

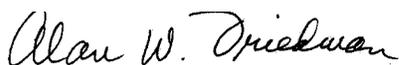
DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COLLEGE SCHOLARS SECTION IN THE HONORS CHAPTER
IN THE *GENERAL INFORMATION CATALOG***

On behalf of the Educational Policy Committee, Seema Agarwala (Committee Chair and Associate Professor, Molecular Biosciences) submitted the following proposal to change the criteria for selecting college scholars and distinguished college scholars in the *General Information* catalog. The Educational Policy Committee approved the changes on April 17, 2018. The Secretary has classified it as general legislation. Final approval resides with the Executive Vice President and Provost on behalf of the President.

If no objection is filed with the Office of the General Faculty by the date specified below, the legislation will be held to have been approved by the Faculty Council. If an objection is filed within the prescribed period, the legislation will be presented to the Faculty Council at its meeting on May 7, 2018. The objection, with reasons, must be signed by a member of the Faculty Council.

To be counted, a protest must be received in the Office of the General Faculty by May 1, 2018.



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary of the General Faculty and Faculty Council
The University of Texas at Austin
Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and Comparative Literature

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COLLEGE SCHOLARS SECTION IN THE HONORS CHAPTER
IN THE *GENERAL INFORMATION CATALOG***

Purpose: The program used to identify students who qualify for recognition as Distinguished College Scholars at Honors Day is not in alignment with the intent of the criteria previously approved by the Education Policy Committee (EPC) and the Faculty Council and published in the General Information Catalog.

Background: Ten years ago, the EPC was asked to address a problem of having too many students designated to participate in Honors Day. Across campus 26% of all juniors and seniors were recognized, and in some colleges almost 50% were recognized. The primary culprit was understood to be grade inflation, coupled with the fact that the criteria for College Scholars was a 3.50 GPA and the criteria for Distinguished College Scholars was a 3.8 GPA. The recommended solution was to limit the total number recognized to the top 20% and replace the higher GPA criterion for Distinguished College Scholars with a more stringent percentage; top 4% was chosen to align with the criteria for highest honors at graduation.

The reason the decision was made to use percentage of class rather than a strict GPA cut-off was to prevent grade inflation, which was clearly happening and, even worse, was not uniform across colleges, from reducing the status of these awards and resulting in inequities across colleges. Although it is hard to conceive of a class not having a true top 4%, we nevertheless now see this happening. In April 2017, because there were fewer than 25 students in the senior class of Undergraduate Studies (UGS), the criterion for Distinguished College Scholar switched from top 4% to 4.00 GPA. As a result, a student in UGS with over 60 credit hours was recognized as a College Scholar. This student's GPA (3.86) was higher than all other "seniors" in UGS and also higher than all "juniors" in UGS, including the junior who was recognized as a Distinguished College Scholar. Paradoxically, this student would have been a Distinguished College Scholar if the student had 7 fewer credit hours (and so had been classified as a member of the junior class or if there were a few more students in UGS with more than 60 credit hours.

Purpose II. A second purpose of the proposed revisions is to address the question of how to disqualify students who have violated our standards of academic integrity from being eligible to receive the academic honors mentioned above. This year alone 33 students on probation for academic dishonesty were on the list of College and/or Distinguished College Scholars. Based on input from the campus academic associate deans and student deans and the director of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, we propose a two-year window over which violations of academic integrity would disqualify students from receiving Honors Day recognition is being proposed. We do not believe that permanent disqualification is warranted, however, this issue is serious and deserves a two-year period over which a student who has at least once violated our institutional standards of academic integrity has since demonstrated appropriate academic conduct.

A related question, whether we should also disqualify students who have violated non-academic standards of conduct, is not included. The rationale for this (articulated by Dr. A. Fils-Aime and communicated by Dr. L. Abraham) is that it not be included here because all of the other current criteria for these honors are academic.

The current language in the general information catalog and our proposed changes are provided below. Also, included is the language approved by the Education Policy Committee (EPC) and the Faculty Council (FC) in February and passed for the year by the Faculty Council.

College Scholars

On Honors Day each spring, the University designates outstanding students as College Scholars and Distinguished College Scholars, on the basis of registration and grade point average requirements for courses taken in residence at the University, as specified below. Students who are eligible for recognition receive invitations to the Honors Day convocation about three weeks before Honors Day.

To be designated a College Scholar, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

1. The student must be registered as an undergraduate in the current semester. Students who hold a bachelors degree or are registered in-absentia are not eligible.

2. The student must have completed at least thirty semester hours of coursework in residence at the University, and at least sixty semester hours of college coursework, including transferred work and credit by examination.
3. The student must rank in the top 20 percent of their class in each college or school in which he or she is pursuing a major, based on in-residence cumulative grade point average.
4. The student must have an in-residence University grade point average of at least 3.50.

To be designated a Distinguished College Scholar, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

1. The student must meet the first, second, and fourth College Scholar requirements stated above.
2. The student also must rank in the top 4 percent of their class in each college or school in which they are pursuing a major, based on in-residence cumulative grade point average.

Interpretation Approved by EPC and FC in February 2018 (D 15920-15922)

1. In each class, of all students meeting criteria 1, 2, and 4, the student with the highest GPA should be recognized as a Distinguished College Scholar;
2. In each class, of all students meeting criteria 1, 2, and 4, any additional students who rank in the top 4% of the entire class should also be recognized as Distinguished College Scholars; and
3. In each class, of all students meeting criteria 1, 2, and 4, any additional students who rank in the top 20% of the entire class should also be recognized as College Scholars.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CATALOG LANGUAGE:

HONORS

College Scholars

On Honors Day each spring, the University designates outstanding students as College Scholars and Distinguished College Scholars, on the basis of registration and grade point average requirements for courses taken in residence at the University, as specified below. Students who have received sanctions in the last two years for academic misconduct involving academic probation or higher sanctions are not eligible to be recognized for these honors. Students who are eligible for recognition receive invitations to the Honors Day convocation about three weeks before Honors Day.

To be designated a College Scholar, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

1. The student must be registered as an undergraduate in the current semester. Students who hold a bachelors degree or are registered in-absentia are not eligible.
2. The student must have completed at least thirty semester hours of coursework in residence at the University, and at least sixty semester hours of college coursework, including transferred work and credit by examination.
3. The student must rank in the top 20 percent of their class in each college or school in which he or she is enrolled [~~pursuing a major~~], based on in-residence cumulative grade point average.
4. The student must have an in-residence University grade point average of at least 3.50.

To be designated a Distinguished College Scholar, a student must meet ~~[all]~~ one of the following requirements:

1. The student in each class of each college or school meeting the above requirements for College Scholars with the highest in-residence University grade point average will be designated a Distinguished College Scholar [~~must meet the first, second, and fourth College Scholar requirements stated above~~].
2. [~~The student also must rank in the top 4 percent of their class in each college or school in which they are pursuing a major, based on in-residence cumulative grade point average.~~] All other students in each college or school who meet the first, second, and fourth College Scholar requirements stated above and are also in the top 4% of their class in each college or school in which they are enrolled will be designated as Distinguished College Scholars.