Understanding Student Retention at SFU
Report #1
Student Pathways Through Academic Standing

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PREFACE

With an undergraduate enrollment of roughly 25,000 students, Simon Fraser University admits approximately six thousand new undergraduate students each year and confers roughly four thousand bachelor's degrees annually. While this might suggest a net growth of two thousand students per year, this is not the case. Many of those admitted to SFU are not retained to degree completion. Approximately 30% of undergraduate students admitted to SFU leave the university without completing a credential. Within 16 terms\(^1\) of admission to SFU, roughly 22% leave voluntarily and 9.4% are required to withdraw.

In the midst of a strong BC economy and a generally declining university-age population, SFU faces increasing challenges in attracting and retaining its undergraduate students. The ways in which students leave and the reasons for their departure are multi-faceted and important issues for SFU to understand. To be successful in improving student retention and the student academic experience, we must identify and minimize the factors that contribute to student departure. To this end, Institutional Research and Planning (IRP)\(^2\) prepared this report, a first in the series, "Understanding Student Retention at SFU".

IRP will prepare additional reports in this series in the coming months. One of these reports will be quantitative in nature and based on student academic performance records; it will summarize the state and trends in student retention at SFU. A further report will be qualitative in nature, based on various sources of student surveys; it will provide a synthesis of student perceptions and experiences that influence whether students drop out or persist to degree completion. These reports will be available on the Institutional Research and Planning web site at: http://www.sfu.ca/irp/Students/index.html\#retention. This web page houses a number of retention reports that may be of interest to the reader.

In this report, we focus on the various pathways through academic standing at SFU. The aim of this report is to help the University understand the various pathways students may take from SFU entry to exit, either with or without a credential upon departure. More than three quarters (77%) of students admitted to SFU remain in Good Academic Standing throughout their stay at SFU (or through their first 16 semesters at SFU), and roughly two-thirds of these students will graduate within approximately five years. The balance of those admitted (22%) are placed on academic probation within roughly five years of admission; half of these students will continue to struggle and drop out voluntarily or they will be required to withdraw. Gaining a better appreciation of how students follow these different pathways through academic standings might shed light on a number of opportunities for SFU to provide interventions and better support for students, such that undesirable student outcomes are minimized and student retention is improved.

\(^1\) The average time to degree completion at SFU is roughly 16 terms, or just over five years.
\(^2\) The Office of Analytical Studies was renamed to Institutional Research and Planning on August 13, 2007.
INTRODUCTION

Simon Fraser University (SFU) requires its students to maintain a certain minimum level of academic achievement. A student’s “academic standing” reflects the extent to which he or she has succeeded in meeting this acceptable academic standard. Student pathways through academic standing guide SFU retention rates, and ultimately affect the university’s ability to meet its enrollment targets.

This report describes the paths that SFU’s undergraduate students take through different academic standings over the course of their studies, and examines trends in academic standing at SFU over the last ten years. The findings indicate that about half of SFU students complete a credential within 16 semesters of admission. However, rates of poor academic standing have been increasing since about the year 2000, and nearly one-third of SFU students leave the university before completing their credential, either by their own choice, or through poor academic performance.

BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS

Considered in the simplest way, there are three distinct academic standings in use at SFU: “Good Academic Standing” (GAS), “On/Continued Academic Probation” (OAP/CAP), and “Required to Withdraw” (RTW). A student’s academic standing is based on their SemGPA (semester grade point average) and their CGPA (cumulative grade point average).

All students begin their studies at SFU in “Good Academic Standing”. Once a student has taken at least nine credits at SFU, his/her academic standing is reevaluated at the end of each semester. The first time a student’s CGPA is below 2.00, he/she is placed “On Academic Probation”. Subsequent to being placed OAP, if the student’s SemGPA and CGPA fall below 2.00, the student will be Required to Withdraw; otherwise the student will Continue on Academic Probation (CAP) until both GPAs reach 2.00 or higher, at which time the student will return to Good Academic Standing (GAS). For an explanation of the calculation of grade point average at SFU, please consult Appendix A. The official SFU guide to academic standing can be found in Appendix C.

OAP/RTW TRENDS BY FACULTY AND INTERNATIONAL STATUS

This section examines the ten-year trend of the percentage of registered students who are On Academic Probation or Required to Withdraw at the end of each

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3 Some programs have stricter requirements for continuance. However at present, students who do not meet these program-specific requirements are transferred to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and are not “Required to Withdraw” from the university until their SemGPA and CGPA fall below 2.00.

semester. Figure 1 displays the ten-year trends for all registered students. Note the difference in scale between the two graphs.

Figure 1:

As Figure 1 indicates, the rate of poor academic standing has been generally increasing since about 2000. The plots also show that the OAP/CAP rates are
highest in the Fall semester, while the RTW rates are highest in the Spring semester. This is expected, since most students begin their studies in the Fall semester, and the most common path from GAS to RTW is to be OAP at the end of the first semester (usually the Fall semester) and RTW at the end of the second (usually the Spring semester.)

Figure 2:
Figure 2 plots the ten year OAP/CAP rates and RTW rates separately for international and domestic students. For the purposes of this plot, “International Students” include both International “A” (unfunded) and International “B” (grandfathered) students.

Figure 2 indicates that OAP and RTW rates have, especially in recent years, been higher for international students than for domestic students. Both OAP and RTW rates have been rising among international students since the 1999-00 academic year. This may be related to average first term GPA, which has been decreasing among international students since 1999.

Figure B.1 (in Appendix B) plots the ten-year trend in OAP/CAP rates, separated by student Faculty. Figure B.2 plots the associated RTW rates. In these plots, student Faculty is defined as their Faculty at the time of admission.

Figures B.1 and B.2 indicate that both OAP and RTW rates have been highest among students who enter SFU in the Faculty of Science, and lowest among those in Business and Education. In the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, rates of poor academic standing have been rising fairly steadily for the past ten years. In Business, the rates have been slowly rising since about the year 2000. The RTW rates in Science have been decreasing in the spring semesters since 2003, but have been increasing in the summer semesters, and fairly stable in the fall semesters over the past five years. Besides the 2002-03 academic year, OAP rates in the Faculty of Science have been generally decreasing over the past five or six years.

The Faculty of Applied Sciences experienced a marked increase in both OAP and RTW rates in 2003. This is primarily driven by Computing Science, Engineering Science, and TechOne. Both Computing Science and Engineering Science have experienced decreasing average admission GPAs since about 2001-02, with a large drop in average first term GPAs in the 2002-03 academic year. These declining admission GPAs, perhaps the result of softening demand for entry into the Computing and Engineering programs, have correlated with rising RTW and OAP rates. The TechOne program, under the Faculty of Applied Sciences, launched in the 2002-03 academic year, and students in this program have admission GPAs below the SFU average. Figure B.3 (in Appendix B) demonstrates the relationship between decreasing admission GPA and poor academic standing in the Faculty of Applied Sciences.

PATHWAYS THROUGH ACADEMIC STANDING

All students begin their studies at SFU in “Good Academic Standing”. Once a student has taken at least nine credits at SFU, his/her academic standing is reevaluated at the end of each semester. The first time a student’s CGPA is below 2.000, he/she is placed “On Academic Probation”. Once a student is OAP, one of
three things can happen in subsequent semesters, depending on his/her SemGPA and CGPA⁵:

**SemGPA and CGPA**  |  **New Academic Standing**  
---|---  
1. both ≥ 2.000  |  student returns to Good Academic Standing (GAS)  
2. one ≥ 2.000, the other < 2.000  |  student Continues on Academic Probation (CAP)  
3. both < 2.000  |  student is Required to Withdraw (RTW⁶)  

**Figure 3: Pathways through Academic Standing at SFU**

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Figure 3 illustrates student pathways through academic standings and provides the percentage distribution of those admitted, by their final and intermediate outcomes. The analysis is based on 25,201 students admitted to SFU over a five-year period from 1997 to 2002⁷. The same group of students is illustrated in Figure B.4 (in

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⁵ Note: Prior to the Summer 2003 semester, students placed OAP were not reevaluated on a semesterly basis until they had completed an addition nine credit hours at SFU.

⁶ For the purposes of this study, the “RTW” category includes the following academic standings: “RTW” (Required to Withdraw); “EW” (Extended Withdrawal); “PW” (Permanent Withdrawal); and “INF”, “ING”, or “INW” (Ineligible to Re-Register – no longer in use as of the Fall 2003 semester.)

⁷ Data Source: Retention Database, Institutional Research and Planning, Simon Fraser University.
Appendix B), a more detailed pathway analysis that includes student outcomes (followed over 16 semesters\(^8\).)

Figure 3 separates students into eight functional groups, based on their pathways through academic standing. Figures 3 and B.4, in conjunction with related analyses, illustrate a number of important points regarding the performance of SFU students.

**Group A: “Succeeders”**
- Over three-quarters (77%) of students admitted to SFU did not experience poor academic standing (within their first 16 semesters.)
- This group represents students who may not require extra assistance to complete their studies.
- Among these students who found a pathway to success:
  - 63% completed their credential within 16 semesters (average graduating CGPA = 3.15);
  - nearly one-quarter (22%) had “dropped out” – although in Good Academic Standing, they had not registered at SFU for at least 6 semesters when the follow-up period ended, and had not yet completed a credential.\(^9\)

**Group B: “Strugglers”**
- Nearly one quarter (22%) of SFU students were On Academic Probation at least once in the first 16 semesters of their studies.
- over half (60%) were OAP by the end of their 1\(^{st}\) term at SFU, and most (83%) were OAP by the end of their 2\(^{nd}\) term.\(^10\)
- Among these students who experienced academic difficulty:
  - almost half (49%) improved their grades and returned to GAS (“Recoverers”);
  - 15% remained On Academic Probation (“Persisting Strugglers”);
  - and 36% continued their poor academic performance and were subsequently Required to Withdraw (“Non-Recoverers”).

We will now look more closely at the outcomes of the “Strugglers” who recovered (C), persisted (D), or did not recover (E).

**Group C: “Recoverers”**
- Nearly half (49%) of the “Strugglers” who were placed On Academic Probation returned to Good Academic Standing (without first being RTW.)

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\(^8\) Sixteen semesters was chosen because it is the average degree completion time among completers.

\(^9\) Although students tended to have few credits when they “dropped out”, a larger number than expected (~5%) had completed 60-64 credits (including both SFU and transfer credits.) Since some programs at other institutions require 60 credits for admission, this group of students may have always intended to leave SFU without completing a credential.
• nearly half (40%) had returned to GAS by the end of their 2nd term at SFU, 65% by the end of their 3rd term, and 84% by the end of their 4th term.

• Among these students who found a way to turn their academic difficulty around:
  o after 16 semesters, over three-quarters (78%) had either completed a credential or were still actively studying at SFU;
  o among completers (52%), the average graduating CGPA was 2.59. This is roughly 0.56 grade points below “Succeeders”, but still represents a respectable average between B- and C+.

• These findings suggest that students who recover from poor academic standing have a good chance of successful completion or continued persistence at SFU. Any assistance that SFU can provide to help these students recover from academic probation will likely lead to their success.

• “Recoverers” were more likely than “Non-Recoverers” to be female, and were also more likely to have been admitted to SFU from BC College (versus BC12). At the time they were placed On Academic Probation, college transfer students were, on average, approximately 40 credits further along in their degree than BC12 students. Their greater success at returning to Good Academic Standing may therefore reflect a greater desire to “recover” than BC12s, who had completed fewer credits at the time when they began to “struggle”.

Group D: “Persisting Strugglers”

• 15% of “Strugglers”, or those who were ever placed On Academic Probation, remained On Academic Probation through the end of the follow-up period.

• Most of these students (91%) had “dropped out” – they had not registered at SFU for at least 6 semesters when the follow-up period ended (despite not yet having completed a credential.)

• It is not known whether these students subsequently registered at another institution, but this group, representing 3% of all SFU students admitted during the studied timeframe, is effectively lost to SFU, despite not being Required to Withdraw. Since these students have been identified as being in academic difficulty, there is a potential for intervention on the part of the university.

Group E: “Non-Recoverers”

• 36% of students who “struggled” and were placed On Academic Probation did not improve their academic performance and were subsequently Required to Withdraw.

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10 Based on an analysis of undergraduate students admitted to SFU over a ten-year period from Fall 1996 to Summer 2006. In this analysis, all students were followed up to the end of the Summer 2006 semester. As such, the reader should bear in mind that students admitted to SFU earlier will have had more time to experience various outcomes than those admitted to SFU more recently.
• almost half (46%) were RTW by the end of their 2nd term, 68% by the end of their 3rd term, and 80% by the end of their 4th term\textsuperscript{10}.
• This group represents 8% of all students.
• Among these students:
  o the vast majority (74%) did not return to SFU before the end of the follow-up period;
  o only 26% returned to SFU within 16 semesters of their original admission (“Returners”).

We will now look more closely at the outcomes of the “Non-Recoverers” who returned to SFU (F), and those who never came back (G).

**Group F: “Returners”**

• This is the group of students who were Required to Withdraw, but were subsequently re-admitted to SFU\textsuperscript{11}. Approximately one-quarter (26%) of RTW students returned to SFU during the follow-up period.
• over half (62%) returned to SFU within 3-6 terms after they were RTW\textsuperscript{10}.
• Among these students:
  o over three quarters (77%) had either completed a credential (28%), or were still studying at SFU (49%) after 16 semesters;
  o 15% were RTW again by the end of the follow-up period.
• Among “Returners” who completed a credential, the average graduating CGPA was 2.51. This is very similar to the graduating 2.59 CGPA of “Recoverers” (those students who went from OAP back to GAS).
• The findings suggest that students who are Required to Withdraw can in fact persist to credential completion, thus providing evidence that any means by which SFU can provide academic support to RTW students can be beneficial to the student.
• “Returners” were more likely than “Non-Returners” to have been admitted to SFU from BC12 (versus BC College), and were more likely to have been in the Faculty of Science when they were RTW\textsuperscript{10}.

**Group G: “Non-Returners”**

• Roughly three-quarters (74%) of RTW students did NOT return to SFU by the end of the follow-up period.
• This means that approximately 6% of all admitted SFU students were Required to Withdraw and did not return to SFU.
• The students in this group might benefit from an intervention targeted at high-risk students.

\textsuperscript{11} Students may qualify for readmission by completing transferable courses at another recognized institution.
• International students who are Required to Withdraw are more likely to be “Non-Returners” than “Returners”. This may be related the regulations around maintaining a student Visa.
• Students admitted to SFU from BC College are slightly less likely to return (versus BC12.) It is possible for a student admitted from a BC College to already have the maximum number of credits transferred to SFU (60 credits.) In such cases, the additional credits required for readmission would not be counted towards an SFU credential, which might make readmission to SFU a less attractive option for these students.

**Group H: “Withdrawers”**
• Only a very small proportion (less than 1%) of SFU students were Required to Withdraw without first being put On Academic Probation.12

**Overall:**
• Over half (55%) of SFU students completed their credential within 16 semesters. Their average graduating CGPA was 3.08.
• 49% of students graduated within 16 semesters without ever being in poor academic standing.
• Credential completers who had been OAP at least once graduated with a similar average CGPA whether or not they had ever been RTW. However, these students graduated with a lower average CGPA than students who remained in Good Academic Standing for the duration of their studies.
• 14% of students were still currently studying at SFU at the end of the follow-up period (“Persisters”).
• Nearly one-quarter (22%) of students “dropped out” – they had not registered at SFU for at least 6 semesters, despite the fact that they had not yet completed their credential or been Required to Withdraw. These students are, in a sense, falling through the cracks of the system. Although they were not being forced to leave, they chose not to stay. This suggests an opportunity for SFU to offer some intervention to identify and assist these students before they become “dropouts”.
• Nearly one-tenth (9.4%)13 of SFU students were Required to Withdraw within 16 semesters.
• Combining these last two groups, nearly one-third (~30%) of SFU students chose to leave or were forced to leave within 16 semesters of their admission.

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12 In most cases, these students were Ineligible to Re-Register based on academic standing regulations that are no longer in effect, as of September 2003. Under these rules, students in academic difficulty over several semesters could be flagged as Ineligible to Re-Register regardless of how many credits they had taken. Since students cannot be placed On Academic Probation until they have taken nine credits, these regulations allowed for the possibility of being Ineligible to Re-Register prior to being OAP.
13 This may be an underestimate. Since the analysis only looks at a student’s early academic standing and final outcomes, some students in the “Recoverers” group may have been RTW after they recovered, but before experiencing their eventual outcome.
SUMMARY

While approximately three quarters of students remain in Good Academic Standing for at least 16 semesters after admission to SFU, rates of poor academic standing (Academic Probation and students Required to Withdraw) have been increasing at Simon Fraser University over the past six or seven years. Rates are higher among international students, and among students from the Faculties of Science and of Arts and Social Sciences and, since about 2003, the Faculty of Applied Sciences. Students who are Required to Withdraw from SFU tend to go On Academic Probation after their first semester, and become RTW in the following semester. International students are less likely to return to SFU after being Required to Withdraw, while students from the Faculty of Science are more likely to return. Students who return to SFU after being RTW usually do so within three to six semesters.

Academic Standing is closely tied to student retention. An understanding of student pathways through academic standing must form the foundation of any efforts to improve retention at the university. Some steps have already been taken in this direction. A new “Student Success” pilot program designed to help students who have met the RTW criteria will be launching in the Fall 2007 semester. However, the university might also consider targeting assistance towards students On Academic Probation. Nearly half of SFU’s OAP students return to Good Academic Standing on their own. SFU stands to achieve considerable gains in student retention if “Persisting Strugglers” (who remain CAP) and “Non-Recoverers” (who are eventually Required to Withdraw) can be guided back to Good Academic Standing.

Additional analyses of academic standing and student outcomes will be conducted in future to track the problem over time, to investigate the relevance and feasibility of possible solutions, and to measure the effectiveness of any actions the university takes to address the problem.
APPENDIX A: CALCULATING GRADE POINT AVERAGE

The “grade point average” (GPA) is a method of expressing the letter grades a student has received in his/her classes as a numerical average. The GPA only includes grades which have a numerical equivalent. SFU’s grade scale is defined in Table A.1. Table A.2 lists grades that have no numerical equivalent, and are therefore omitted from the calculation of GPA. Although they are not included in a student’s GPA, credit is granted for the following grades: “AE”, “CC”, “CO”, “CR”, “P”, and “S”.

Table A.1: Simon Fraser University’s Grade Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.2: Grades at SFU with No Numerical Equivalent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>aegrotat standing, compassionate pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>course challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CF</td>
<td>challenge failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN</td>
<td>challenge not completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>completed (graduate thesis/project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>credit without grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>deferred grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FX</td>
<td>formal exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GN</td>
<td>grade not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD</td>
<td>withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE</td>
<td>withdrawal under extenuating circumstances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The GPA is a weighted average of the numerical equivalents of the grades a student has earned. The grade associated with each course is weighted by the credit hour value assigned to the course. So, a grade achieved in a 5-credit hour course has more weight in the student’s GPA than a grade achieved in a 3-credit hour course. Table A.3 illustrated the calculation of a GPA from several courses.
Table A.3: Calculating a GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Value (V)</th>
<th>Credit Hours (H)</th>
<th>Weighted Grade Point (= V x H)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course 1 A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 2 C+</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 3 F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 4 B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>36.98</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student's GPA = 36.98/15 = 2.47

A student’s semester grade point average (SemGPA) is based on the courses he/she took in one particular semester. A cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is based on all of the courses a student has taken. For both types of GPA, grades with no numerical equivalent are excluded from the calculation. For further details, see the Simon Fraser University Calendar\(^\text{14}\).

\(^{14}\) [http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/](http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/)
APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURES

Figure B.1: Percentage of Registered Students “OAP”/“CAP” by Semester and Faculty

Note: Due to changes in recording practices, the total number of students registered in Education in the Fall 2003 and Spring 2004 semesters was taken from the OAS Enrollment Reports.
Figure B.3:

Trends in Admission GPA and Rates of Poor Academic Standing: Students Admitted to Applied Sciences

- 2-Year OAP Rate
- 2-Year RTW Rate
- Average Admission GPA

Percentage of Students

Year (Fall Semester)

Admission GPA

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**Notes:**

1. This analysis includes Undergraduate Students admitted to SFU from semesters 0971 to 1017 (over 5 calendar years).
2. Students are followed for 16 terms from admission.
3. English Bridge Program and Integrated Studies Students are excluded from the Analysis.
4. Red Boxes are Terminal Nodes, which include the number of students, percent of all students (in red), and average end CGPA.
5. The percentages next to the arrows (in blue) represent a percent of the parent group, NOT the percentage of all students.
6. Of the 133 students who went from GAS straight to RTW, 15 students (11.3%) returned to SFU, and 118 (88.7%) did not.
7. *GAS* = "Good Academic Standing", *OAP/CAP* = "On/Continued Academic Probation", *RTW* = "Required to Withdraw".
8. A "Completer" has completed a credential at SFU.
9. A "Persistor" has not yet completed a credential, has registered at SFU within the last 3 terms.
10. A "Drop-Out" is a student who has not yet completed a credential, has not registered in the last 3 terms, but registered 4-6 terms ago.
11. A "Withdrawer" is a student who has not yet completed a credential, and has not registered at SFU in the last 6 terms.
12. A "Withdrawer" is a student who has informed the university of his/her voluntary withdrawal from SFU.
13. Source: Retention Database, oas_pathways.prg
APPENDIX C: SFU Guide to Academic Standing and Continuance
GUIDE TO ACADEMIC STANDING AND CONTINUANCE

This guide is intended to assist undergraduate students, advisors and faculty to understand the policies relating to academic standing and continuance. It contains information relating to all undergraduate students, and some information relating specifically to students experiencing academic difficulty. Policies and regulations are published in the University Calendar. If there are any discrepancies between the Calendar and this guide, the regulations given in the Calendar will apply.

The academic policies of the University, including those for standing and continuance, are approved by the Senate. This body includes elected representatives from the student body, faculty and alumni, as well as senior academic officials of the University. Policy review and ongoing responsibility for the policies on standing and continuance are delegated by Senate to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS) sub-committee, which also includes student and faculty representatives.

We encourage you to read this guide, and to contact Academic Advising & Student Success at 778.782.4356 if you wish to make an appointment with an advisor to discuss any aspect of this guide and/or how it relates to your particular situation. The advisors can help you understand your options if you are experiencing academic difficulty; they can also help you identify other services that may be available to you throughout the University.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Purpose of the policies on standing and continuance
Simon Fraser University takes pride in its high academic standards and in its international reputation for excellence in teaching and research. To this end, it is expected that all students will maintain a certain minimum level of academic achievement.

This achievement level is reflected in a grade point average calculation (GPA). All undergraduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 2.00 to remain in Good Academic Standing (GAS) at SFU. This is equivalent to achieving, on average, a grade of C in all courses. The University will not award credentials (degrees, certificates and diplomas) to any student whose cumulative grade point average (and upper division grade point average in the case of a degree) is below this minimum. You should be aware, however, that some programs may require a CGPA higher than 2.00 in order for you to be permitted to continue within that particular program.

Students whose GPA is unsatisfactory, and thus appear unlikely to graduate or achieve their chosen academic goals, must improve their academic performance or risk being Required To Withdraw (RTW) from their studies at the University.

The University's policies:

- alert you to unsatisfactory academic performance;
- prevent you from continued enrollment in classes if this unsatisfactory performance persists;
- allow you to return to your studies at Simon Fraser University after you have demonstrated improved academic performance elsewhere.

These policies apply equally to all students.

Your performance in each course is graded at the end of each term. Letter grades and numerical equivalents are as listed here. All grade point calculations (term GPA, cumulative GPA, upper division GPA, etc.) are based on grades with numerical equivalents, which means that grades such as N will be included in these calculations.

Term grade point average

The term grade point average (term GPA) describes your average academic performance for the term. Each letter grade is assigned a numerical equivalent, which is then multiplied by the number of units assigned for each course. This gives the grade points for that course.

The term GPA is the total number of grade points earned, divided by the total number of units taken in the term.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1 (Spring)</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Numerical Value</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHYS 100 - 3</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 199 - 3</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>12.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 151 - 3</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISC 101 - 4</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 110 - 3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term GPA = 41.00 / 16 = 2.563

Cumulative grade point average

The cumulative grade point average (CGPA) describes your average academic performance for all terms completed at Simon Fraser University. The CGPA is the total number of grade points earned overall, divided by the total number of credits taken from the start of your studies at the University.

ACADEMIC ADVISING & STUDENT SUCCESS

STUDENT SERVICES

If you repeat a course, only the higher grade will be used to calculate your CGPA. You may repeat an individual course only once, and you may repeat no more than five courses in total during your time at SFU. Only with special permission of your Department Chair or the Dean of your Faculty may you exceed these limits.

In the following example the student has attended for two terms and has repeated one course, achieving a higher grade on the second attempt.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1 (Spring)</th>
<th>Term 2 (Summer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHYS 100 - 3</td>
<td>ENGL 199 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 199 - 3</td>
<td>MATH 151 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 151 - 3</td>
<td>BISC 101 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISC 101 - 4</td>
<td>KIN 110 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 110 - 3</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CGPA</th>
<th>CGPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41.00 / 13</td>
<td>41.00 / 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: In the case of repeat courses, the numerical value of the lower grade will not show on your record, nor will it be calculated in your term GPA or CGPA.

Upper division grade point average

The upper division grade point average (UDGPA) describes your average academic performance on upper division courses (numbered 300 to 499) attempted at Simon Fraser University. The UDGPA is the total number of grade points earned in upper division courses, divided by the total number of units assigned for those courses.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1 (Spring)</th>
<th>Term 2 (Summer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECON 103 - 3</td>
<td>ECON 103 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 199 - 3</td>
<td>MATH 100 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 151 - 3</td>
<td>ARCH 301 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISC 101 - 4</td>
<td>HIST 105 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 110 - 3</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CGPA</th>
<th>CGPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39.00 / 15</td>
<td>39.00 / 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deferred grades

There are two types of deferred grades: DE and GN.

A deferred grade (DE) is given when you have made special arrangements with your instructor to complete outstanding work for the term by an arranged date. A
ON ACADEMIC PROBATION (OAP)

I just found out that I am on academic probation. What does this mean?

When students begin their first term at the University, most students are considered to be in “Good Academic Standing.” Every student’s record is evaluated at the end of each term.

If you have attempted at least 9 units in one or more terms and your CGPA is below 2.000, you will be placed on Academic Probation (OAP). Even if you pass every course, your academic standing may be unsatisfactory. Sustained performance at the marginal pass level (C- or D) will lead to a CGPA below 2.000 and result in academic probation. Continued performance at the marginal level will lead to the University requiring you to withdraw.

Your academic performance is evaluated in two ways when you are OAP: the CGPA and the term GPA.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1 (Spring)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISC 101 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 103 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 154 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGPA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STANDING: OAP (On Academic Probation)

Getting off academic probation

What do I have to do to be off academic probation?

Your term GPA and your CGPA determine the outcome of the review as follows:

There are four possible results:

1. Your term GPA is ≥ 2.000 and your CGPA ≥ 2.000
   You will be in Good Academic Standing (GAS).
2. Your term GPA is ≥ 2.000 and your CGPA < 2.000
   You will Continue on Academic Probation and your review will continue the next term (CAP).
3. Your term GPA is < 2.000 and your CGPA ≥ 2.000
   You will Continue on Academic Probation and your review will continue the next term (CAP).
4. Your term GPA is < 2.000 and your CGPA < 2.000
   You will be Required to Withdraw (RTW).

Condition 2 could occur if your performance is improving but your CGPA is rising too slowly to reach 2.000. Condition 3 can sometimes occur if you have repeated a course. Only one grade of a repeated course is used in a CGPA calculation.

Can I repeat a course while I am on probation if I did not do well in it before?

If you took a course when you were in good academic standing, and you did not do well in it, then you could repeat the course while you are on probation. SFU includes the better of the two grades of a repeated course when calculating your CGPA. If a course overload is specified by your faculty, you should not exceed it. If you are considering repeating courses, you should contact Academic Advising & Student Success (604.291.4356) and make an appointment to speak with a Special Advisor.

How many terms can I be on probation?

You may continue on probation (CAP) for as long as it takes for your status to change (either GAS or RTW), provided that either your term GPA or CGPA is always 2.000 or higher. If you are CAP, you will be reviewed every term. While you are CAP, you may repeat courses which you have failed or in which you have obtained low grades. Remember: in order to graduate, you will need a CGPA average of 2.000 or higher and an UD GPA of 2.000 or higher. So, if your probation status continues indefinitely, you cannot graduate.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1 (Fall)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISC 101 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 103 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 154 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGPA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STANDING: OAP (On Academic Probation)
REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW (RTW)

What if my CGPA and term GPA are not 2.00?
You will be Required To Withdraw (RTW) at the end of a term if the following 2 conditions occur:

a) you began the term On Academic Probation (or Continued on Academic Probation); AND

b) you achieved a term GPA and CGPA of less than 2.00.

You will not normally be RTW unless you have first been placed on Academic Probation. If you are RTW you may not enroll in classes. If you were already enrolled for the next term, your enrollment will be cancelled and any fees paid for that term will be returned to you. Help is available from the advisors in Academic Advising & Student Success. All students who are in academic difficulty or who have been RTW are urged to arrange an appointment (phone 604.291.4356). If you are readmitted (see Criteria for Readmission below), your Permanent Record will always show that you were RTW and you will be placed automatically On Academic Probation (OAP) when you return to SFU (see page 2).

How can I get back into SFU if I am Required To Withdraw (RTW)?
If you are Required To Withdraw, you should take the opportunity to examine and resolve the academic and non-academic factors which might have affected your performance as a student.

If you are Required To Withdraw you must complete transferable courses at another recognized postsecondary institution to qualify for readmission. Readmission decisions are based on the units and CGPA achieved in transferable academic course work completed after you last enrolled at SFU.

Repeat attempts at courses which you passed with a grade of C or higher prior to leaving SFU will not count in unit or GPA calculations in readmission cases. You may not take courses at college that are lower than the level already completed at SFU for readmission (e.g., student has successfully completed at SFU MATH 157 and/or 158; student may not take MATH 100, MATH XXX or MATH 1XX for readmission).

You should consult the BC Transfer Guide to determine whether a course you plan to take elsewhere is equivalent to either a course you took at SFU or a course you took before you entered SFU. This Guide is available online at www.bctransferguide.ca.

Your application for readmission will be considered once your final grades are available. Courses in progress will not be evaluated. However, if you have already fulfilled the readmission criteria and are taking further courses outside SFU, you may be conditionally readmitted.

You should apply for readmission by the deadlines listed on Page 4. Questions regarding the readmission process should be addressed to Admissions at 778.782.3224. Students are urged to arrange an appointment to see an advisor at Academic Advising & Student Success, 778.782.4356, once they have been readmitted.

Criteria for Readmission
If you are Required To Withdraw you will be eligible for readmission on Academic Probation if you complete any of the following 5 combinations of further transferable academic course work:

1. 12-17 units with a minimum 3.50 GPA, or
2. 18-23 units with a minimum 3.00 GPA, or
3. 24-29 units with a minimum 2.75 GPA or with the acceptance GPA*, whichever is higher, or
4. 30 or more units with the acceptance GPA*, or
5. a completed 2 year technical diploma with a 70% minimum average and at least 12 units of transferable course work with a minimum 2.75 GPA (the transferable work may be within the diploma program or supplementary to it).

* The acceptance GPA is the minimum GPA that BC College transfer students must achieve in order to enter Simon Fraser University that term. Because of enrollment limits, the acceptance GPA will fluctuate.

Where can I take courses that will help me get back into SFU?
If you are involuntarily withdrawn from the University, and you wish to qualify for readmission, the following institutions might be suitable, depending upon your chosen program:

a) For transferable courses:
   • a BC Community College (the BC Transfer Guide is available at www.bctransferguide.ca);
   • a BC University College (the BC Transfer Guide is available at www.bctransferguide.ca);
   • a community college in another Canadian province (information on course transferability is available from Admissions, Student Services, SFU);

b) For technical programs:
   • a technical institution, such as the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT).

What happens if I repeat an SFU course that I have already attempted at SFU? How will it affect my SFU GPA?
Doing this will have no effect on your SFU CGPA. You are taking courses at another institution to re-establish your eligibility to return to SFU. Your college courses, as appropriate, may be transferred to SFU for credit, and can be applied toward degree requirements. However, your college grades are only used to determine if you are eligible to return to SFU. The grades on your college courses are not SFU grades; thus, they will not be used in the SFU CGPA. Upon readmission to SFU your CGPA remains the same as it was when you left SFU.

Remember: if you have been Required To Withdraw from SFU, you cannot repeat courses at another institution in which you originally received a grade of C or higher; if you do, these courses do not count toward the criteria for readmission to SFU.
INELIGIBLE TO RE-ENROLL
(INF, ING, INW)

As of September 1, 2003, the INF, ING, and INW standings are no longer used in the evaluation of a student’s academic performance. The following information is for students who attended SFU before that date and are in any one of the following standings.

I have an ING standing on my transcript. What does it mean, and what do I have to do to return to SFU?
You are Ineligible to Re-enroll (ING) when your CGPA was below 1.00 for 2 consecutive terms of enrollment, regardless of how many units you complete. You will be eligible for readmission to Simon Fraser University on Academic Probation under the same conditions as for students who are Required To Withdraw.

I have an INF standing on my transcript. What does it mean, and what do I have to do to return to SFU?
You are Ineligible to Re-enroll (INF) when you have two or more consecutive terms of enrollment of only N or F grades, regardless of how many units you complete. You will be eligible for readmission under the following conditions:
- If your CGPA is below 2.00, conditions will be as for students who have been Required To Withdraw and, if readmitted, you will be on Academic Probation;
- or
- If your CGPA is 2.00 or higher, you must complete at least 3 units of transferable course work at another postsecondary institution, with a minimum 2.00 GPA.

I have an INW standing on my transcript. What does it mean, and what do I have to do to return to SFU?
You are Ineligible to Re-enroll (INW) when you have voluntarily withdrawn from three consecutive terms of enrollment. You will be eligible for readmission under the following conditions:
- If your CGPA is below 2.00, conditions will be as for students who have been Required To Withdraw and, if readmitted, you will be on Academic Probation;
- or
- If your CGPA is 2.00 or higher, you must complete at least 3 units of transferable course work at another postsecondary institution, with a minimum 2.00 GPA.

RETURNING TO SIMON FRASER
What happens when I return to SFU after being RTW? Am I On Academic Probation? Do I have to maintain a certain CGPA?
Once you have re-established your eligibility to return to SFU after being RTW, you will return On Academic Probation (OAP). This means that your academic status will be reviewed after you have completed one term at SFU (see page 2). If you do not maintain a term GPA of 2.00 or better and your CGPA (which continues from when you were last at SFU) is also below 2.00, then you will be Required To Withdraw for an extended period of time (EW - see page 3).

What about transfer credit for coursework completed elsewhere?
Credit for transferable courses will be granted on readmission, subject first to a minimum “C” grade in each course to be transferred and to normal transfer credit limits. Remember: doing a course at another institution will not affect your SFU CGPA.

When do I have to apply for readmission?
Students must apply for readmission online through the MyBCCampus website, accessible through http://students.sfu.ca/admission/readmission. Apply early for the term of your choice:
- April 30 application deadline for entrance to a Fall term (September to December)
- September 30 application deadline for entrance to a Spring term (January to April)
- January 31 application deadline for entrance to a Summer term (May to August).
Deadline extensions may be posted at http://students.sfu.ca/admission/readmission.

Priority enrollment in courses begins approximately two months before the start of the term. Assessments for readmission are based only on final grades; courses in progress will not be evaluated. However, if you have already fulfilled the readmission criteria and are taking further courses outside SFU, you may be conditionally readmitted.

Where can I go if I have other questions about Academic Standing?
If you are having difficulty in your courses, you should discuss your performance with your instructor(s). A review of your work, at the end of the fourth week of classes, can be helpful.
If you are placed on Academic Probation, or you are Required To Withdraw, you should seek help from Academic Advising & Student Success (604.291.4356). There, you will receive advice on how to choose courses and programs. The advisors can also explain University regulations, such as the rules about repeating courses, which may help you to improve your academic standing. If you have further questions regarding the information in this guide please contact Academic Advising & Student Success.

CONSECUTIVE TERMS
those terms occurring one after the other in which a student enrolls for courses at SFU (e.g. a student who enrolls in fall of 2006 and spring of 2007, takes the summer off to work, and enrolls again in fall of 2007, would have 3 consecutive terms of enrollment)

Continued on Academic Probation (CAP)
while on academic probation, your cumulative grade point average is below 2.00 and your term grade point average is above 2.00, or vice versa; it is an extension of probation

Course Overload
more than the maximum amount of units you are permitted to enroll in without seeking special permission (the amount differs depending upon your Faculty; consult the Calendar under “Course Loads”)

Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)
the grade point average calculated on all Simon Fraser University courses attempted

Extended Withdrawal (EW)
your academic standing if you were required to withdraw from Simon Fraser University for a second time or subsequent time

Good Academic Standing (GAS)
your academic standing when you are maintaining a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or better and a review grade point average of 2.00 or better

On Academic Probation (OAP)
your academic standing when your cumulative grade point average is below 2.00

Permanent Record
the history of your academic performance at a postsecondary institution (also often referred to as a transcript)

Required to Withdraw (RTW)
your academic standing when both your cumulative grade point average and your term grade point average are below 2.00; students cannot re-enroll in courses at SFU until they fulfill the criteria for readmission

Term Grade Point Average (term GPA)
the grade point average calculated on all Simon Fraser University courses attempted within a term

Student Services
the University department that is responsible for maintaining all student records, admitting all students, maintaining the enrollment system, administering financial assistance, etc.

Voluntary Withdrawal
when you choose to withdraw from your courses after week 1. (A notation of WD or WE may appear on your permanent record, depending upon the point in the term when you withdrew and the circumstances of your withdrawal.)