

Annual Report to the University Senate

Academic Year 2023-2024

Senate Scholastic Standards Committee

Committee Charge: This committee shall prepare legislation within the jurisdiction of the Senate concerning those scholastic matters affecting the University as a whole, and not assigned to the Curricula and Courses Committee, including academic programs, the marking system, scholarship standards, and the like.

2023/2024 Scholastic Standards Committee Members:

- ***Karen Bresciano, Co-Chair, The Graduate School**
- ***Jamie Kleinman, Co-Chair, CLAS, Psychological Sciences, Avery Point**
- *Maureen Armstrong, Dean of Students Office
- *Kelly Burke, Engineering, Chem & Biomolecular
- *Robin Coulter, Business, Marketing
- *Carrie Fernandes, Financial Aid
- *Holly Fitch, CLAS, Psychological Sciences
- *Morty Ortega, CAHNR, Natural Resources and the Environment
- *Lawrence Walsh, Office of Admissions
- Erin Ciarimboli, Office of Undergraduate Advising
- Sarah Croucher, Provost's Office, Academic Affairs
- Lindsay Cummings, SFA, Dramatic Arts
- Jennifer Lease Butts, Honors and Enrichment Program (Ex-Officio Member)
- Lizbeth Polanco, Undergraduate Student
- Brian Rockwood, Registrar's Office
- Sharyn Rusch, CLAS Academic Services Center
- Lauren Schlesselman, CETL, Academic Program Assessment and Learning Initiatives
- Christine Wenzel, Center for Students with Disabilities

*indicates 2023/2024 Senate member

Specific Topics Addressed:

Juneteenth- This topic was brought to us from SEC with support from the President and Provost. The request was to explore the possibility of declaring Juneteenth a non-teaching holiday. There was broad support from the committee. The registrar's said that the summer calendar could be adapted with a small amount of inconvenience. The current by-laws do not contain any language about summer/winter calendaring, so while the committee supported the concept, there are

currently no by-laws to amend to make Juneteenth a non-teaching holiday. This has been brought back to the SEC who are reviewing next steps.

Election Day- SSC was asked to consider if Election Day should be a non-teaching day. This topic was brought forth by the USG. The challenges presented mirror the disruptions that have been discussed annually when the topic of having an October break is raised. It was determined that there is no practical way to make Election Day a non-teaching day at this time, but that faculty should be flexible to allow students time to vote.

Academic Engagement- A subgroup continued previous work on the issues surrounding the need to know when our students are academically engaged. This is important for Financial Aid and federal reporting purposes. They developed a plan which includes instructors entering a date for the last date of academic engagement whenever posting a non-passing and temporary grade.

Temporary Grades- There continues to be confusion among instructors on when to use which temporary grade. While there is room for more education on the topic, there were no proposed by-law changes to consider.

Bunched finals- We examined a request from USG to change the current policy to define bunched finals as “3 final exams within a 24-hour period” as opposed to the current policy which is “3 final exams in one calendar day”. It was shared that in Fall 2022 approximately 3,000 students had three finals in 24 hours last fall, and that approximately 115 students received approval for a reschedule. We learned that the Registrar’s Office was rolling out a new scheduling software and data collection method that has the potential to have a much more accurate accounting of who is holding a final exam. It is thought that this may help reduce the number of bunched finals since it should pull out all of the exams that were scheduled but did not actually exist. It was decided that we would wait and see the effectiveness of this software and method and examine the data next year to see if the need for by-law change is still needed or if the concern has been resolved.

10th day rule- Concerns about an unusually high number of students adding classes after the first day of class during this semester’s add/drop period (up to the 10th day) were raised. We discussed that it is often challenging for students to catch up with work they may have missed by adding a class during this period. The committee also learned of the many valid reasons that students might be adding classes after the first day as well as the enrollment problems that would be created if the add date was moved sooner. It was agreed that we would work on a list of guidelines for students to consider when joining a class after the first day of class as well as suggestions for instructors to mitigate those concerns.

Learning Accommodations Taskforce: The topic of helping faculty meet the needs of students with accommodations through CSD is a frequent agenda item. As the concerns are often about resources and pedagogy rather than scholastic policy, the SSC requested that the SEC consider asking the Provost’s Office to form a taskforce to address these important concerns.

During its regular Senate meeting on Monday, February 5, 2024, the University Senate approved a resolution presented by the Senate Executive Committee to charge the Provost’s Office with

convening a university-wide taskforce to address issues related to learning accommodations delivery from a faculty-facing perspective.

As described in the resolution, “The purpose of the Taskforce is to analyze CSD and faculty data with respect to the nature and frequency of accommodations, obtain input from faculty and students on challenges and effective strategies around accommodations, and evaluate faculty training and support in adopting Universal Design for Learning and inclusive teaching approaches that might reduce the need for accommodations.”

An update on the work of this taskforce should be shared with the University Senate Executive Committee by the end of the Spring 2024 semester, and the final report should be presented to the University Senate in the Fall of 2024, along with any other units relevant to the report.

The motion passed YES 62, NO 2, ABSTAIN 1. The full resolution is available [here](#).

Denial of Space for Non-Attendance- We discussed this policy in the Senate By-Laws.

The Registrar’s Office confirmed that it is a little used policy, but policy but could be useful when a class has a wait list, and instructors are aware of a student who has not attended the class. This is particularly true of lab classes. It was decided that no changes are required at this time.

Undergraduate Scholastic Standing & Dismissals Bylaw Changes:

Background:

The University’s Scholastic Standing process (*impacting undergraduates only*) has been under review over the last several years.

A thorough review was compiled and submitted to the Provost’s Office in October 2023 that shared an overview of the history of the process, identified areas of recent changes and challenges, and provided recommendations moving forward based on data and collaborative discussions with campus partners.

One of the review’s recommendations was to explore and implement any potential UConn Senate By-Law policy changes or related procedural/process changes with a focus on clarity, simplicity, and student support before the end of Spring 2024, so that changes can be planned and implemented for the 2024-25 academic year.

Overview of Proposed By-Law Changes:

1. Name changes of overall process (for clarity) and probationary standing (less criminalistic’):
 - a. Rename ‘scholastic standing’ to ‘academic standing’ when referring to overall process or individual academic standings.
 - b. Rename ‘scholastic probation’ to ‘academic notice’

2. Removal of scholastic warning standing (and associated earned credit criteria)

Rationale: Impact on small number of students; simplifies and clarifies the process and required student supports/engagement; in line with peer/aspirant practices.

3. Change in minimum required time away from UConn after dismissal (before applying for readmission) from 2 semesters to 1 semester after the first academic dismissal and from 8 semesters to 4 semesters for second academic dismissal.

1. Rationales:

1. Reducing the minimum required time away for students following academic dismissal to increase readmission rates of dismissed students (*currently about 15% of dismissed students are readmitted*) and align with national standards of practice (including peer institutions)
2. Responding to student enrollment challenges and patterns as result of the pandemic.

4. Clarifying language added regarding the impact of summer and winter classes on academic standing Rationale: Existing bylaws fail to account for summer and winter sessions and their implications for students on probationary statuses, resulting in confusion.

5. Change in how a student is returned to good academic standing

a. BOTH semester GPA (sGPA) and cumulative GPA (cGPA) must be above 2.0 for a student to return to good standing, regardless of number of earned credits (currently, academic standing is based on both GPA and number of earned credits)

b. No student with at least a 2.3 sGPA average after completing all courses for which they are registered at the end of a semester is subject to dismissal; the student will be continued on academic notice if such status is warranted, until both the sGPA and cGPAs are at least 2.0.

Rationale: Under current bylaws, students may return to good standing if they have less than 24 credits and achieve a 2.3 sGPA, even if their cGPA remains below 2.0.

6. Moving language about end of semester to II.H.1: University Calendar.

7. Small edits to readmission language to more accurately reflect the holistic readmission process for dismissed students.

Motion passed during the April 1, 2024 meeting of the University Senate, 51 YAY, 2 NAY, 3 ABSTAIN.