Proposal for Revisions Undergraduate Grade Forgiveness Policy
12/03/2019

The current grade forgiveness policy requires students to repeat the course for which they want to use grade forgiveness in order to improve their UA grade-point average. This has little benefit, and can be detrimental, to students who change majors and who no longer need the course they want removed from their GPA calculation. For instance, a student who receives a “D” or “F” in MATH 2445 Calculus I with Review and has switched their major to something that doesn’t require that course must repeat the course if they want to improve their GPA through grade forgiveness. Some of the potential impacts on students are:

* The student’s only option is to retake a course that they struggled in the first time.
* The student must pay for a course that they no longer need for their degree plan, which has a very detrimental impact on low-income students.
* The student’s progress toward degree completion is slowed down by having to repeat a course they don’t need.

This proposal is to replace our current grade forgiveness policy with one that allows students to exclude up to 9 hours from their UA grade-point average calculation.

Summary of proposed revisions to the policy are:

* Change language from “Grade Forgiveness” to “Grade Exclusion”
* Allow course grade to be excluded from UAGrade Point Average without requiring that the course be repeated
* Allow students to exclude grade points for up to 9 UA credit hours (this allows for a combination of 2-3 courses in most cases)

Current Undergraduate Grade Forgiveness Policy

Under the Grade Forgiveness Policy, a student may improve the undergraduate cumulative GPA by repeating a maximum of two courses (up to nine hours) in which a grade of “D” or “F” was received and requesting that the repeat grade be the only one that is counted in the calculation. Only two such requests are available to any student in his or her undergraduate career. The repeated grade must be in the same course taken at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Only a course in which a grade of “D” or “F” was earned may be repeated under the Forgiveness Policy. The student must file a written petition to use grade forgiveness indicating which course(s) he/she chooses to grade renew: the petition must be completed and approved prior to graduation. Both attempts at the course will remain on the transcript, but only the second will be used to calculate both credit and GPA. The first attempt and the grade earned will be recorded on the transcript with the symbol “R” to denote that it has been repeated. Students considering grade forgiveness should be aware that many graduate schools, professional schools, employers or other institutions, in considering admission or employment, recompute the GPA and include all courses attempted even though a course was repeated. This means that if the cumulative GPA has been raised because of grade renewal or forgiveness, the recomputed GPA will be lower.  The Grade Forgiveness Policy begins with the Fall 1996 semester.  This policy may be used to forgive the grade of courses taken prior to that semester as long as the retaken course was in or after the Fall 1996 semester.

Proposed Undergraduate Grade Exclusion Policy

Under the Grade Exclusion Policy, undergraduate students may improve their UA undergraduate cumulative grade-point average (GPA) by requesting that the university exclude up to 9 credit hours in courses taken at the UA in which a grade of “D” or “F” was received. The excluded courses will no longer be used to compute the UA GPA. Students must file a petition with the Office of the Registrar to use grade exclusion indicating which course(s) they choose to grade exclude. The petition must be completed and approved prior to graduation. Undergraduate students who return to the UA for an additional degree(s) may use grade exclusion only for courses taken after their most recent undergraduate UA degree was awarded. Other stipulations are:

1. Undergraduate students may select up to 9 hours of any combination of UA courses with posted grades of “D” or “F” to be excluded from their cumulative grade point average calculation. In most cases, this will allow grade exclusion for 2-3 courses.
2. Excluded courses cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements. Credit hours earned for a “D” grade in an excluded course will no longer count towards the student’s degree.
3. Grade exclusions must be posted before the undergraduate degree has been conferred.
4. The course and grade that is being excluded will remain on the student’s transcript with a notation indicating that the UA Grade Exclusion Policy has been applied.
5. Grade exclusion cannot be removed or applied to another course once it has been posted.
6. Grade exclusion cannot be applied to courses in which academic misconduct has been committed.
7. Grade exclusion may result in a recalculation of a student’s academic standing, but it does not retroactively result in a refund of tuition or fees, nor does it change a student’s semester academic honors for previous semesters.
8. Excluded courses and hours will continue to be counted in calculations of satisfactory progress for financial aid eligibility.
9. Students considering grade exclusion should be aware that many graduate schools, professional schools, employers or other institutions, in considering admission or employment, recalculate the GPA and include all courses attempted. This means that if the cumulative GPA has been raised because of grade exclusion, then the recalculated GPA will be lower.
10. The Grade Exclusion Policy begins with the Fall 2020 semester, but may apply to courses taken before this term as long as the student has not earned an undergraduate degree from the UA or as long as the courses subject to exclusion were taken after the last UA undergraduate degree was awarded.
11. Grade forgiveness hours will be combined with grade exclusion hours when considering the credit hour limit under this policy. Therefore, any hours previously approved for grade forgiveness prior to fall 2020 will count toward the maximum 9-hour credit limit for grade exclusion. Thus, a student who has used 3 hours of grade forgiveness may use up to 6 hours of grade exclusion.