

**BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
City University of New York

**Minutes of the Academic Standing Committee of the Academic Senate**

**Meeting of April 3, 2019**

**Members Present:**

J. Blake, H. Brockington, A. Cain, C. Christopher, A. Creaco, K. Dreyer, G. Miller, A. Perdomo, C. Persaud, C. Priano, C. Wiseman

- The meeting was convened by Glenn Miller, Chair, at 2:00 p.m. in room N-795.
- Committee members read and acted on student appeals.
- The committee discussed a proposal from the VP of Enrollment and the Registrar concerning changing the criteria for “good academic standing”. A draft of the committee’s response is below.
- The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Priano, Secretary

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**Academic Standing Committee Response to VP of Enrollment Management  
and Registrars Proposals for Changes in Academic Standing Policies**

On March 19, 2019, I met with VP Walleser and Mohammad Alam. They presented to me a proposal to change the definition of good academic standing and some of the procedures for appeals for financial aid and academic standing. As the document given to me had no attribution, I can only attribute it to them. The Committee on Academic Standing considered this three-part proposal at its April meeting. The committee’s response is below:

1.

To replace this current policy:	With . . .
Students in all credit accumulation brackets are subject to academic standing processing. Current retention standard: 1-12 credits-- 1.5 13-24 credits -- 1.75 25+ credits-- 2.00	Students who earn more than 12 credits will be subject to academic standing processing. Future retention standard example: 1-12 credits -- NA 13-18 credits-- 1.50 19-24 credits-- 1.75 25+ credits -- 2.00

*Response:* As BMCC faculty, we share the desire to increase retention and prevent students from being dismissed or failing to enroll because of being denied financial aid due to being on probation. However, without some form of official notification that their current academic performance is unlikely to lead to successful degree completion, followed by mandatory academic intervention to change that performance, we would be doing a disservice to these at-risk students by simply lowering the standards to increase retention.

Students with a low number of credits have the lowest retention rate making them the most vulnerable population, and, therefore, we all agree that a targeted set of services would be useful. Also, we know that students do not do “optional” or “recommended” interventions (the limited success of the FYE workshops is an example). Currently, probationary status, which requires the student receiving financial aid to see an academic advisor and a counselor to reinstate aid, is the only intervention in place for these at-risk individuals. Ideally, there would be a mandatory orientation program BEFORE incoming students reach probationary status. As faculty, we know that there are many students who come to us underprepared in terms of study skills, time management skills, a positive attitude, and an effective approach towards success in college. Additionally, a mandatory intervention for students identified as being at high risk of dismissal based on poor academic performance needs to be in place before it makes sense to consider lowering the definition of what constitutes good academic standing. Otherwise we would take away the one warning flag and mandatory intervention that currently exists for students headed on a path towards dismissal. Note also that while not processing for academic probation until the 12 credit threshold would initially cause a large drop in the number of students on probation, it is not at all clear what would transpire once those students reach the threshold with perhaps such a poor academic record that it would be quite difficult to reach good standing.

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To replace this current policy:	With . . .
Students are dismissed when they take only remedial courses or withdraw from all their classes while on probation.	Students are not dismissed when they take only remedial courses or withdraw from all their classes while on probation. Instead of dismissal their probation status is extended.

*Response:* The committee sees very few appeals of the category of students who took only remedial courses since most students are required to take at least one credit bearing course. However, we would still like to rule on those appeals because it matters to us whether or not the student has passed the remedial courses. In the case of students who withdrew from all courses, again, these students are certainly at-risk and having to file an appeal requires that the student meet with a counselor which can often be beneficial in such circumstances.

3.

To replace this current policy:	With . . .
Title IV and Reinstatement appeals for the same student are reviewed separately. Example, Title IV appeal granted and CAS appeal denied- student cannot enroll; Title IV appeal denied and CAS appeal granted- student cannot afford tuition.	Title IV appeal and Reinstatement appeals for the same student should be reviewed together for the same decision – granted or denied

*Response:* The way financial aid regulations are implemented at CUNY changed a few years ago causing many students who are on PROBATION to lose financial aid unless granted an appeal. Our committee has no control over this policy (our charge is to read financial eligibility appeals, but we have no voice on changes in policy.) We have read those appeals very liberally compared to the academic appeals- documentation provided for any extenuating circumstance generally suffices for the appeal to be granted (but documentation is required for all students except those who have been at the college for two semesters or less). For the re-instatement appeal, the committee considers a myriad of factors; we take a more holistic view of the student's likelihood of obtaining his or her degree from BMCC based on the student's statement, the counselor's statement, the student's transcript, and documented extenuating circumstances. Thus, implementing this linking of Title IV and re-instatement appeals would likely lead to a lowering of the rate at which we grant financial aid appeals since we aim for consistency across the type of appeal. A student with no documented extenuating circumstances could currently be re-admitted but denied financial aid, if the change were made that student would not be able to come back at all.

The members of the committee are not in favor of making any policy changes at this time based on this proposal. However, we see the need for decreasing the number of students on probation and dismissed from BMCC and look forward to working with administration, faculty, and student efforts to accomplish this. Committee members had ideas for ways to accomplish these goals such as:

- re-instituting a mandatory orientation course for incoming freshmen,
- revising communication sent to probationary students to encourage them to file a Title IV appeal reinstating their financial aid,
- identifying and providing mandatory intervention for first year students who are struggling academically, and
- adopting mandatory interventions for students who have been granted special probation to support them in their efforts to return to good standing.

While instituting such programs lies outside of the purview of the Academic Standing Committee, having such supports in place might cause the committee to reconsider changes in the college's policies on what constitutes good academic standing.