

UNIVERSITY SENATE
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: Undergraduate Academic Council

Date: December 14, 2009

Grade Point Requirements for Continuing in the Honors College

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the following requirements for continuing in The Honors College be approved by the University Senate.
2. That this proposal be forwarded to the President for approval.
3. That the proposal take effect upon the President's approval.

Proposal:

Currently, students who enter The Honors College as incoming freshmen are expected to achieve at least a 3.0 GPA during their first semester; during each subsequent semester, honors students are expected to achieve at least a 3.25 GPA.

Beginning with students admitted to The Honors College during the 2010/11 academic year, students in The Honors College must achieve the following grade point averages (GPAs) to remain in The Honors College.

For students who enter The Honors College as incoming freshmen:

During their first semester, they must achieve at least a 3.25 GPA. At the end of their freshman year, they must achieve least a 3.30 cumulative GPA.

Each subsequent academic year, they must achieve at least a 3.5 GPA during that academic year.

For students who enter The Honors College at the beginning of their sophomore year:

They must achieve at least a 3.5 GPA each academic year.

A student whose GPA is one quarter point or less below the expected GPA (at the end of the first semester for incoming freshmen; at the end of each academic year for all students) may be granted a probationary semester by the Director of The Honors College, following a meeting between the student and the Director. Before this meeting, the student will submit a statement describing the issues that interfered with the student's academic achievement and a plan for overcoming those issues in future semesters. Students granted a probationary semester must meet the GPA requirement in each subsequent semester or year to remain in The Honors College. Students who fail to meet this standard at the end of their probationary semester will be removed from the Honors College.

A student whose GPA during any semester or year is more than one quarter of a point below the expected GPA may be granted a probationary semester by the Director of The Honors College if the Director concludes that issues largely outside the control of the student had a significant influence on the student's GPA (e.g., a prolonged illness, a death in the student's family). A student experiencing these issues must request a meeting with the Director to discuss them and the student's plan for academic success in the upcoming semesters. Students granted a probationary semester must meet the GPA requirement in each subsequent semester or year

to remain in The Honors College. Students who fail to meet this standard at the end of their probationary semester will be removed from the Honors College.

Students whose semester GPA is below that expected for their year in school, but whose GPA remains at or above that required for that year (e.g., a junior who receives a 3.4 during the spring semester but whose GPA for the junior year is above 3.5), will be invited by the Director to discuss their lower performance that semester and plans to improve in the future. However, these students will not be required to meet with the Director to remain in The Honors College.

Each year, the Director will include in the annual report the number of students who were dismissed or placed on probation during the previous year.

Rationale:

By unanimous vote, the Governing Board of the Honors College requests that this proposal be adopted. To continue in The Honors College, honors students are expected to attain a consistently high level of academic achievement. The members of the Governing Board believe that students achieving the GPAs specified in this proposal are maintaining a high level of academic achievement.

The lower expectation during an honors student's first year at UAlbany recognizes that the grades achieved during a student's first year may reflect short-lived struggles during the transition from high school to the university. Some of these students attain much higher grades after their first or second semester. Consequently, it would not be appropriate to drop them from The Honors College before they have had the opportunity to make a successful transition to the university.

After a student's first semester at UAlbany, the GPA expectation is based on each academic year, rather than each semester. This expectation recognizes that some high achieving students experience variability in their performance from semester to semester, based on their curriculum or other issues in their lives. Thus, this expectation allows a student to offset a somewhat less successful semester with a more successful semester during any given academic year and remain in The Honors College.

Some honors students experience problematic semesters during which their GPA falls below the expected level. Counseling by the Director focused on identifying problems from the previous semester to overcome those problems during the subsequent semester can be helpful in assisting a student to regain his or her previous high achievement.

Some students experience significant issues during a semester that can have a detrimental influence on their academic achievement. Ongoing counseling and support for these students may assist them in regaining their previous high achievement.

Additional Information:

Following are the current GPA expectations for students to remain in The Honors College. They were determined by the Governing Board during the first year of The Honors College.

For students who enter The Honors College as incoming freshmen:

During their first semester as freshmen, honors students are expected to achieve at least a 3.0 GPA. During each subsequent semester, honors students are expected to achieve at least a 3.25 GPA.

Students who do not meet the expected GPA will be dropped from The Honors College.

Students who are close to the expected GPA (e.g., a 2.8 or higher during the first semester, a 3.1 or higher during subsequent semesters) may request a probationary semester by initiating a meeting with the Director. The student's circumstances will be reviewed during this meeting and, if a probationary semester is approved, the student will need to achieve a 3.25 or higher GPA during the probationary semester and each subsequent semester to remain in The Honors College.

Students who are not close to the expected GPA can remain in The Honors College if they experienced a significant issue during the semester that impeded their ability to achieve the needed GPA (e.g., a significant illness, the onset of high levels of anxiety, a family crisis). Students experiencing these issues should initiate a meeting with the Director.

When creating the current proposal, the members of the Governing Board examined the GPA expectations for students in other honors colleges and honors programs (see Appendix). As can be seen from the information in the Appendix, the GPA expectations in this proposal are similar to the higher expectations in many honors colleges and honors programs. As can also be seen, several universities have raised their GPA expectations for honors students in the last few years.

At the end of the 2008/09 academic year, 87% of the students in The Honors College—263 students out of a total of 301—had a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher; 92% of the students—280 students out of 301—had a cumulative GPA of 3.4 or higher. At the end of the 2007/08 academic year, 86% of the students in The Honors College—227 students out of a total of 264—had a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher; 89% of the students—236 students out of 264—had a cumulative GPA of 3.4 or higher.

Appendix: The following were retrieved from the universities' websites in 2009.

SUNY Stony Brook -- Maintain a GPA of 3.0

SUNY Buffalo -- Maintain a 3.2 Grade Point Average (GPA) during your first year and at least a 3.5 GPA in each successive year.

CUNY -- University Scholars are expected to achieve an overall GPA of 3.3 by the end of their freshman year. A cumulative 3.5 GPA must be achieved by the end of the sophomore year and maintained through graduation.

Penn State -- Students admitted to the SHC Fall 09 or after must maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.40 and a cumulative GPA of at least 3.40. (Students admitted to the SHC prior to Fall 09 must maintain semester and cumulative GPAs of at least 3.33.)

University of Vermont -- A 3.2 GPA is required to remain in good standing in the Honors College. Students are subject to dismissal from the Honors College if they receive grades of C- or below for more than 8 credits of coursework.

University of New Hampshire -- Students who enter the University in fall 2008 and in subsequent years must achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.40 in order to graduate with a University Honors designation. The current minimum cumulative GPA of 3.20 will continue to apply to all students enrolled at UNH as of May 2008.

University of Maine -- No by-semester requirements, must have a 3.3 to graduate from the honors college.

University of Delaware -- Must maintain a GPA of 3.00 in the first year to take Honors courses and remain in the Honors Program. After the second year and in subsequent years, Honors Program students must maintain a minimum of a 3.20 overall GPA.

University of Massachusetts at Amherst -- Achieve a grade of B or better in all honors courses including affiliated non-honors components (e.g., non-honors courses enriched with honors colloquia);

University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign -- Chancellor's Scholars joining the Program in Fall 2002 or later are required to maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.30 or better.

University of Illinois, Chicago -- All Honors College students are required to maintain a minimum 3.4 cumulative grade point average for all coursework taken at UIC.

University of Maryland, College Park --The University Honors Program Citation requires a 3.2 cumulative GPA

University of Maryland, Baltimore County --Maintenance of a cumulative 3.25 GPA (assessed at the end of each academic year) until completion of degree.

Ohio State University – Arts & Sciences -- 3.4 at the end of every year; 3.3 at end of first year only

Purdue University -- Students must receive at least a B in each of the courses and also have a 3.3 final cumulative GPA.

Indiana University -- Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.40 in their notation courses and a minimum overall grade point average of 3.40 at graduation.

University of Florida -- Honors students are required to maintain a 3.0 cumulative UF GPA in order to remain in the program.

University of Georgia -- In order to remain in good standing in the Honors Program, students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.4 and a minimum Honors GPA of 3.3.