

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

S.97-64

*As amended
by Senate
6/10/97*

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: D. Gagan, Chair *David Gagan*
Senate Committee on Academic Planning

Subject: Undergraduate Regulation Change
(SCUS Reference: SCUS 97-18)
(SCAP Reference: SCAP 97-39)

Date: September 16, 1997

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and the Senate Committee on Academic Planning gives rise to the following motion:

Motion:

"That Senate approve, as set forth in S.97 -64 , the following additional limit on the duplication of courses:

Normally, a course may not be duplicated if the original grade is ~~C- or better~~ higher than a C- "

Referred back to Scus for reconsideration

Simon Fraser University
Psychology Department
CC 8308

Roger Blackman
Chair, SCUS
291-5486

MEMORANDUM

To: Alison Watt, Director of Secretariat Services
Date: June 24, 1997
Topic: Undergraduate Regulation Change

The following change in the regulations limiting the duplication of courses was approved at the May 26th meeting of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, and is being forwarded to the Senate Committee on Academic Planning for approval.

Motion:

That SCAP approve and recommend to Senate the following additional limit on the duplication of courses:

Normally, a course may not be duplicated if the original grade is C or better.

Note: If approved, the calendar entry would be amended to specify that waiver of this limitation could be granted by the department offering the course.

Rationale

The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS) has examined the regulations governing the duplication of courses. Currently there are two limitations on duplication:

- the maximum number of different courses a student may duplicate is 5;
- no course may be duplicated more than once.

The calendar specifies that the Dean's permission is needed to extend the former limit, while approval to duplicate a course for the second or subsequent time can be given at the program level.

SCUS considered data on duplications compiled by the Office of Analytical Studies, which showed that:

- some 2-3% of all grades awarded are duplicates;
- roughly 1/3 of all students attempt at least 1 duplication, 5% attempt more than 3 duplications, and fewer than 1% of students attempt more than 5 duplications;
- of all course duplications, about 2% are second or subsequent "re-duplications;"
- about 10% of duplications are of courses in which the original grade is C or better.

We sought feedback from faculties and programs on the perceived appropriateness of the two existing limitations and the proposed additional limitation, in light of the brief statistical profile sketched above. Responses showed a high level of acceptance of the current limits on duplication and of the level at which waivers can be granted, and we received widespread but not unanimous support for the proposed additional limit.

SCUS is recommending prohibition of duplication of a course in which the grade received is C or better. We are motivated by concerns about resources and equity. In principle, it is plainly inefficient to have a student taking a course more than once. In practice, however, there are circumstances in which that seems reasonable. One such circumstance may be when a student who is performing at an acceptable level stumbles badly in a course and earns a marginal or failing grade. Duplication allows the student the opportunity to repair the damage.

A circumstance that may not be reasonable grounds for duplication arises when a student has a cumulative GPA that falls short of the required level for admission to a program or for maintaining standing in the university. Duplication for the purpose of boosting a student's GPA to the required level is generally undesirable because it introduces inequity, as do repeated attempts to pass a required course.

The grading system and the grade levels used for limiting admission or maintenance of academic standing are both predicated on the assumption that students are taking courses for the first time. Given that a student who repeats a course can be expected to earn a higher grade, duplication confers an unfair advantage over the first-time student. This inequity may be seen as tolerable in cases where the student "blew" the course the first time. However, it should not normally be accepted for the student with a C+ average who wants to turn some C grades into B grades in order to meet the GPA requirement for admission to Program X.