INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Chancellor is submitting an amendment to Policy 2.9 Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees approved a revised Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy and Procedure in 2004. The procedure provides a framework for a satisfactory academic progress policy to which all institutional financial aid SAP policies must conform. However, there is no requirement that an institution’s academic and financial aid SAP policies must be the same, and many MnSCU institutions continue to have two different policies. This can result in a situation where a student may become ineligible for financial aid, but still eligible to continue at the institution if s/he can pay the costs from other resources. Explaining the rationale for such a situation can be challenging for college and university administrators. It could even be said that such an arrangement discriminates against students from low-income backgrounds who receive financial aid, because they are being held to a higher academic standard that their peers from higher-income backgrounds who do not receive financial aid. Maintaining two separate SAP policies can be problematic for financial aid administrators who must ensure that financial aid eligibility is being determined on the basis of the financial aid SAP policy, not the academic policy. Failure to do so can and has resulted in significant financial liability for the institution.

The major area of difference between institutional academic and financial aid satisfactory progress policies is that the financial aid policies require students to complete a certain percentage of their courses. Many institutions’ academic policies currently do not require that students complete any set percentage of the credits attempted. This raises questions of academic quality, accountability, and stewardship of state resources.

The Business Practice Alignment Committee (BPAC) appointed a study group to examine various business practice variations related to academic policies and to make recommendations. The study group forwarded a recommendation to BPAC that institutional academic standing policies be aligned with their financial aid satisfactory academic progress policies.

CONSULTATION

Consultation has occurred as follows:

- A system-wide study group reviewed business practice variations related to academic policies during Spring, 2005 and forwarded a recommendation to the BPAC in May, 2005.
- The BPAC endorsed the study group recommendation at its May, 2005 meeting.
Chief Academic and Student Affairs Officers discussed the recommendation at their meeting in October, 2005

Policy draft was reviewed at the Academic and Student Affairs Policy Council meeting, 11/15/05 1/25/06; and 4/10/06

Policy draft was reviewed at MSCF Meet and Confer, 12/8/05

Policy draft was reviewed with the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Leadership Council, 1/10/06; 2/7/06; 4/4/06; 5/2/06

Policy draft was reviewed at IFO Meet and Confer, 1/13/06 and 4/7/06

Policy draft was reviewed at MSUAASF Meet and Confer, 1/20/06 and 4/14/06

Policy draft was reviewed at the Chief Academic Officers meeting, 2/23/06

RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE ACTION

The Educational Policy Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees adopt the following motion:

RECOMMENDED MOTION

The Board of Trustees approves the proposed amendment to Policy 2.9. Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress and the repeal of Carry Forward Community College Policies III.02.06 Academic Standards and IV.07.01 Academic Suspension.
# BOARD POLICY

## Chapter 2. STUDENTS

### Section 9. FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

### 2.9 Academic Standing and Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress

Measurement of student satisfactory academic progress toward achievement of an academic award is an important activity in higher education. Such measurement provides feedback to students and ensures responsible action by colleges and universities regarding effective use of state resources.

Student academic progress must also be monitored to ensure effective and responsible management of federal and state student financial aid. Students within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities are often enrolled in more than one institution. Students also transfer frequently among colleges and universities. Therefore, institutional financial aid satisfactory academic progress policies shall be as uniform as possible, consistent with individual institutional missions.

### Part 1. Academic Standing Policy

Each college and university shall develop a policy requiring students to maintain good academic standing and describing the academic performance standards students must meet to maintain good academic standing. This policy shall apply to all students, whether receiving financial aid or not. At each institution, the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy and Academic Standing Policy shall have the same grade point average requirement and percentage of completion requirement. Institutional policies may provide for reinstatement to enroll in classes following academic suspension under conditions different from those required for financial aid reinstatement.

### Part 2. Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Each college and university shall develop an institutional satisfactory academic progress policy that will apply to all students receiving federal or state financial aid. The Chancellor shall develop a system procedure for Board Policy 2.9 that shall contain required elements and parameters for these institutional policies, and each college and university satisfactory academic progress policy and procedure shall conform to the requirements of the System Procedure.

### Part 3. Annual Review and Report to the Board

The Office of the Chancellor shall annually review each college and university financial aid satisfactory academic progress policy and procedure to ensure continued compliance with the System’s Procedure. Significant exceptions shall be reported to the Board of Trustees.

*Date of Implementation: 9/20/95,
Date of Adoption: 9/20/95,
Date & Subject of Revisions: 3/17/04 - replaced almost all policy language.*
III.02.06 Academic Standards

GRADES AND OTHER TRANSCRIPT SYMBOLS

Students who complete credit courses shall be assigned grades according to the plan listed below:

A: Superior Achievement - 4 Grade Points
B: Above Average Achievement - 3 Grade Points
C: Average Achievement - 2 Grade Points
D: Below Average Achievement - 1 Grade Point
F: Inadequate Achievement - 0 Grade Points (to be assigned to courses numbered 100 level or above)
NC: No Credit - Not Figured in Grade Point Average (may only be assigned to courses numbered 99 level and below and to Competency Based Education courses.)
P: Issued for work that is judged average (C) or above. Suitable for transfer - Not figured in Grade Point Average

All grades A through F, should be utilized in determining the student's grade point average. In addition to grades, the following symbols may be used:

I: Incomplete - The mark of "I" is assigned only in exceptional circumstances and is a temporary grade. It will be given only to students who cannot complete the work of a course on schedule because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control. An "I" grade automatically becomes an "F" grade (or "NC" in the case of courses numbered below 100) at the end of the next quarter (not including summer sessions) if requirements have not been satisfactorily met. Instructors have the option of setting an earlier completion date for the student.
V: Visitor, or Auditor, to be declared only at time of registration.
W: Withdrawn from course, not later than 10 class days prior to the first day of the final examination period. The "W" should normally be student initiated. However, under special circumstances a college may give a student a "W". This action (with the exception of suspension or expulsion) should take place not later than the deadline for student initiated withdrawal and the student should be notified of the action.
X: Continuation in another course or courses is necessary because grades cannot be determined until the full sequence is completed. Instructors submit letter grades for each "X" upon completion of the sequence.
A double asterisk (***) will appear on the transcript if no grade or symbol has been submitted as of the date of printing the grade reports.

5/11/82, 4/12/84, 4/14/88, 1/10/91, 3/19/92, 5/19/94

ACADEMIC PROBATION AND SUSPENSION

In order for a student to be suspended or expelled for academic reasons, such suspension or expulsion must be in accord with regulations of the system or the college. These regulations shall state the reasons for academic suspension or expulsion, and shall state the procedures to be followed.

If a student wishes to appeal a decision involving suspension or expulsion for academic reasons, such student is to use the system-wide "Policy Concerning Student Complaints and Grievances." If that student's college has a substitute regulation approved by the Board, then that regulation shall be used.

4/12/84

COURSE PLAN FOR CREDIT COURSES

Each course offered for college credit by a community college shall have a current course plan which is made accessible to prospective students prior to the first scheduled day of class. All sections of a given course may follow the same plan, but, if a section is taught with significant differences, a separate plan shall be prepared by the instructor of that section.

The Chancellor or designee shall issue recommendations on minimum content of course plans, following consultation with college representatives.

4/12/84

Date & Subject of Revisions - December 17, 2003 - repealed the first section regarding Review and Evaluation of Academic Programs.
<table>
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<th>BOARD OF TRUSTEES</th>
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<td>MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES</td>
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**BOARD ACTION**

Proposed Repeal of Carry Forward Community College Policy IV.07.01 Academic Suspension

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*IV.07.01 Academic Suspension*

1. Each Minnesota Community College shall follow uniform standards and procedures for monitoring students’ performance for satisfactory academic progress and academic suspension.
2. The System Academic Suspension Regulation will be the official document identifying systemwide standards for satisfactory academic progress.

6/17/93