Policy on Dismissal of Students for Academic Reasons

Purpose: Dismissal of students for unsatisfactory academic performance.

Policy: The school demands and expects satisfactory academic performance by its students. Unsatisfactory academic performance by a student may result in dismissal from the student’s academic program and the school.

Coverage: All students and academic programs in the school. Violation of academic honesty by students is covered separately in the Policy on Student Academic Honesty.

Terminology: Unless otherwise modified, “school” refers to the School of Public Health and Information Sciences, and “associate dean” to the associate dean responsible for academic affairs.

Procedure:

**Measures of Satisfactory Academic Performance for a Program**

Each academic program is responsible for publishing its measures for satisfactory academic performance in the program, including placement on academic probation, removal from academic probation, and transition from provisional to full admission status. These measures may not be less demanding than those of the school and must be approved by the dean.

In the absence of measures specific to the program, the measures of the school apply.

Each academic program is responsible for notifying its students about the program’s measures of satisfactory academic performance and about this policy at least once each academic year.

**School’s Measures for Satisfactory Academic Performance**

For the purposes of this policy, graduate grade point average (GGPA) is on a 4-point scale and includes all courses listed on the student’s graduate transcript, whether the courses are at the undergraduate or graduate level.

**Measures for Probationary Admission**

A student admitted with a grade point average below 2.75 on a 4-point scale is placed on academic probation upon enrollment. If the student does not attain a GGPA of 3.0 in the first term after enrollment, the student may be subject to dismissal for academic reasons. Other conditions and timeframes may be included in a probationary admission. If the student fails to meet these conditions or timeframes, the student may be subject to dismissal for academic reasons.

**Measures for Good Standing**

A student in an academic program of the School is in good standing if the student’s GGPA is 3.0 or higher. A student must be in good standing in order to receive his or her degree.

**Measures for Academic Probation**

A student whose GGPA falls below 3.0 is placed on academic probation until the student attains GGPA of 3.0 or higher, which is expected to be achieved in one semester but may be extended upon approval by the dean of such a request submitted by the student's academic program.

**Academic Performance and Probationary Admission**

If a student’s admission is probationary, the student’s letter of admission states that the student will be placed on academic probation upon enrollment and also includes the performance
measures and timeframe required for the student to be removed from academic probation. The program director notifies the associate dean in writing within ten working days following enrollment by the student and includes a copy of the student’s letter of admission. If the student does not meet the performance measures within the timeframe and the academic program determines that the student should be recommended for dismissal, the program director notifies the student in writing of the recommendation (see example student notification under Examples, below), including reference to this policy, and notifies the associate dean in writing of the recommendation including a copy of the notice sent to the student. The latter two notices are sent within five working days following the close of the student’s timeframe requirement.

**Academic Performance and Academic Probation**

If a student is placed on academic probation, the program director notifies the student in writing within five working days of his or her placement on probation and the performance measures and timeframe required for the student to be removed from academic probation. Within the same five working days, the program director sends the associate dean a copy of the notice sent to the student. If the student does not meet the performance measures within the timeframe and the academic program determines that the student should be recommended for dismissal, the program director notifies the student in writing of the recommendation (see example student notification under Examples, below), including reference to this policy, and notifies the associate dean in writing of the program’s recommendation for dismissal and includes a copy of the notice sent to the student. The latter two notices are sent within five working days following the close of the student’s timeframe requirement.

**Other Academic Performance**

A student who is not on academic probation may perform at such an unsatisfactory level that if the student were placed on academic probation, there is no possibility that the student could meet the measures for removal from academic probation. In such a case, if the academic program determines that the student should be recommended for dismissal, the program director notifies the student in writing of the recommendation (see example student notification under Examples, below), including reference to this policy, and notifies the associate dean in writing of the program’s recommendation for dismissal and includes a copy of the notice sent to the student. The latter two notices are sent within five working days following the program’s determination, which is made within ten working days following the close of the semester or other grading period.

**Actions following Notice of Provisional Admission or Placement on Probation**

Upon receipt of a notice from a program director of probationary admission or placement on probation, the associate dean confirms that the applicable measures have been followed and acknowledges receipt of the notice within five working days following receipt of the notice.

**Actions following Recommendation for Dismissal**

Upon receipt of a recommendation for dismissal of a student for academic reasons, the associate dean reviews with the program director the circumstances of the case within two working days. If the associate dean agrees that the policies have been followed appropriately and that the recommendation is appropriate, the associate dean sends the recommendation for dismissal to the
School of Public Health and Information Sciences

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<td>Author: Peter L. Walton, M.D., Associate Dean</td>
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Dean in writing within five working days following receipt of the initial recommendation. Within the same five working days, the associate dean notifies the student of the recommendation to the dean.

If the associate dean does not agree with the recommendation, the case is referred to the dean, who, within five working days, reviews the case with the associate dean and program director and decides whether to accept the dismissal recommendation or not. If the dean’s decision is to accept the recommendation, then the associate dean notifies the student in writing of the his or her dismissal from the program ten within working days following receipt of the initial recommendation.

If the Dean’s decision is not to proceed with the dismissal recommendation, then the Dean provides an alternate course of action, which is communicated to the student in writing by the program director within ten working days following receipt of the initial recommendation.

**Student Grievances**

Students who believe they have been treated unfairly, discriminated against, or have had their rights abridged in being dismissed for academic reasons may initiate grievances. However, the finding of the grievance process may not set aside or provide substitutes for dismissal decisions by the school.

**Examples:**

Sample notice to student of program’s recommendation for dismissal for unsatisfactory academic performance following probationary admission:

Dear <name of student>:

In your letter of admission, a copy of which is attached, you were informed that your admission was probationary and that upon enrollment you would be placed on academic probation. The reasons for the probationary admission were discussed in the letter of admission, along with the academic performance required of you within a specified timeframe to be removed from academic probation.

You have not met the required academic performance within the timeframe specified. As a result, the <name of program> is recommending that you be dismissed from the program for academic reasons. The policy and procedures involved in the dismissal process are available online at <URL> or by contacting me for a copy.

You will be informed of each step in the process as it occurs.

Sincerely yours,

<name of program director>

Sample notice to student of program’s recommendation for dismissal for unsatisfactory academic performance following placement on academic probation:

Dear <name of student>:

In the notice sent to you of your placement on probation, a copy of which is attached, you were informed of the academic performance required of you within a specified timeframe to
be removed from academic probation.

You have not met the required academic performance within the timeframe specified. As a result, the <name of program> is recommending that you be dismissed from the program for academic reasons. The policy and procedures involved in the dismissal process are available online at <URL> or by contacting me for a copy.

You will be informed of each step in the process as it occurs.

Sincerely yours,
<name of program director>

Sample notice to student of program’s recommendation for dismissal for unsatisfactory academic performance from which there is no recovery:

Dear <student name>:

Your recent academic performance in the <name of program> is at too low a level for you to be able to attain the academic performance measures needed for you to continue in the program, even if you are placed on probation for one or two semesters.

As a result, the <name of program> is recommending that you be dismissed from the program for academic reasons. The policy and procedures involved in the dismissal process are available online at <URL> or by contacting me for a copy.

You will be informed of each step in the process as it occurs.

Sincerely yours,
<name of program director>

Sample notice to student of dismissal for academic reasons:

Dear <name of student>:

The Dean’s Office has received and reviewed a copy of the notice sent to you by the <name of program> recommending your dismissal from the program for academic reasons. I have confirmed that the appropriate procedures and measures have been applied and have accepted the recommendation.

Effective immediately, you are hereby dismissed from the <name of program> for academic reasons previously communicated to you.

Sincerely yours,
<name of dean>

Discussion: The intent of the design of this policy and procedure is to assure, to the extent possible, that each student is aware of the applicable measures of satisfactory academic performance and of the procedures in the event academic performance is not satisfactory.

The procedures provide for early and open communication with the student about the process and
the status of the student’s particular case.

See also: Policy on Student Academic Honesty

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