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Committee on Academic Policy and Standards

April 7, 2022

York College Senate

Dear Senators:

The Committee on Academic Policy and Standards, pursuant to your delegation under the York College Charter “to review and recommend policies relating to the academic policy and standards of the college”, will propose the following revision to the College policy:

Students on probation may register for a maximum of 15 credits and/or; the size of their program may be less than 15 credits in accordance with any conditions stipulated by the Committee on Academic Policy and Standards.

Summary of current policy:

We quote the York College Undergraduate Course Bulletin for details of the current policy:

Students on probation may register for a maximum of 12 credits and/or; the size of their program may be less than 12 credits in accordance with any conditions stipulated by the Committee on Academic Policy and Standards.

Reasons to modify current policy:

The philosophy of the current restriction is to try to ensure that students in minor academic difficulty do not overextend themselves and cause more academic damage. There are a number of interwoven and overlapping reasons we are recommending this policy change at the current time, some practical, some philosophical.

The State Department of Education, for various purposes, currently defines a full-time courseload to be 12 credits. At the time the current policy was enacted, the vast majority of courses at the College were 3 credits; it was therefore easy for students to take a full-time load while not exceeding the 12 credit restriction. This is not any longer the case: many programs have courses that exceed 3 credits or carry half credits, even at the introductory level, making it difficult for a student to maintain academic progress while still meeting this 12 credit limit. The Registrar has reported that every semester, some students who are placed on probation

must be deregistered from courses in order to not exceed the 12 credit limit, and there is no way to do so while maintaining their full-time status. Failure to maintain full-time status while simultaneously progressing in an academic program can jeopardize or eliminate financial aid. Indeed, students in SEEK lose all support services if registered for less than 12 credits, TAP support is lost below 12 credits, and Excelsior scholars lose financial support below 15 credits. Raising the upper limit from 12 to 15 credits will leave flexibility for students to maintain full-time status and academic progress. We also note that probation policy at many other CUNY Colleges embraces the 15 credit probation limit, including for instance Queens College.

Further, in recent years, the College has made significant strides toward improving support, advising, and tracking for students at academic risk. Students on probation are now required to attend probation counseling sessions before the beginning of the semester. Online tools – including CUNYFirst, DegreeWorks, and the upcoming Navigate tool – better enable advisors to understand and assist students in academic difficulty. Finally, various initiatives led by the Advising Center will enable targeted follow-up with readmitted and probationary students to help them maintain academic progress and improve achievement.

We still propose maintaining the flexibility for CAPS to further restrict credits for readmitted students that return in deep academic difficulty. In partnership with Academic Advising, these students will be better identified and supported in their return to the College. Currently, addition credit restrictions for readmitted students are based on a sliding scale connected to their academic deficit and specific circumstances. That scale would be updated to match the new credit limits for all probationary students.

Discussion Items from March Senate Meeting

When first presented to the March 2022 Senate Meeting, a number of questions were raised that we wish to address here:

1. *Perhaps the policy should refer to number of courses instead of credits?* We believe not. First and foremost, courses at the College are offered with varying numbers of credits that reflect their workload. Secondly, related policies and definitions – such as full time status – are specified in terms of credits. Finally, financial aid requirements are also stated in terms of credits.
2. *Perhaps a different constraints should be applied to graduate courseloads?* This is indeed an issue that should be looked at. However, all current courseload limits apply identically to graduate and undergraduate students. We believe that applying different courseload constraints for graduate students on probation should be addressed in the context of a full reappraisal of graduate courseload limits.

Proposed Resolution:

For the foregoing reasons, we propose the following modification to the York College academic policy:

Resolved: Effective for the 2022-2023 Academic Year, Students on probation may register for a maximum of 15 credits and/or; the size of their program

may be less than 15 credits in accordance with any conditions stipulated by the Committee on Academic Policy and Standards.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration on behalf of the Committee on Academic Policy and Standards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kevin Lynch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "K".

Kevin R. Lynch
Professor, Earth and Physical Sciences
Chair, Committee on Academic Policy and Standards