

**Winthrop University—Academic Council Friday,
April 3, 2020 2:00pm
Virtual Meeting via *Microsoft Teams*
Minutes—*approved via email vote on 04-14-2020***

Kelly	Costner	COE
Kristen	Abernathy	CAS
DeAnn	Brame	Library
Alice	Burmeister	CVPA
Jennifer	Disney	CAS
Laura	Glasscock	CAS
Erin	Hamel	COE
Matthew	Hayes	CAS
Dustin	Hoffman	CAS
Alice	McLaine	COE
Wendy	Sellers	CAS
Larry	Stevens	CBA
Danko	Tarabar	CBA
Jason	Tselentis	CVPA
Michael	Whitney	CBA
Brad	Witzel	COE
Kristen	Wonderlich	CVPA
Gina	Jones	Rec and Reg
Imani	Belton	Student

Guests: Kimarie Whetstone, Jamie Cooper, Chlotia Garrison, Jack DeRochi, Steve Frankforter, Jeff Bellantoni, Greg Oakes, Robin Lammi, Mark Herring, Wanda Ebright, Bill Schulte, Tim Drueke, Gloria Jones, Adolphus Belk, Jennie Rakestraw

- I. **Minutes from the February 14, 2020 meeting** –*unanimously approved via email*
- II. **Remarks from the Chair (Kelly Costner)**—Dr. Costner’s comments were incorporated within the agenda items as appropriate.
- III. **Remarks from the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (Adrienne McCormick)** —written report ([Appendix A](#))
Dr. Whitney asked if Dr. McCormick would touch on Faculty Searches.

Dr. McCormick stated they are looking at positions not filled. The deans were asked to identify essential needs, and she conferred with president and approved. She is informing deans.

Mr. Tselentis asked, “Are faculty still able to propose a Summer 2020 course, one that's a new offering, and online? Or is Summer 2020 closed?”

Dr. McCormick replied to talk to his chair to see if it meets curricular needs. Dr. Bellantoni (VPA Dean) replied that yes, he can propose.

Dr. Oakes asked, “If a faculty member receives an incentive for instruction summer 2020, will that faculty member be eligible for travel funds in AY2020-21?” Dr. McCormick replied yes.

Dr. Disney inquired about the \$1000 incentive and whether it applies for faculty offering a summer course for the first time online this summer that is not currently in the summer course system, and if that stipend would be paid this summer or the next academic year?

Dr. McCormick clarified that this was not a stipend and would come in the form of funds available for professional development (conference travel) costs, and it was for this summer.

IV. Remarks from the President of the Council of Student Leaders (CSL) (Imani Belton)

Ms. Belton submitted video remarks summarizing CSL activity since January, which included completing administration of the survey of students. She added that campaigning has begun for Vice President and President and we would see evidence of that on social media.

V. Reports from Standing Committees

A. Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum (Laura Glasscock)

Program	Title	Action
BA-ENGL-CSST	BA IN ENGLISH/LICENSURE SEC SCH TEACHER	Modify program: Require that students take ENGL 305 as part of major electives: Allow ENGL 507 and 530 to be taken S/U.
BA-MLAN-CSFR	BA IN MODERN LANGUAGES/FRENCH TEACHER	Modify program: Add FREN 112 as an alternative to FREN 102; Replace MLAN 390 with MLAN 591M, 591S.
BA-MLAN-CSSP	BA IN MODERN LANGUAGES/SPANISH TEACHER	Modify program: Add SPAN 112 as an alternative to SPAN 102; Replace MLAN 390 with MLAN 591M, 591S.
BA-SCST-CSST	BA in Social Studies with Teacher Cert	Modify program: Add GEOG 307 and 209 and remove HIST 346 and 347 as options in the major core; In the concentration, remove ECON 415 and add 347, 349, and 357, Change HIST requirement

Program	Title	Action
		to one course in each category, Add HIST 312, 502, 517, 342, 360, 545, 539, 543, Remove HIST 524, Add PLSC 308, 309, 315, 366, 513, 555, 316, 320, Add ANTH 101 as an option to ANTH 201, Remove SOCL 316, 516, 298 requirement, and change additional ANTH/SOCL courses from 1 to 4; Update courses that changed from EDUC to EDCO, Change SCST 391 to SCST 591 and SCST 393 to SCST 593; Add note that students must receive a C or better in all EDCO courses.
BA-THTR-CERT	BA in THEATRE with Certification	Modify program: Students now have to take both THRA 255 and 265; Remove THRA 330; Add THRA 362, 378, and 379 to major electives.
BS-BIOL-CSST	BS IN BIOLOGY/LICENSURE SEC SCHOOL TEACH	Modify program: Replace BIOL 310 with BIOL 315; Replace BIOL 304, 323, 403, 507, 510 or 511 with BIOL 301, 302, 314, 323, 403, 405, 407, 507, 551, 552A, 303, 304, 305, 306, 309, 310, 505, 508, 510, 511, 518, 524, 525, 526; Remove CHEM 106; Add GEOL 210; Add an additional 1-2 credits of Math and Science Electives.
BS-BADM-ACCT	BS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION/ACCOUNTING	Modify program: Add ACCT 303 to concentration.
BS-MLED	BS in Middle Level Education	Modify program: Indicate that students can only S/U two courses in their concentration.
BS-CYBR	BS in Cybersecurity	New degree program

There were no questions. AC members voted online. **All were unanimously approved.**

B. General Education (Alice McLaine)

Dr. McLaine stated that the paragraph defining the ULCs (University Level Competencies) was missing on quite a few submissions, but those issues have been addressed with the departments. The courses below were submitted for first certification. **All were approved by a majority online vote.**

HART (Humanities and Arts)

READ590 Children's Literature.

ORAL

FREN 202 Intermediate French II
 FREN 220 Fairy Tales, Songs, and Comics
 SPAN 202 Intermediate Spanish II

SOCS (Social Science)

PLSC /WMST316 LGBTQ Politics & Policy

TECH

CSC1 327 Soc Implications of Computing

GLOB / HART

ARTH 421 Medieval Pilgrimage

GLOB / HART / HIST

ARTH 358 Art and Architecture of the Islamic Worlds

ARTH 455 Museums, Monuments, and Cultural Heritage

VCOM 392 Special Topics

C. Honors Program Committee—Annual Report (Michael Lipscomb) (Appendix B) Dr. Lipscomb submitted a written Honors program report. There was no discussion.

D. Academic Conduct Committee—Annual Report
There were no cases for 2019-20, so there was no report

E. Cultural Events Committee—Annual Report (Teri Guidry)
This committee reports directly to the General Education committee. Once that committee has received and approved the report, it will be shared with members of the Council.

VI. Old Business

A. Course Attribute: Research or Creative Scholarship

Robin Lammi presented a PowerPoint Video. (Content of the slides appears as **Appendix C**).

Dr. Costner asked Mr. Drueke if vote by AC would now be the approval process for all course attributes. Mr. Drueke replied that this would be the process for attributes that would apply across colleges, such as with general education courses. Otherwise, the Registrar will have flexibility to implement new attributes as the need arises.

Dr. Rakestraw asked if service learning, internships, etc could be tracked using course attributes. Mr. Drueke replied that such tracking is a function of the attributes. Dr. Rakestraw said this would help with data needed for reports to AAAS.

Dr. Costner asked if this particular attribute might be labeled Research AND/OR Creative Scholarship?

Dr. Lammi stated that they had originally discussed OR, as one department may prefer one or the other.

Dr. Costner asked whether AND/OR might be useful to include the situation where a creative product generates or incorporates a research project, such as an artwork that prompts an accompanying social science investigation?

Dr. Lammi replied that there was a concern that people in one area couldn't use the attribute if it were labeled as one or the other.

Dr. Ebright added from the arts perspective that there is a tendency to view creative scholarship as research—it just results in a different product.

The course attribute was approved by the majority through an online vote.

B. Review of Bylaws—work by *ad hoc* group (Alice Burmeister, Jennifer Disney, Wendy Sellers) continues.

C. Procedures for General Education Component Reviews—development in progress; Chair will facilitate with members of 2019-2020 component review committees.

D. AC support of Recruitment and Retention goal: Survey (of AC members) for sorting priorities and next steps is coming.

Dr. Costner indicated that continued work in these three areas (items B, C, D above) is intended but has been on hold as we've adjusted to online formats of instruction and other operations due to the pandemic.

VII. New Business

A. Nominations for Chair for 2020-2021

Dr. Costner was nominated for a second term by two Council members via email. There were no other nominations. Dr. Disney made the motion to close nominations and it was seconded by Dr. Burmeister. ***Dr. Costner was unanimously approved by an online vote.***

B. New Grading System for Spring 2020 (Wendy Sellers)

Dr. Sellers brought forward a proposal (**Appendix D**) from another faculty member to extend the **S/U** deadline and a *credit (CR)* grade that would **replace the range of D grades**. This approach would support the WIG goal and help scholarships. She brought this to Academic Council in the spirit of helping our most vulnerable students in this most unusual time. She made a motion that the Council approve the proposed grading system. Dr. McLaine seconded. There was discussion.

Dr. Whitney asked if changing the grading scheme was legal in the eyes of the state and federal government? Mr. Drueke and Dr. McCormick both confirmed this is not an issue. Dr. McCormick also noted that the Deans had already agreed that **D-** was not an **S**, so we didn't want to go that route.

Members discussed some options including not fully implementing rules about academic standing. One of the differences between us and USC and Clemson is size, and perhaps we can look at students individually.

Dr. Garrison asked if the date to elect **S/U** would be changed if this proposal were accepted. Dr. McCormick replied that students still have until Study Day.

Mr. Drueke indicated that a challenge would be with changes occurring after we post degrees or financial aid SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress). With an appeal, that can be worked out. The challenge is with processing these changes or appeals during grading while Records and Registration is also changing the grade type (**S/U**). He also talked about our being able to add **CR** which could be related to a **D** in the system. For **S/U** classes, the **CR** could also be an option for students who pass but not with a **C-**. We can insert a value for just this semester. Currently, the instructor can issue the **S** if they felt the student earned an **S**. Grades are determined by the instructor on their own grading scale. We've never as an institution decided what constitutes a certain grade.

Dr. Disney pointed out that a 60 is passing. She has always wondered about the retention reality of an **S/U** policy that only grants credit for a 70 or higher. She thought moving to a **P/F** option is something we should think about more broadly anyway, not just in the context of a global pandemic.

The **CR** option allows faculty more leeway in grading. Students still have the **S/U** option but now faculty have a choice to give them credit.

Regarding the deadline, Dr. McCormick said we want to make sure there are no negative outcomes as we're trying to help students.

Mr. Drueke stated that with the clearing of degrees, Records and Registration contacts the student with issues. While we wouldn't want to give them an unlimited window, on the flip side, there are students who may be close to graduation honors.

Dr. Hamel asked about the amendment to the motion suggested by Dr. Beth Costner (**Appendix E**). The original proposal may not help the most vulnerable.

Dr. McCormick said it seemed like the issue is solved with the **CR**. A mandatory universal **S/U** has caused an uproar among students at other institutions. She then asked if we could add **CR** to everyone with **D**'s? Mr. Drueke said the **CR** could be an option as mentioned above.

Ms. Jones mentioned academic standing, that we could approach that like we do in summer. (We do not place anyone on probation or suspension in summer.)

Dr. Sumter asked if the proposal delays the receipt of diplomas (with requests that would be submitted after final grades are in), would this possibly delay employment with those requiring degree receipt prior to the start of a new job?

Dr. Sellers noted that some schools have a different time line for graduating students.

Dr. Disney clarified that if we agree to add a **CR** to the **SU** option, the only issue is the timing of the decision.

Dr. Sumter spoke to the question of diploma receipt being related to agreed-upon start dates for jobs (assuming that they'd complete the degree in early May) that a student who

holds an offer may have negotiated based on date of degree conferral. This may not be an issue, but it should be considered.

Dr. Sellers admitted that she doesn't know enough of the details to know why schools have staggering deadlines.

Dr. Hamel asked if the members could discuss the proposed amendment titled "COE thoughts on grading proposal" (**Appendix E**)

There was discussion.

Ms. Jones noted we need to be careful with students who are receiving Veterans benefits. Grades of "U" and no-credit options won't work with them in terms of maintaining eligibility for benefits.

Dr. McCormick remarked after discussion that it looked like we've come to a place where we're deciding not to mandate **S/U**. We can contact veterans to let them know to opt out of whatever we decide (so that they can receive the type of grade that aligns with their expectations).

Dr. Abernathy summarized: Undergraduates have option between **S**/letter grade; if students earn below **C-** they receive **CR** (if **D/+/-**) or **U** (unless veteran...then they get **F**). Students will have until April 28 to decide letter grades vs. **S**. This summary of the discussion brought consensus.

Mr. Drueke will work on FAQs for faculty and student.

Dr. McLaine requested that in faculty communication, to make sure it's clear that this system will be for this semester only.

Ms. Belton remarked that she highly recommended notifying students as there are different ways it may impact them.

Dr. Costner asked if it would be good from a student perspective to have someone (Provost/Registrar?) post a video talk about this to talk through some of the implications. She replied yes, and maybe a flowchart with possible outcomes. Dr. Abernathy volunteered to create the flowchart

Dr. Garrison asked, "What about the student who receives a **C** instead of the expected **B**? Can they petition to change to **S/U**?" Ms. Jones, replied, "Yes, they can petition anything."

Dr. Hamel offered Dr. Abernathy's summary as a motion. There was a second by Dr. Disney. ***The motion was unanimously approved by an online vote.***

VIII. Announcements

Dr. Belk announced that the WU Foundation has an emergency assistance fund for students. He asked we consider a donation. He provided the link in the meeting chat:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/winthropstrong>

Dr. Disney asked for a clarification from earlier. She understood that the Professional Development Funds approved by the president (for first time online course development for summer 2020) will be to allow \$1000 more for reimbursable professional development *NEXT* year (2020-2021).

There was a motion to adjourn by Dr. Sellers.

Dr. Costner adjourned the meeting at 3:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gina Jones, Secretary

Note: Following the meeting on Fri Apr 3, further discussion in Records and Registration led to a slight revision of the proposed grading system to accommodate limitations of our grade reporting system. The grade "U" was changed to "UN" in part to distinguish from our usual use (in all other semesters) of the grade U. This change is reflected in the document (revised by K. Costner, Chair of AC) that appears herein as **Appendix F**.

Provost's Report on COVID-19 Response Planning: Academic Council, 3 April 2020
Submitted by: Adrienne McCormick

1) S/U policy change:

- In consultation with Faculty Conference and Academic Council leadership, ALC approved expanded utilization of S/U grade options for students this semester, regardless of number used previously and with no impact on choices in the future.
- Advice put in place for students to consult with faculty and professional support personnel, and for faculty to review S/U options with students during advising
- S grades would satisfy major requirements and pre-req requirements that normally request letter grades; U grades would not
- Students can change S/U status through the last day of classes
- Students can use appeal process to address other grade concerns, as always
- Discussed and decided against allowing D- and above to count as an S, whereas it is a passing grade
- Discussed extending S/U options past final grades (as Coastal and some other SC universities have done), and decided to let students use the current petition process for any resulting concerns

2) Adjustments to course withdrawal deadline:

- We are considering extending the withdrawal deadline to the last day of classes as well. I asked the Registrar to consider this and make a recommendation.

3) Final exam schedule:

- Final Exam schedule has been communicated, with removal of time periods and clarified expectations that final work should occur in finals week, not the last week of classes.
- Final Exams are assigned a day only, not a date and time.

4) Final grade deadline:

- I don't have an announcement on this yet, but we will have some relaxing of the deadline for graduating Seniors, as we will not have a commencement deadline to work against
- The Registrar's Office will announce these deadlines, as always. Suggestions for alternations in the current circumstances are welcome.

5) Academic Standing:

- No decisions have been made in this area yet, but ALC will discuss next week.
- Other schools are modifying probation/suspension recommendations. If students earn the grades to get off probation, they will be off probation. If they do not earn the grades to get off probation, some schools are extending the next decision-making step to the following full semester rather than recommending suspensions.

6) Student Course Evaluations:

- No decision has been made on modifications to student evaluations of teaching.

- The Task Force on Tenure and Promotion listed this as one of the work areas we needed to continue, and I have had conversations with the pre-tenure review committee about continuing their charge by attending to this question as well, once we complete our recommendations on the pre-tenure review modifications. People interested in this particular question would be welcome to join the group.
- One potential path is to complete evaluations online as we traditionally do, and make decisions about how to weight/use this term's evaluations in future with the asterisk that they were COVID-19 impacted.
- Another idea I suggested to ALC and the Faculty Conference Chair was to charge the **Committee on Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Promotion to make a recommendation to ALC on how / whether to make adjustments to the 2020-2021 tenure and promotion procedures as a result of Spring 2020 remote instruction.** Areas I would charge them to review would include:
 - Optional extensions of time on the tenure-track for faculty impacted by cancellation of conferences and performances.
 - Modifications to review of criteria such as Student Evaluations of Teaching as a result of the shift to remote instruction.

7) **Summer Sessions:**

- ALC is working with WOOL on a plan to move Summer Session courses in A-C sessions online
- This decision is in light of current uncertainties related to COVID-19 timelines and when we can return to campus-based instruction, and driven by the need to give students as much flexibility as we can to improve GPAs and/or recover credits that may be impacted by the shift to remote instruction
- Summer enrollment is happening now, and students and faculty must be able to plan accordingly
- A modified WOTC 101 section was planned: 10 hours of guided exercises to prepare courses for online instruction in 2020 Summer Sessions
- Additional instructional design staff will be put in place and Wiley resources will be deployed to support quality review of a larger-than-planned shift to online modalities for this summer
- We know this is a heavy lift for faculty! We are considering ways to ease this burden, beyond streamlining the training supports in place in WOTC 101, such as reinstating our exemption option for faculty who present an online course for review.
- **I also have commitment from the President and CFO Justin Oates to offer an incentive to faculty who are moving their campus-based courses to online modalities for Summer Session 2020. In FY 2021, \$1000 in professional development funds will be earmarked for each faculty member who completes WOTC 101 and 102 and offers a fully online course in Summer Session 2020. These funds will be in addition to individual college-based allocations for professional development.**

8) Academic Policy Review:

- We are all eager to get back to normal business, which would include the goals we had for Academic Policy Review this semester
- ALC has put this on hold while we shifted our attention to the shift to remote instruction, remote advising, and remote work
- We hope to shift our attention back as these new processes become more familiar
- We will work with Academic Council to prioritize those policy revisions that are most pressing and needed in order to advance our work in preparation for SACS reaffirmation
- More soon.

9) Remote Instruction Supports:

- Many kudos to our brilliant team in WOOL!
- Continuity of Instruction website has been a valuable tool for faculty, and is being updated frequently.
- Remote Instruction guidance for students was also set up through WOOL.
- The WOTC class will be tailored specifically to support faculty who will be teaching online into the summer.

10) Faculty/Staff/Student technology needs:

- Mark Herring has been a huge support in distributing laptops and Macbooks to students who reached out in need
- Laptops were procured from Dacus, ITC, and departments with laptop carts
- IT has also procured All-In-Ones from our labs to provide computers to many faculty and staff (after we exhausted the laptop supply)
- A few hotspots have been provided as well for a small number of students who needed wifi access
- Licenses have been provided for key software so students/fac/staff could have home access

11) Remote tutoring supports:

- Writing Center, Math Tutorial Center, and Academic Success Center shifted pretty seamlessly to online tutoring sessions and supports
- Please continue to send your students for help
- Even if students did not attend a seminar, they can reach out for help if they need support on navigating the challenges presented by the remote instruction period

12) Faculty Searches:

- We are reviewing all positions that were in the pipeline and reconsidering them on a case-by-base basis, to see if they are:
 - Essential for immediate hire
 - Essential to resume, but held until operations return to normal
 - Recommended to be held until next year
 - Recommended to be held indefinitely
- Staff positions that received permissions to continue for immediate hire have received notifications

13) Research Council Awards:

- The Research Council is working to get communications out as soon as possible.
- We had an unprecedented number of requests this year, and I worked to find additional funding before the virus hit and changed the playing field.
- Announcements will be coming out soon for applicants.

14) CHE collaborations:

- I have worked with a team of other Provosts, CFOs, and Chiefs of Staff to align our planning around student fee reductions
- All SC institutions agreed, and a press release went out today stating that students will have unused portions of their residence hall, dining, and parking fees reduced pro-rated based on when we shifted to remote instruction
- Any resulting balances will be refunded to students through direct deposit or mailed as refund checks

15) **Supervisors were able to assign students remote work** as of this week, so that we could continue to provide income to those students who need it the most

16) **Communications are coming soon from Finance and Business Affairs** on Friday after the Board meeting on how we will finish off the year in terms of our budget allocations, and plan for the many unknowns that now present themselves as we look to summer revenues and Fall enrollment projections.

17) **CARES Act** passes with relief funding for higher education. For details, see this discussion from AASCU: <https://www.aascu.org/AASCUAdvantage/Articles/COVID-19/>

18) **Senior Leadership is interested in ways we can work together to promote the Winthrop Spirit.** We all feel challenged by this remote work environment. We are literally isolated from one another. But we can and must think of ways to rebuild and reaffirm the community that defines Winthrop. I am happy to hear suggestions for what you'd like to see in this regard!

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Honors Program Report to Academic Council

March 30, 2020

1) Honors Theses and Research Presentations for spring 2020

Given the closing of the campus and the move to online instruction, helping graduating Honors students complete their Honors theses in a timely fashion has emerged as a primary challenge for the Honors program. Given the unexpected move to online instruction, and given that at least some students are running into problems with their preexisting plans for data collection and analysis, I have been working, in my role as the Honors Program Director, with both students and thesis directors on a one-to-one basis to meet these kinds of challenges. In the majority of cases, students are finding their way forward; most of them have been able to submit their penultimate thesis drafts as of March 30, 2020.

The challenges that students and faculty face have also led to an emendation of our expectations related to student research presentations for the spring 2020 term. In collaboration with Robin Lammi, the Director of Undergraduate Student Research, we have made the requirement for Honors students to present their thesis at SOURCE or at another academic conference optional this year. Under normal circumstances, this is a requirement for the Honors Thesis Seminar (HONR 451H) that students take the semester that they write their thesis. Dr. Lammi is working on the mechanics for making that optional presentation opportunity available electronically; this set-up will allow students who want or need to present their work the opportunity to do so, but it will also allow students who do not absolutely need such an opportunity the ability to focus their energies on the unexpected challenges that they are facing this semester.

2) Ongoing Concerns and Opportunities

a. Moving Forms Online

First, we are in the process to moving all forms online, a move which will make things more convenient for students, faculty, staff, and administration. Our goal is to have these electronic versions implemented by the early part of the fall semester.

b. Growing the program

A developing point of emphasis during my first year as director has been on building our numbers in the program. As you know, with the reduction of scholarship dollars available for Honors students, we have had smaller incoming classes the past few years than had become our norm. We have seen a slight uptick in the numbers of program applicants for the fall 2020 semester. As of right now, we have, between incoming freshmen and transfers, 96 applicants formally accepted into the program, and we hope to receive more before the beginning of the fall semester (though the pandemic and its economic effects may affect normal enrollment patterns). This is slightly up from last year's count of 91 accepted applicants.

In order to begin to address the goal of building enrollments, we added information sessions at summer preview days for admitted but not committed students, and we will continue to build our recruiting infrastructure moving forward. For example, we are hoping to add a video testimonial about the program that can be accessed via the Honors Program web page. We are also pursuing strategies for building a fundraising infrastructure for the program, which can be used as a recruitment tool and as a way of adding value to the program for already enrolled students. We have met with representatives from the Office of University Advancement to begin developing a fundraising plan, which includes the consideration of creating an advisory

board for the program, creating a top-tier scholarship or scholarships for our highest-achieving students, and creating another tier of scholarships of smaller amounts for the next level of students (the scholarships could be the focus of asks made to potential donors). When we get past our current crisis, we hope to further pursue these avenues with the Provost, the interim President, and the Board of Trustees. These efforts might put us in a better position to think through the potential for pursuing the idea of an Honors College, which is a potential goal inherited from the previous program director, Kathy Lyon.

c. Honors Student Retention

The one student-level challenge that has jumped out at me during my first year as director has been the failure to retain Honors students through to the completion of their degree. We think that we can improve that retention rate, at least marginally, by taking some steps on our end. One, I think that we can do a better job of clarifying the program requirements. That will include thinking about clarifying the language of the published requirements, both as they appear in the Undergraduate Catalog and on the program's web page. We are also attempting to communicate the program requirements to students on a regular basis, both through email and through face-to-face information sessions.

d. Potential Curriculum Change

Perhaps the biggest obstacle for many students in completing the Honors degree is the completion of the Honors thesis. Many students who complete almost all of the program's requirements nonetheless drop out because they find the completion of the thesis one thing too much as they seek to complete their Winthrop degree. Again, we think part of the solution is to clarify the language of the thesis requirements and to regularly provide students with that information, but we are also considering a more substantial move involving the alteration of the current 1 credit Honors Thesis Seminar writing course (HONR 451H) to a 1-credit course that Honors students would be required to take at least one semester *before* they actually write their thesis. This course, as initially imagined, would shepherd students through the process of determining a thesis director and readers for their thesis committee, writing a proposal where they work towards specifying their research question and initial (hypo)thesis, and completing an annotated bibliography that could serve as a basis for their literature review. The course would have the virtues of investing the student in the thesis-writing process at an earlier stage and making the in-semester writing of the thesis less forbidding (the students would still be under the direction of their thesis director during the semester in which they write their thesis, either under the HONR 450H designator or in that major's capstone experience). We think that this could help us keep more students and improve the quality of student theses. The 41 students in my HONR 451H class this semester were overwhelmingly in support of the creation of this class (they said that they wished that it had been part of their requirements!), and the outgoing Dean of University College, Gloria Jones, agrees that it would be a good idea. We also note that many departments and many students are already modeling this kind of practice (for example, chemistry, biology, and psychology), and we believe that integrating their current practices with this proposed class would work well. The Honors Program Committee will give this nascent idea fuller consideration in the very early part of the fall semester, and if there is agreement that it is a worthwhile curricula proposal, we will formally bring it before Academic Council at one of its fall meetings.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have questions or concerns.

Michael Lipscomb, PhD
Honors Program Director
803 524 2236 (cell)

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New Course Attribute: Research or Creative Scholarship Proposed to Academic Council Friday April 3, 2020

The Undergraduate Research Office and CAS Student Research Committee propose to create a new, campus-wide course attribute to recognize courses involving significant research or creative scholarship, in which students' projects make original intellectual or creative contributions to their disciplines.

Benefits:

1. The Research or Creative Scholarship course attribute will allow interested parties across campus (e.g., faculty, departments, colleges, administrators, assessment personnel) to **easily advertise opportunities and track student participation** in course-based research and creative projects. (There is currently no mechanism for this.)
2. Students will be able to see the attribute in Wingspan, allowing them to **choose courses** involving significant research or creative scholarship in accordance with their educational and career goals.
3. Faculty will have a convenient means of **documenting their roles as instructors** in these courses. (In the College of Arts and Sciences, instructors of record for courses on a Dean's Office-approved list may accrue reassign time related to their instruction of undergraduate research/scholarship.)
4. Within the next several years (according to the Registrar), course attributes may be **listed on students' transcripts**, providing direct evidence of students' scholarly or creative activity for future employers and/or graduate institutions.

Mechanism for applying the attribute to a course or section:

1. The Research or Creative Scholarship attribute may be applied to courses (or course sections) in **all colleges and departments**, as they deem appropriate.
2. **Department Chairs (in consultation with instructors)** will indicate which courses or course sections should carry the Research or Creative Scholarship attribute when they make the course schedule. There will be **no** additional review or approval. (This is consistent with the policy in place for the Capstone Course attribute; it is also in line with the way that large Honors sections are managed.)
3. Some courses (e.g., Research/Methods courses) may have the attribute applied every semester, for every section. In other cases, the attribute may be carried by only certain sections, or in only certain semesters, as the Department Chair and instructor(s) deem appropriate. This could include creating sections for individual students (or small groups of students), if desired.

Characteristics of Research or Creative Scholarship courses or sections:

We respect the primacy of Department Chairs (and instructors) in determining which courses or course sections in their departments should carry the Research or Creative Scholarship attribute. The characteristics below are provided to assist Chairs (and instructors) in making that determination.

- Courses or sections should engage all enrolled students in required research or creative scholarship: these student projects are expected to make **original intellectual or creative contributions to the discipline**, in

keeping with the definition of “undergraduate research” espoused by the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR).

- In addition to so-called “Research” or “Methods” courses, we encourage Chairs to consider whether existing traditional and/or Capstone courses or sections in their departments should carry the attribute, **if** students complete projects that make **original intellectual or creative contributions to the discipline**. (We note that introductory-level General Education courses/sections (e.g., WRIT 101, etc.) would likely **not** meet this criterion.)
- We expect that students will produce formal products resulting from their research or creative scholarship, of a quality **appropriate** for sharing outside the classroom, in campus and/or extramural venues (e.g., SOURCE and campus exhibitions/performances; extramural conferences, performances, and exhibitions; publications, etc.) Note that we are **not** suggesting that all products will or must be shared, only that their quality should make such sharing possible.
- We anticipate that courses or sections will educate students about appropriate methods/approaches and norms, etc., for original research or creative scholarship in the discipline. Research or creative scholarship and related instruction should be a significant focus of the course/section.
- Courses or sections should allow for significant feedback/mentoring from the instructor(s), enabling students to produce high-quality products. (This may be difficult to achieve with large enrollments.)

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Date: April 2, 2020

To: Academic Council, Winthrop University

Re: Policy Proposal – Allow Students a Credit/No Credit Option for Spring 2020

Proposed Policy:

The proposed policy expands the S/U policy to include a **temporary Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) policy for Spring 2020** and adds a **notation on transcripts** regarding the unusual circumstances of Spring 2020.

- Students earning grades of C- or better could apply for S under the current system
- Students with D+, D, or D- could apply to have CR in place of the grade
- Students with grades of F could select NC for no credit
- Students could request change during the week after final grades are posted.
- Grades of S/CR/NC will have no impact on the student's GPA.
- This will apply to all courses including major, minor, general education, and electives.

Advantages:

- Will protect the GPAs of students to improve retention
- Will extend help to students earning less than a C-.
- Will allow students to move forward in terms of credit without impacting their GPAs.
- Will protect students with required minimum GPA requirements for their major. Without it, they may not be allowed to register for key classes or internships.

Rationale:

- Our primary WIG this year is retaining students. Protecting GPAs is key to this.
- Has the potential to help the students who are struggling the most academically
- Will provide further GPA protection for students who are undergoing extreme stress due to the move to online learning, the closing of the dormitories, and the threat of illness for themselves and their loved ones
- Most of our classes were not planned as online classes. Mid-semester redesign had to occur.
- The students did not choose to take online classes.
- Many accessibility issues exist: Wi-Fi availability, lack of quiet space for studying and reading, reduced access to tutoring and supplemental assistance, and less access to mental health supports.
- Will protect state lottery scholarships which help students attend school and live on campus (which also brings in revenue for the university).
 - Roughly ½ of the undergraduate students (2504 students in 2018) receive the Palmetto, Life, or Hope scholarships (South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's Statistical Abstract, 2018)
- This is particularly important for students taking general education courses where enrollment may be higher and the work more challenging.
- This proposed policy mirrors policies that have begun appearing at other South Carolina colleges and universities described below.

Data on the Adoption of Alternate Grading Systems During Spring 2020

South Carolina Peer Institutions

University of South Carolina – Columbia

<https://sc.edu/safety/coronavirus/index.php - Messages>

College of Charleston

<https://registrar.cofc.edu/grades/covid-19-grading-policy.php>

Wofford College

<https://www.wofford.edu/coronavirus/temporary-grading-policy>

Furman University

<https://www.furman.edu/covid-19/updates/03-28-2020/>

Peer Institutions outside of South Carolina

Harvard College

Smith College

Dartmouth College

Vanderbilt University

Stanford University

University of Maryland, College Park

Columbia University

Johns Hopkins University,

Duke University

University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Towson University

University of Wisconsin – Madison

University of North Carolina-Charlotte

National Movement toward Pass/Fail for Spring 2020

Burke, L. (2020, March 19). *#PassFailNation*. Inside Higher Ed.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/03/19/colleges-go-passfail-address-coronavirus#.XoVFMcEIsE.link>.

Campbell, C. (2020, March 29) *Maryland universities expanding use of pass-fail grading, citing challenges amid coronavirus pandemic*. The Baltimore Sun.

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-coronavirus-jhu-grading-20200329-3gf2vxqddzgwbdlieb7fcdsyzm-story.html>.

Schwartz, N. (2020, March 27). *What's Next: As colleges switch to pass/fail, what's the best approach?* Education Dive. <https://www.educationdive.com/news/whats-next-as-colleges-switch-to-passfail-whats-the-best-approach/575054/>.

Stranger, A. (2020, March 19). *Make All Courses Pass/Fail Now*. The Chronicle of Higher Education. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Make-All-Courses-Pass-Fail-Now/248281>.

Zalaznick, M. (2020, March 19). *Colleges shift to pass/fail to smooth students' transition to distance learning*. University Business. <https://universitybusiness.com/coronavirus-shift-pass-fail-college-distance-remote-online-learning/>.

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Costner, Kelly M.

Shared with verbal permission of sender

From: Costner, Beth Greene
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:31 AM
To: Rakestraw, Jennie F.
Cc: Costner, Kelly M.; Hamel, Erin Coccia; Witzel, Bradley S.; McLaine, Alice J.; Harris, Joanna P; Gaylor, Ruth E
Subject: Thought about Proposed Grading Change at AC Today

All,

The more I have had a chance to think about the grading proposal over night, I would like to suggest a small change. From a student services perspective and with retention at the heart of what I do, I think this is an interesting measure.

But I was immediately concerned about how to best reach the students who will need this tool the most. As structured it could actually not impact the most vulnerable students whom I believe are the focus. My concern is that students will not necessarily receive the messages they need (regardless of a tidal wave of effort) to make the best decision possible.

The change I suggest is to remove the requirement to elect Credit/No Credit and instead temporarily change our grading system to remove the grades of D (+-), F, and U and automatically replace these as appropriate with CR/NC as appropriate. I created the chart that follows:

Current Grading System		Proposed Grading System for Spring 2020	
Letter Grades	Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory	Letter Grades	Satisfactory/Credit/No Credit
A	S	A	S
A-		A-	
B+		B+	
B		B	
B-		B-	
C+		C+	
C		C	
C-		C-	
D+	U	CR	CR
D			
D-		NC	NC
F			
GPA—Full impact	GPA—No impact	GPA—Full impact A to C- No impact below C-	GPA—No impact

I fully recognize that there could be thought about students taking responsibility for making the choice and typically that is part of what I would suggest. However, in this time when so much is changing so quickly and we are all being flooded with communications, this seems like a consideration we need to set aside temporarily.

I know that typically such a suggestion would need to come from sitting members of committee and as such I am sending to all as well as Jennie as she will be attending the meeting with the hope that it could at least be discussed by the full body.

Thank you for your consideration,
Beth

Beth Greene Costner
Associate Dean, RWR College of Education
Professor of Mathematics Education
Co-PI WISE Program
Winthrop University
106 Withers BLDG
Rock Hill, SC 29733

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Date: Monday, April 3, 2020 (revised 11:30am)
 To: Academic Leadership Council, Winthrop University
 From: Academic Council (Kelly M. Costner, Chair)
 Re: **Policy Proposal – Alternate Grading System for Spring 2020**

Proposed Policy:

The proposed policy, approved by Academic Council on Fri Apr 3, creates a **temporary grading scheme for Spring 2020 only** that replaces the grades of D+/D/D- with a grade of CR (Credit) and the grade of F with UN (Unsatisfactory, No credit) as shown in the following table:

Current Grading System		Proposed Grading System for Spring 2020	
Letter Grades	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory	Letter Grades	Satisfactory/Credit/ Unsatisfactory
A	S	A	S
A-		A-	
B+		B+	
B		B	
B-		B-	
C+		C+	
C		C	
C-		C-	
D+	U	CR	CR
D			
D-		UN	UN
F			
GPA—Full impact	GPA—No impact	GPA—Full impact A to C- but no impact below C-	GPA—No impact

- A special **notation on transcripts** would explain this system in the context of the unusual circumstances of the pandemic of Spring 2020.
- Grades of **S, CR, and UN** will have **no impact** (positive or negative) **on GPA**.
- The grade of **CR will award credit** for the course in terms of progress toward the degree, but will **not contribute points toward GPA** calculation.
- Students **do not have to choose to opt into** this grading scheme.
- Students who have or may still (**through Tues Apr 28, 2020**) **choose to opt for S/U grades** will be assigned grades as indicated in the table above: **S** (for A through C-), **CR** (for D+, D, D-), and **UN** (for F). While none of these three contributes points toward GPA calculation, the grade of CR will award credit for the course in terms of progress toward the degree.

- This will apply to all courses including major, minor, general education, and electives.
- **NOTE:** *Students with VA benefits will still be able to have a grade of F recorded in order to maintain their financial aid through that program's specific requirements. They will be contacted directly to ensure understanding of this system in order to make appropriate individual choices.*

Advantages:

- Will protect the GPAs of students to improve retention
- Will extend help to students earning less than a C-
- Will allow students to move forward in terms of credit without impacting their GPAs
- Will protect students with required minimum GPA requirements for their major (without which, they may not be allowed to register for key courses or internships)

Rationale:

- Our primary *WIG (Wildly Important Goal)* this year is retaining students. Protecting GPAs is key to this.
- Has the potential to help the students who are struggling the most academically
- Will provide further GPA protection for students who are undergoing extreme stress due to the move to online learning, the closing of the dormitories, and the threat of illness for themselves and their loved ones
- Most of our classes were not planned as online classes. Mid-semester redesign had to occur.
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- This is particularly important for students taking general education courses where enrollment may be higher and the work more challenging.
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Duke University

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Towson University

University of Wisconsin – Madison

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/03/19/colleges-go-passfail-address-coronavirus#.XoVFMcEIsE.link>.

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Stranger, A. (2020, March 19). *Make All Courses Pass/Fail Now*. The Chronicle of Higher Education. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Make-All-Courses-Pass-Fail-Now/248281>.

Zalaznick, M. (2020, March 19). *Colleges shift to pass/fail to smooth students' transition to distance learning*. University Business. <https://universitybusiness.com/coronavirus-shift-pass-fail-college-distance-remote-online-learning/>.

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