STANDARDS FOR UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Report and recommendations of the UWM Academic Policy Committee

Discussion: Several federal agencies which provide financial aid for students have established provisions requiring institutions to adopt standards of academic progress in addition to standards of academic good standing. The Education Amendments of 1976, which are now final, require that federal aid to students shall be provided only if students are making satisfactory progress according to the standards established by their institutions. UWM must adopt such standards in order to comply with the Education Amendments of 1976: federal funding will not be continued unless this action is taken.

The legislation proposed by the Academic Policy Committee was prepared in consultation with representatives from Admissions, Financial Aids, and Student Services. We have been guided in our work by: Regent Policy, Chapter IV, AP7.2 (revised), "Planning improved services for minority and educationally disadvantaged students"; by the June, 1977 UW System "Guideline on academic progress standards and financial aid"; by the 1976 Education Amendments; and by UWM's current academic performance standards.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: UNDERGRADUATES WHO ARE ENROLLED IN SIX OR MORE CREDITS AT THE END OF THE SECOND WEEK OF CLASSES IN ANY SEMESTER MUST COMPLETE WITH PASSING GRADES AT LEAST 6 CREDITS IN THAT SEMESTER AS THE CRITERION FOR SATISFACTORY PROGRESS.

RATIONALE: The System Guidelines indicate that each institution should establish for all undergraduates a minimum number of credits or credit-equivalent educational experiences which must be completed in a given period of time not to exceed twelve months.

This minimum credit requirement provides for a reasonable expectation of progress toward a UWM degree. At six credits per semester a student would take over ten years to complete a degree. All federal aid has either time or dollar maximums which would be exhausted before the student completed his or her degree.

In the case of grant eligibility both the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG) and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) have four year maximums (or five years for students in special programs). SEOG, in addition, has a dollar maximum of up to $4,000 or up to $5,000 for students in five year programs.

State grant funds have a ten-semester and up to $1,500 per year maximum per student. The loan programs (National Direct Student Loan and Guaranteed Student Loan) have dollar maximums, with NSDL further restricting the loan amount by the year in school.

An undergraduate student who takes more than five years to complete a degree generally runs out of eligibility for major sources of funding.
If the student cannot complete the undergraduate degree requirements, he or she will be placed in repayment on loan programs.

Given these year and dollar ceilings on financial assistance, it would appear that to assist needy students and to provide aid in a responsible manner, a six credit per semester standard (for those students who enroll in nine or more credits) is fair and equitable.

"Credits" are understood to mean any work for which students register and pay tuition.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OF EACH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE SHALL BE USED AS THE STANDARD OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ENROLLING IN FIVE OR FEWER CREDITS DURING A SEMESTER.

RATIONALE: The Guidelines indicate that each institution should determine standards of academic progress for part-time students. In effect, the Committee is recommending using the current academic performance standards also as the academic progress standards for students who complete five or fewer credits per semester. (A student receiving a probation action because of grades would also be on probation for academic progress.)

RECOMMENDATION THREE: ALL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS SHALL BE NOTIFIED ON THEIR GRADE REPORTS AT THE END OF EACH SEMESTER THAT THEY DO OR DO NOT MEET THE ACADEMIC PROGRESS STANDARD.

RATIONALE: The Guidelines indicate that each institution should establish a system for notification at regular intervals of undergraduate students who fail to meet the institution's standards for academic progress. This procedure can be administered through automatic notification on the grade report, using UWM's computer facilities.

The content of the grade report as it concerns academic progress should include the following:

1. Number of credits earned with grade of D- or better, or with report of "Credit", or "K" (for pass).

2. Number of credits for which the student was officially enrolled at the end of the second week in the semester (or higher number if the student adds any courses after the second week), or analogous period in the summer session.

3. Administrative comment:
A. Satisfactory progress

B. Review - for students enrolled in six to eight credits who complete fewer than six

C. Warning - for students enrolled in nine or more credits who complete fewer than six

D. Probation - criteria for probation determined by individual schools and colleges

E. Suspension - criteria for suspension determined by individual schools and colleges

RECOMMENDATION FOUR: STUDENTS WHO WISH TO APPEAL ACADEMIC PROGRESS ACTIONS MAY USE THE EXISTING DEPARTMENTAL, SCHOOL OR COLLEGE, AND CAMPUS-WIDE APPEALS PROCEDURES.

RATIONALE: The Guidelines indicate that each institution should establish an appropriate appeal procedure for undergraduate students who fail to meet the institution's academic progress standards.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE: THE ABOVE STANDARDS SHALL SERVE AS MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS. INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES MAY ADOPT STANDARDS FOR THEIR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WHICH EXCEED THESE REQUIREMENTS.

RATIONALE: The Academic Policy Committee believes that the adoption of minimal standards meets requirements of the 1976 Education Amendments. It is the Committee's expectation that some units of the University may wish to develop standards for undergraduate academic progress which go beyond these basic requirements. Adoption of this recommendation will permit them to do so.

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