Date: March 2, 2015

To: Deans (via Deans and Assistants listserv)
University Council on Academic Affairs and Assessment (UCAAA)

From: Sarah C. Mangelsdorf, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

RE: Approval of a Campus Policy for the Undergraduate Pass/Fail Grading Option

The University Academic Planning Council has approved a campus-wide pass-fail policy for undergraduates, effective Fall 2015. This policy replaces existing school/college policy and serves as a single pass/fail for undergraduates across UW-Madison.

Previously each school or college that served undergraduates had its own policy regarding when a student was eligible to elect the pass-fail grading basis for a course. Each of the policies was very similar, but minor differences in how the rules applied added confusion for students who might switch from a major in one school/college to another. Student uncertainty about which pass/fail policy applied to them meant they often had to seek out an advisor or dean for clarification, which is an inefficient use of time for both students and staff. All of the school/college policies took into account the student’s academic standing, placed a limit on the types of courses that could be graded pass/fail, and limited the number of courses taken on a pass/fail basis both in a single term and over the undergraduate career. The key differences among the school/college policies related to the number of courses or total credits taken on a pass/fail basis (ranging from 12 credits to 10 courses) as well as other minor differences in wording.

If you have school/college specific information that you communicate to students, please replace that information with the new policy, effective Fall 2015. A copy of the approved policy is attached and also posted with UAPC documentation at http://apir.wisc.edu/uapc/2014-15/UAPC2015021906_PassFail.pdf. Information is also available in the Knowledge Base (https://kb.wisc.edu/vesta/page.php?id=47789).

A simplified, campus-wide policy will benefit campus positively in terms of the time spent communicating about the policy with little to no impact on student’s academic choices.

If you have questions about this policy, please contact Michelle Young (michelle.young@wisc.edu).

Attachment

Copies:

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