

TO: SUNY ESF Academic Affairs Committee

FROM: Sustainable Resources Management, Undergraduate Education Committee

RE: Resolution Title: Implementation of Grade Forgiveness Policy for students changing majors

DATE: 03/07/2024

RATIONALE:

RECALLING that student retention is a key performance indicator for SUNY ESF;

HAVING SEEN that undergraduate students often participate in exploration and potential shifts in their chosen major when they become aware of another SUNY ESF degree program that is more aligned with their career goals or as having more career opportunities upon graduation;

HAVING SEEN that transitioning between majors can present challenges for students, particularly regarding the impact of prior coursework on their GPA and academic standing;

WHEREAS, fostering an environment that supports academic growth and encourages students to pursue their passions without fear of punitive consequences is essential for their success and well-being;

WHEREAS, courses taken to satisfy previous program requirements no longer apply to their new major;

WHEREAS, a Grade Forgiveness Policy would provide students with the opportunity to mitigate the adverse effects of previous academic performance when changing majors;

WHEREAS, other SUNY academic institutions have similar Grade Forgiveness Policies, including

- SUNY Maritime College (<https://www.sunymaritime.edu/sites/default/files/2022-07/Policies-Grade%20Forgiveness%20092018%20%281%29.pdf>);
- Rockland Community College (<https://sunyrokland.edu/about/college-policies/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-forgiveness/>);
- SUNY Fredonia ([https://www.fredonia.edu/sites/default/files/section/academics/registrar/\\_files/Academic%20Forgiveness%20Policies.pdf](https://www.fredonia.edu/sites/default/files/section/academics/registrar/_files/Academic%20Forgiveness%20Policies.pdf)); and
- Onondaga Community College (<https://www.sunyocc.edu/sites/default/files/public:/documents/2020-02/Academic%20Forgiveness%20Petition.pdf>),

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that: SUNY ESF hereby implements a Grade Forgiveness Policy specifically tailored for students undergoing a change in major.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that: this policy allows students to petition for the exclusion of grades earned in courses relevant to their previous major from their GPA calculation when transitioning to a new major.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that: the Grade Forgiveness Policy shall be applicable under the following conditions:

1. The student must have officially declared their intent to change majors and received approval from the appropriate academic advisor and department curriculum coordinator.
2. The courses for which grade forgiveness is requested must not be required in the new major.
3. Grade Forgiveness shall be applicable only to courses in which the student received a failing grade.
4. Courses and grades will remain on the academic transcript, with grades for excluded courses marked with an "E" to show that they are excluded from the cumulative GPA.
5. Grade Forgiveness does not automatically make a student eligible for financial aid. Students should contact the Office of Financial Aid for information and explanations about their eligibility.
6. Students may use Grade Forgiveness once and only once.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that: the implementation of this Grade Forgiveness Policy shall adhere to the following guidelines:

1. A clear and accessible process for students to petition for Grade Forgiveness, including necessary documentation and deadlines.
2. Fair and consistent evaluation of petitions by a designated committee or academic authority.
3. Transparent communication of the outcomes of petitions to students, including explanations for approvals or denials.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that: SUNY ESF, through the Academic Affairs Committee, shall review the effectiveness of the Grade Forgiveness Policy periodically and make necessary adjustments to ensure its alignment with the evolving needs of students.