

Recommendations to Faculty Senate From Academic Standards Committee

The Academic Standards Committee sends the following motions forward for the Faculty Senate's approval:

1. Continuation Standards

Proposed catalog language:

Students will be in good standing if they maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 in all UTC attempted hours, excluding developmental courses.

Current catalog language:

In order to continue in residence at UTC, students must earn a minimum grade point average in accordance with the following scale of attempted hours:

Hours Attempted	GPA Required
1-23	1.0
24-39	1.5
40-55	1.8
56 and above	2.0

(from 2006-2007 catalog, p. 26)

Rationale:

Among the many reasons to support this change is that requiring students to maintain a 2.0 for their entire UTC enrollment will enable students to graduate whereas the current standards mean that some students will never graduate if they get off to a poor start at UTC. Because students can take up to 56 hours with below a cumulative 2.0 GPA to continue in "good standing," many students get themselves into a situation where there is almost no way that they can graduate even when they have completed more than 120 hours.

Further, the numbers affected by these changes are very small, support is available for those identified earlier as being in trouble under the new policy, the proposed change will serve as a wake-up call for students, the new policy will make UTC more attractive because higher standards attract better students, students well below a 2.0 drag down the entire class, and it is humane to stop students who are not succeeding early so that they do not burden themselves with student loans.

Clarification concerning the proposed changes:

1. The probation, suspension, and dismissal rules remain the same; only the GPA requirement for “good standing” is being changed.
2. Only UTC courses are used to calculate the cumulative GPA; no transfer courses, developmental courses, or institutional courses will be used.
3. UTC will no longer include institutional credits in calculating the cumulative average for continuation purposes for students taking developmental courses.
4. These continuation standards will be implemented beginning with the Fall 2008 semester.
5. Until the implementation date, the GPA will be calculated as currently described in the UTC Catalog. After the implementation date, the UTC GPA will be computed using courses taken at UTC, not including developmental or institutional courses. Students' earned and attempted hours will carry over.

In 1993 the Academic Standards Committee, the Faculty Council (as it was called then) as well as the full faculty voted to change continuation standards to 2.0 no matter the number of hours students have completed. Because UTC was under the Geier Consent, the University of Tennessee system administrators said that UTC could not change these standards unless it was able to put into place a number of support programs to help students. Since these support programs were not funded, UTC could not go forward with the proposed changes. Now that the University of Tennessee system schools are no longer bound by the Geier Consent, that UTC has a strong record of diversity in its student body, and that UTC has support services in place (Special Services, Student Success Center, the Writing Center, and the Fresh Life Program), the committee is once again bringing forward these changes in continuation standards.

2. Enforcement of catalog regulations for admissions to UTC

That the catalog regulations on application deadlines and calendar restrictions prohibiting new registrations after the first week of classes be strictly enforced.

Rationale:

Although the undergraduate catalog specifically states that application deadlines for new students' entrance into UTC are August 1 and December 1, respectively, and for transfer students' entrance the dates are August 15 and December 15 respectively, the actual practice is a “rolling admissions” policy. Enforcing these dates may improve student success.

Further, the current practice is to allow all students to register in courses through the second week of classes and sometimes after that. Such additions to courses mean, in many cases, that students cannot successfully complete courses when they are enrolled at such a late date. However, students registered during the first week of classes may make additions and changes to their schedules during the second week of classes. Students not registered in the first week of classes may no longer register for classes during the second week of class. No new registrations are to be processed during the second week of classes.