

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE HONORS POLICY

Submitted and Approved by the Academic Policies Committee
Approved by the Faculty Senate (10-22-02)

The Academic Policies Committee has drafted and approved some changes to the Honors policy. We would ask the Senate to review and approve the changes and forward them to the Provost.

1. Proposed change to the criteria for honors eligibility

The old catalogue language was:

“Students must complete a minimum of 60 hours of coursework at Salisbury University, with at least 54 graded hours of A, B, C, D, or P, and at least 30 hours of 300/400-level courses with grades of A, B, or C.”

The proposed language is:

“Students must complete a minimum of 56 graded hours of coursework at Salisbury University, and at least 30 hours of 300/400-level courses at Salisbury University with grades of A, B, or C.”

Justification: Transfer students can be admitted to the university with 64 credit hours, making them automatically ineligible for honors distinctions under the current policy. As a result, the Academic Policies Committee receives numerous appeals from students denied honors because they fell short of the 60-hour requirement. These appeals have been uniformly denied. Because we accept up to 64 transfer hours, the committee felt it was reasonable to drop the number of hours needed to be eligible for honors to 56.

However, we also eliminated the language in the current policy allowing only 54 graded hours (which allowed students to CLEP out of 6 hours). This scenario did not seem likely to adversely affect large numbers of transfer students transferring in over 60 hours. Students transferring earlier in their academic career (who might be more likely to CLEP out of 6 hours) would be unaffected under the new policy because they would meet and exceed the 56 hours needed to be eligible for honors. Students would continue to have the right to appeal decisions to deny them honors under the new policy.

2. Proposed change to the GPA cutoffs for Latin honors distinctions

Currently, students are eligible for Latin honors distinctions as follows:

Cumulative GPA of 3.3—Cum Laude,
3.6—Magna Cum Laude, and
3.8—Summa Cum Laude

The committee proposes we change those requirements to:

Cumulative GPA of 3.5—Cum Laude
3.7—Magna Cum Laude
3.9—Summa Cum Laude

Justification: Salisbury University currently has the **lowest** academic requirements for granting Latin honors distinctions in the system (at least as compared to Frostburg, Towson, UMCP, and UMBC). The following table provides data on the number of students who have graduated with honors the past two semesters, and data on how those numbers would have changed if the proposed cutoff limits had been imposed.

Honors Categories	Current	Proposed Plan
	FALL 2001	
Cum Laude	3.3	3.5
# of students (%)	42 (12%)	26 (8%)
Magna	3.6	3.7
# of students (%)	28 (8%)	19 (5%)
Summa	3.8	3.9
# of students (%)	18 (6%)	9 (3%)
Total graduates	339	-----
Total honors	88 (26%)	54 (16%)
	SPRING 2002	
Cum Laude	3.3	3.5
# of students (%)	196 (23%)	114 (13%)
Magna	3.6	3.7
# of students (%)	86 (10%)	67 (8%)
Summa	3.8	3.9
# of students (%)	62 (7%)	29 (3%)
Total graduates	870	-----
Total Honors	344 (40%)	210 (24%)

The committee feels that our current policy has the effect of diluting the distinction of “graduating with honors.” We feel that bestowing the distinction of honors on 40% of Spring graduates is much too lenient. In order to bring the policy at Salisbury University in line with other institution in the system and to

69 restore the pride of accomplishment intended through affixing Latin honors
70 distinctions on our graduates, we must raise the cutoff limits on the cumulative
71 GPA requirements.