

3-31-1983

## Academic Standards and Calendar Committee Report #82-83-1: Sections 8.33.30 and 8.35.10

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND  
Kingston, Rhode Island

FACULTY SENATE  
BILL

Adopted by the Faculty Senate

TO: President Frank Newman

FROM: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

1. The attached BILL, titled Academic Standards and Calendar Committee Report #82-83-1: Sections 8.33.30 and 8.35.10

is forwarded for your consideration.

2. The original and two copies for your use are included.
3. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on March 31, 1983 (date).
4. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Governors, completing the appropriate endorsement below.
5. In accordance with Section 10, paragraph 4 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective on April 21, 1983 (date), three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Regents for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Governors, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

April 1, 1983  
(date)

James Findlay  
James Findlay  
Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

FROM: President of the University

1. Returned.
2. a. Approved ✓.
- b. Approved subject to final approval by Board of Governors \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_.

4/7/83  
(date)

F. Newman  
President

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND  
Kingston, Rhode Island

FACULTY SENATE

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND CALENDAR COMMITTEE  
Report #82-83-1

January 19, 1983

On December 21, 1982, the Faculty Senate Academic Standards and Calendar Committee approved the following sections of the University Manual. They are now presented to the Faculty Senate for approval:

I. Add the following new section 8.33.30:

8.33.30 Repeating Courses. Unless otherwise designated, no course may be repeated in which a grade of C or better has already been received except with permission of the student's academic dean. The dean may require that the course be taken Pass-Fail. If such a course is repeated for credit, both grades are used in computing the QPA, and the credit requirement for graduation shall be increased by the number of credits repeated. A course in which an undergraduate student earns below a C (C-, any D, or F grade) may be repeated for a second grade option in which only the grade earned when the course is repeated will be used in the calculation of a student's QPA and only the credits earned for the repeated course will apply towards the graduation requirement. All grades earned for a given course shall remain on a student's permanent record. Students who wish to take advantage of this second grade option must ~~submit the appropriate form to the Office of the Registrar.~~ *obtain approval from* their academic dean and submit the appropriate form to the Office of the Registrar. *This second grade option may be used once per course.*

II. Change existing section 8.55.10 as follows:

Existing

8.55.10 Failures in Courses. Failures shall be included in the computation of quality points.

Proposed

8.55.10 Failure in Courses. Failures shall be included in the computation of quality points. A failed course or one in which a C- or a D was earned by an undergraduate student may be repeated. The original grade shall then be ignored in the calculation of a student's QPA, but all grades received for a given course shall appear on a student's permanent record. See 8.33.30.

Rationale:

The Committee recommendations come in the wake of concerns expressed by the Admissions/Retention Task Force and University College. Dean Strommer met with the Committee and expressed her support for the recommendations. The reasons for the changes we urge the Faculty Senate to adopt are best expressed by the following excerpts from Dean Strommer's letter to the Committee:

"My immediate concern is with the way in which we handle students who find themselves in academic trouble. The appeal process seems to imply that we will consider non-academic factors in deciding whether a student should return; yet, our Scholastic Standing Committee in large part bases its decisions on the extent of the student's deficiency. I have myself argued that it is not fair to continue those students faced with a virtually insurmountable grade point deficit. Their only hope is to be dismissed and later to return on conditional status. Because this strikes me as being a bit like bombing a village to save it, I think a change in our policy on repeating courses may well be in order.

We currently dismiss first semester freshmen only if their QPA is below a 1.0. This means that many freshmen who are not on the dismissal list begin their second semester with a deficiency of 1 to 16 or occasionally more quality points. Freshmen on the dismissal list who appeal successfully to continue face even greater hurdles: they typically begin their second semester with a deficiency of more than 15 quality points.

When one analyzes the academic history and SAT scores of these students, one is struck by how average they tend to be. Some are, of course, at the lower end of our admissions scale; a few are at the upper. But the vast majority are those students for whom one would expect a solid C average. We have, then, a sizeable group of second semester freshmen, average students for the most part, who because of illness, problems in adjusting to college or a host of other matters, have had a rotten semester. The message we give to these students is, "You can remain in school, but you have one or, at the most, two semesters to achieve a 2.0." We know (and no doubt he or she knows) that making up 12 or 15 quality points in a single semester is a Herculean task. Few students who earn 1.0 or below during their first semester at URI move to being a 3.0 or even a 2.5 student in a single semester, if they ever do. That happens, but very rarely.

Even if the committee waives a dismissal a second time, we have already sent the student a discouraging message. Instead of congratulating him or her for improving academically, we dismiss the student. Some students apparently are sufficiently discouraged by this action that they do not appeal a second time.

It was, I suspect, in recognition of the difficulty in recovering that the opportunity for dismissed students to return on conditional status was created. Because of that policy many students have graduated who otherwise would never have been able to make it. We recognize that some students need a fresh start and could not achieve a 2.0 if all of their previous work were counted. If, however, students were allowed to repeat courses in which their original grade was below a C (C-, D, and F) and count only the second grade in their QPA, many students would more rapidly be able to return to good standing. They would be encouraged to repeat courses in which they originally did poorly and to master the material of those courses rather than implicitly to be discouraged from trying a second time. Some students rush too quickly to change their major because they fear that repeating a required course will only bring their QPA up slightly--if, for example, they repeat a course in which they earned an F and obtain a C, they have achieved little: their total QPA for that course is still D.

As I'm sure you know, many institutions already have this policy. Indeed, in discussing it with faculty, I learned that a number think that it is already URI policy. Some, however, might argue that it would lower academic standards. My suspicion is that if it has any effect on standards, it might work instead to raise them. Failing a course would not be quite as fatal to the student as it is now; faculty might be more inclined to require a higher level of mastery for students if they knew that students could repeat the course and remove the original F from their QPA. Students who did poorly would be encouraged to repeat key courses to achieve a level of mastery rather than to avoid that course and all others like it or to take it at another, presumably easier, institution. I think that a new policy for repeated courses in which C-, D, and F grades are earned would enable us to work more effectively with many of our students, particularly freshmen, and would enable them to recover from a disastrous semester more rapidly.

This proposed policy change has been discussed informally with many faculty advisors in University College and formally with the college's Scholastic Standing Committee. All have recommended approval. This year the members of our Scholastic Standing Committee are Ev Harris, Business; Mary James, Human Science and Services; Joan Lausier, Pharmacy; Frank Carrano, Barbara Brown, and Mario Trubiano, Arts and Sciences (Mario was unable to attend the meeting at which this was discussed, however). The Registrar's Advisory Council has considered this policy and has approved it in principal."

Members of the Committee:

Jack Demitroff, Registrar  
Abner Gaines, LIB  
Marian Lee, undergraduate student  
Dorothy Massey, PED  
Barbara Morgan, NUR  
John Mottinger, BOT  
Michael Navascues, LAN  
Richard Roughton, HIS, Chairperson