

3-18-1985

Repeat of Course Policy

The College at Brockport, College Senate

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Resolution #21, 1984-85

TO: President John E. Van de Wetering

FROM: The Faculty Senate

Meeting on 3/18/85

(Date)

RE: X I. Formal Resolution (Act of Determination)
 II. Recommendation (Urging the fitness of)
 III. Other (Notice, Request, Report, etc.)

SUBJECT: Repeat of Course Policy

(see attached)



Signed [Signature] Date Sent 3/20/85
(For the Senate)

..... Kenneth P. O'Brien, President, Faculty Senate

TO: The Faculty Senate

FROM: President John E. Van de Wetering

RE: I. Decision and Action Taken on Formal Resolution

- a. Accepted. Effective Date JUN 85
- b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate on _____
- c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the attached explanation

II., III. a. Received and acknowledged

b. Comment:

DISTRIBUTION: Vice Presidents: See attached list

Others:

Distribution Date: 3/26/85

Signed: [Signature]
(President of the College)

Date Received by the Senate: _____

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
College at Brockport

STUDENT POLICIES COMMITTEE
Repeat of Course Policy Revision

PROPOSAL

Proposed: Permit students to repeat a course regardless of the grade previously earned. Eliminate possibility of a withdrawal or incomplete being substituted for a previously earned grade.

Background: Currently courses may be repeated only when the student has received an E or D. This recommended change will provide all students the opportunity if they so choose, to repeat a course in order to improve their academic standing.

Policy Change: refer to page 45 of Academic Policies Handbook 83-85.

- Item 1, Change to reflect Registration and Records Office and to indicate its an option not an application procedure.
 - Item 2, Courses taken for a letter grade may only be repeated for a letter grade. Courses taken as pass/fail may be repeated as pass/fail or for a letter grade.
 - Item 3, Clarified grades that may be earned and credited toward graduation, indexing and transcript recording.
- Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, become 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

NEW POLICY WILL READ:

REPEATING COURSES

1. Students repeating courses must file a repeat of course form in the Office of Registration and Records at the time of the second enrollment.
2. Courses taken for a letter grade may only be repeated for a letter grade. Courses taken as pass/fail may be repeated as pass/fail or for a letter grade.
3. The grade received the last time the course is repeated shall be used in the computation of the cumulative grade point average, and in the computation

of the index in the major should it be affected. In all cases, both the new grade and the previously earned grade shall show on the transcript.

4. Only the grade received in the repeat of course shall be counted for credit toward graduation and the grade point average, i.e., if a student received a "C" in a course and later repeated the course, receiving an "E" grade, the student would receive neither credit toward graduation nor quality points toward his/her index, thereby losing both the credits toward graduation and the quality points toward the index. Neither withdrawals nor incompletes may be substituted for a previously awarded grade when a course is repeated.
5. Courses taken at Brockport may be repeated only at Brockport. Courses taken elsewhere will be treated as transfer credit.
6. In cases where a course number or course title has changed, without substantial change in course material, the department involved shall certify that the course is the same. The student shall receive credit under the new course number and title.
7. Students are also premitted to repeat courses in which they earned a "U". If passed later, credit toward graduation is received.

NEW POLICY FILE 1985

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BROCKPORT

State University of New York
College at Brockport
Brockport, New York 14420

Office of Academic Advisement
(716) 395-2711

February 12, 1985

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

TO: All Faculty Senators
FROM: Roger Weir, Director *Roger*
Personal, Academic & Career Counseling
RE: Repeating Courses

Yesterday the Senate returned to committee the proposal that students be permitted to repeat a course regardless of the grade previously received. The discussion that preceded the vote to return to committee took a number of turns, some of which suggested that there may be some confusion as to one or more of the issues involved. This is an attempt to clarify an issue or two, and perhaps to argue the case in a more leisurely fashion, preparatory to the return of some version of the proposal to the Senate.

The Policy at Present

The present policy permits students to repeat courses in which grades of D or E have been received. There is no limit to the number of repetitions, but the last grade received is the one that counts towards the GPA, no matter whether it is the best grade or not.

Important Point

Some Senators are apparently unaware that all courses attempted at Brockport remain on the transcript forever, whether or not the course is repeated. Anyone who reviews the transcript can see precisely how many times a course was attempted, and the grades received for each attempt. Thus no graduate admissions committee or interested employer can be deceived or unintentionally misled as to the conditions under which a given grade was obtained.

The Meaning of a Grade

Most of us slip back and forth between thinking of a grade as an index of mastery of a subject or competence in a subject (certain skills and/or a body of information/understandings etc.), and as an index of a person's ability to learn within a given period of time. Presumably, if we're looking for competency in a subject (accounting, for example), we don't care too much how long it took to attain the competency, as long as it's undeniably there. On the other hand, if we're looking for indications that a person can do higher level work in a subject area, or can learn new material rapidly and effectively in a work setting, then the fact that an A was obtained the first time through becomes pretty important. Well, we all know that difference, but we mostly don't have policies that can treat the two ideas differently, and both purposes of grading get continually intermixed. Probably should be. The point of this paragraph is merely that by showing all attempts at a course on the transcript, the prospective graduate department or employer can make both judgements. (Let's not forget that some very bright people struggled through several attempts at a language in order to meet the Ph.D. requirements in a whole slew of different fields, and medical schools are filled with people who didn't exactly set the world afire in organic chemistry.)

Alternatives to Opening Up the Repeat Policy

One suggested alternative to correcting the present discriminatory policy (my opinion, I guess) is to limit students to repeating only courses that are required for graduation. But do we really want to tell a student who receives an E in an

elective that that's the end of it? That seems a little extreme. How about courses in a minor, which isn't required for graduation? A business student might be trying to get some language proficiency in order to enter international business. Does an E in beginning Spanish seal that door off? Is it off to Berlitz?

The Worry That Better Students Will Flood the Classrooms

You should be so lucky. First of all, a student has to average 15 hours each semester in order to get out the door in eight semesters, which is the goal of most students. Especially the better students, who are on their way to either graduate work or a good job. These are the very people who aren't interested in making a career as a Brockport student. They often want a double major and a minor to boot. If they decide to waste time taking a course over, it's because they see a particular reason for it. These aren't the people who seem to hang on forever. It is the poorer student, some of whom are merely hanging on for social reasons, who drags along, on and off probation; in and out of academic dismissal, who repeats the courses. Besides, would you really object to having another student in your class who did well the first time and is determined to do even better? Sounds like a marvelous improvement to the class, to me.

The Argument That They Cost the State Money

The President pretty much took care of this concern.

Is This A Lowering of Standards?

I can't imagine why. Remember, we aren't removing the record of the past -- that stays right on the transcript where it belongs. It is true that the repeat changes the GPA, but we have much bigger holes than that in our GPA policies. The present set of policies allows a student to return to Brockport after having been academically dismissed, and have only the courses taken after his return count toward the GPA (the famous double-lining that has been in place for many years). That means a student can be dismissed two or three times for academic performance, then return for a final 10 hours (for example) and graduate with a GPA of 4.0. How's that for a realistic reflection of the world? Policy allows a student to transfer into Brockport with 96 hours. That leaves 24 to take, if all works well. A student who came here with a 2.0 and 96 hours could also graduate with a 4.0 by getting A's in those last 24 hours. These are much worse problems than a repeated course or two. In all of these instances, a saving factor is the transcript, which shows all to those who choose to read it. So yes, the course repeat policy allows a student to raise the GPA by so doing, but at least it is attained by an honest repeat. And those concerned with competencies rather than the demonstration of speed of learning would be perfectly happy with that.

Summary

Well, I maintain we're discriminating as we stand. Alternative solutions don't sound very practicable to me, and I think those who are worried about the proposed policy change are perhaps overreacting. Maybe not. If the above arguments don't compel you to the "right" (our) view, then your own alternative suggestions are probably what we ought to have. Thanks for reading through all this. If you didn't, you just missed some thanks. See you in March.