

Office of Academic Affairs

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DATE: March 13, 2023

To: Scholastic Requirements Committee

ATT: Paloma Harrison, Chair

From: Shoshana Zeisman-Pereyo

Executive Director, Student Learning Initiatives

Re: Intervention for Students on Academic Probation**Problem Statement:**

The Academic Standing policy at PSU is a three-part process. Students whose cumulative PSU GPA falls below 2.0 enter the policy at the academic warning (AW). The intervention for students on AW is to complete the AW workshop (or meet with an advisor) to remove a registration hold, and the student is limited to registering for 13 credits while on AW. The term immediately following, a student on AW will either return to good standing, stay on AW, or go on academic probation depending on their term and cumulative GPAs ([for the full policy, see below](#)).

Currently, up to 100 students are notified each term at PSU that they have been placed on academic probation. These students and those continuing on academic probation are limited to registering for up to 13 credit hours. Beyond the credit limitation, these students do not receive any other intervention or additional mandated support while on academic probation.

Background:

Historically, students on academic probation have been long overlooked. Not only is this a common practice at PSU, but nationally. Research shows that students who find themselves on academic probation during their tenure in college are less likely to be retained than students who do not (Bowman, 2022). While this might seem reasonable, it does not mean that there is nothing to be done for academically struggling students.

Additionally, evidence suggests that students on academic probation find the experience jarring and can feel like a failure once they receive word of their academic standing (Bowman, 2022). PSU must ask whether or not the current practice is having the desired effect or hindering students from seeking resources.

The literature on interventions for academic probation is limited and mixed; one research study at a mid-sized suburban university shows that an academic coaching intervention can lead to successful outcomes. This particular institution closely mirrors PSU's diversity demographics, which is promising, and the results from the intervention led to an increase of .443 grade points across all observations (Vanacore & Dahan, 2019).

Data:

The data below is intended to elucidate the number of students that go on academic probation each term. Additionally, you have been provided with the academic standing flow, meaning how does the typical student flow throughout the process. Lastly, the data has been disaggregated to provide the committee with a clear picture of which students are impacted the most by being on academic probation.

Dataset

All degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at any time between Fall 2020 and Spring 2022, excluding Summer terms. Data from Fact Book Wk4, campus = I. End-of-term standing excludes 'Acad Disq - In Acad Support Prgm', and 'Acad Disq - Reinstated on Probation'.

Term	# Distinct Students	# Warning at EOT	# Probation at EOT	# Dismissed at EOT
Fall 2020	15,538	416	78	37
Winter 2021	14,272	199	123	21
Spring 2021	13,401	182	102	35
<i>Distinct Total</i>	<i>17,116</i>	<i>723</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>93</i>
Fall 2021	14,588	619	93	56
Winter 2022	13,342	295	226	27
Spring 2022	12,473	207	139	76
<i>Distinct Total</i>	<i>16,025</i>	<i>1,021</i>	<i>424</i>	<i>159</i>
Grand Total	22,979	1,686	670	252

EOT= End of Term

Academic Warning Flow

What number & percentage of students go on Academic Warning and what is their flow throughout the process?

723 students went on academic warning in Fall 2020, Winter 2021, or Spring 2021 (AY 2020-21)

	Good Standing (%)	Warning (%)	Probation (%)	Dismissed (%)	Not Enrolled (%)
One Term After Warning	21%	9%	26%	<1%	44%
Two Terms After Warning	24%	3%	7%	6%	60%
Three Terms After Warning	35%	3%	4%	4%	64%

Not enrolled means student did not have a end of term standing in the term

Disaggregates

	N	One Term After Warning				
		Good Standing (%)	Warning (%)	Probation (%)	Dismissed (%)	Not Enrolled (%)
All Students	723	21%	9%	26%	<1%	44%
New First-Year Student	216	15%	10%	26%	0%	49%
New Transfer Student	290	24%	11%	26%	<1%	40%
First Generation	287	20%	9%	29%	<1%	42%
Continuing Generation	257	23%	11%	26%	0%	40%
Asian*	73	21%	15%	33%	0%	32%
Black*	101	22%	12%	28%	0%	39%
Hispanic/Latino*	185	18%	7%	26%	0%	49%
Native American*	31	16%	3%	32%	0%	48%
Pacific Islander*	23	26%	4%	17%	4%	48%
White*	451	22%	10%	23%	<1%	45%

* duplicated race; *small N values*

Probation**How many terms does it take on average for probation students to get back to good standing?**

(187 students were on probation in Fall 2020 or Winter 2021 (AY 2020-21); Students needed to be in good standing in Winter 2021 (for Fall 2020 students), Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Winter 2022, or Spring 2022; this gives students at most 5 terms to return to good standing)

- 149 (80%) did not return to good standing by Spring 2022 (this includes students who left or remained on probation or warning)
- 21 (11%) took one term to return to good standing
- 17 (9%) took two or more terms to return to good standing

Excluding those who did not return to good standing within the timeframe, the average number of terms for probation students to return to good standing was **1.76 terms**.

Proposal:

The Learning Center proposes the following change to PSU's Academic Standing Policy related to students on academic probation:

Required Intervention: A registration hold will be applied to the student record until the completion of an academic coaching appointment facilitated by the Learning Center.

Rationale:

The Learning Center at PSU provides free academic coaching to any registered student. Thoroughly training all academic coaches in strengths-based coaching practices, appreciative inquiry, and trauma-informed practices sets the coaches up to be some of the best experts on campus to work with this population. Additionally, academic coaching appointments are structured around the student's needs and focus on goal setting, executive functioning, campus resources, belonging, and self-efficacy. Lastly, on average, all students who interact with the Learning Center's academic coaches have a 91% term-to-term persistence rate.

Beyond the above-stated reasons, the research also indicates the need for a thoughtful, student-centered approach to working with students on academic probation. While there is no one-sized approach for working with academically struggling students, PSU can have an approach that focuses on an ethos of care and helping the student navigate back to being academically successful.

References:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2022/03/23/how-fix-problems-academic-probation-opinion>

Sarah M. Vanacore & Thomas A. Dahan (2021). Assessing the Effectiveness of a Coaching Intervention for Students on Academic Probation, *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 51:1, 3–16, DOI: [10.1080/10790195.2019.1684855](https://doi.org/10.1080/10790195.2019.1684855)

Current Academic Standing Policy:**Good Standing**

When the term GPA is 2.25 or higher and the cumulative Portland State GPA is 2.00 or higher, students are in good academic standing. Good Standing is not recorded on the academic transcript.

Academic Warning

Students with 12 or more attempted credits (including PSU and transfer work) whose cumulative PSU GPA falls below 2.00 will be placed on academic warning. A registration hold will also be applied to the student record until completion of a mandatory workshop facilitated by Advising and Career Services.

Students who are placed on Academic Warning will be limited to a maximum of 13 credits in future terms unless approved for more by an Academic Advisor.

Academic Probation

Students on academic warning will be placed on academic probation if they do not meet at least one of the following requirements:

1. Raise the cumulative PSU GPA to 2.00, thereby returning to good standing, or
2. Earn a GPA for the given term of 2.25 or above, thereby remaining on academic warning and subject to the same requirements in the next term.

Students who are in Academic Probation are limited to a maximum of 13 credits per term unless approved for more by an Academic Advisor.

Academic Dismissal

Students on academic probation will be dismissed at the end of the term if they do not meet at least one of the following requirements:

1. Raise the cumulative PSU GPA to 2.00, thereby returning to good standing, or
2. Earn a PSU GPA for the given term of 2.25 or above, thereby remaining on academic probation and subject to the same requirements for the next term.

Reinstatement

Students who are dismissed may be reinstated in one of two ways. One is to petition and be approved for reinstatement by the Scholastic Standards Committee (find more information on the Petitions page). Petitions for current term reinstatement must be returned to the Office of the Registrar prior to the beginning of the term for a timely decision. Alternately, conferral of an accredited Bachelor's degree, or an accredited, transferable Associates degree will constitute a basis for automatic reinstatement to the University. (An Associate of Applied Science degree does not result in automatic reinstatement, but can be considered as part of the petition process.) An official transcript with the degree posted must be presented to the Office of the Registrar.

If reinstatement is approved, students will be reinstated to probation status.

Improving Academic Standing

Students whose current academic standing is warning, probation or reinstatement must earn at least a 2.25 GPA each term to maintain their current academic standing. Earning a 2.25 or higher term GPA does not revert current academic standing to the previous standing. In order to return to good standing, students must raise their cumulative PSU GPA to a 2.00 or higher.

Students are encouraged to speak with their academic advisor about their academic standing and ways to improve their GPA.