will be noted on the transcript of students who have earned a grade GPA that places them within the top 20 percent of students graduating that term provided the student has earned 60 or more credits at UW-Madison. The award of Distinction in the Major is granted at graduation, upon the recommendation of a department to the Dean of the College of Letters & Science, to any L&S undergraduate student not earning the Honors degree (i.e., Honors in the Liberal Arts, Honors in the Major, Comprehensive Honors) who has done outstanding work in the major and who has passed a comprehensive examination on that work.		Distinction: top 20%