

Proposed Revisions to the College of Veterinary Medicine's Standards for Academic Progress

Purpose:

The purpose of the proposed revisions is to provide a more effective way of detecting students who are at academic risk and of providing them with support and remediation early in their academic career. Current academic progress standards may fail to catch at-risk students until late in their academic careers. By their third and fourth years, students have not only invested considerable time and effort toward achieving their DVM, but have also incurred extensive tuition debt.

Procedure:

The new standards use higher grade point averages and closely monitor D grades to detect students who are at-risk. The standards also provide an incremental warning system so that students are well aware if their grades leave them in poor standing. Such a system allows the college to provide careful guidance, mentoring, and remediation.

Beginning in fall 2010, the first year students were told that the new academic progress standards apply to them. Following their first semester, students with a GPA below 2.5 were placed on academic warning or probation. No first year students were dismissed using the new standards. Rather, these students were given mentoring, special attention, and advice regarding their study habits and expectations for improvement. Any first year student whose GPA is below 2.5 at the conclusion of their spring 2011 semester, will receive further counseling and remediation. They will not face dismissal. However, if, by completion of their third semester (fall 2011), these students have not sufficiently improved their grades, they may face dismissal. Dismissal actions outlined in the new standards will not occur until after completion of the third semester. Grades accrued in fall 2010 and spring 2011 will affect the dismissal decision.

Resolution for Change in Academic Progress Standards as outlined in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Student Handbook of the Virginia Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine

WHEREAS, the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) student handbook for the Virginia Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine (VMRCVM) provides guidance on matters pertaining to academic progress; and

WHEREAS, unique features of this professional graduate program include a year long clinical training program in the final year and the requirement to pass the North American Veterinary Licensing Exam (NAVLE) before graduates are licensed to practice; and

WHEREAS, the VMRCVM has traditionally established college specific standards for academic progress within the preclinical DVM curriculum, which are targeted at determining if satisfactory progress has been made towards the professional degree; and

WHEREAS, the VMRCVM Curriculum Board and Standards Committee has determined that the current academic progress standards may not detect students at risk of not making academic progress within the final clinical year or successful attainment of the NAVLE; and

WHEREAS, early detection of students who are at academic risk may avoid their late expulsion from the program and acquisition of heavy debt burdens; and

WHEREAS, improved early detection and remediation for students at risk of non-progress in combination with higher academic standards may alleviate this situation and ensure the high standards expected of the VMRCVM graduates and practicing veterinarians; and

WHEREAS, the current first year class (Fall 2010) has been informed, both verbally and in writing, of the proposed new academic progress standards; and

WHEREAS, the new academic progress standards will result in dismissal only if students continue to get poor grades in their third through sixth semesters; and

WHEREAS, the new academic progress standards will not be retroactively applied to students who are currently in years two, three, or four;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the attached text regarding standards for academic progress be added to the DVM student handbook for the VMRCVM in replacement of the old text and to be effective August 22, 2011, for classes entering in the fall semester of 2010 and later.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the attached text regarding standards for academic progress be approved and added to the DVM Student Handbook for the VMRCVM in replacement of the old text (deleted text is crossed out; new text is in red) and to be effective August 22, 2011, for classes entering in the fall semester of 2010 and later.

March 28, 2011

Standards for Academic Progress — ~~Preclerkship Curriculum~~

The College of Veterinary Medicine uses an A - F grading scale (A = 4.0) for nearly all first- through third-year courses (~~remainder~~ **remaining courses** are Pass/Fail). All fourth-year clerkships are **graded** P/F.

~~If a student's semester grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0, s/he will be given an unofficial warning by the Academic Affairs Office. Any student whose cumulative GPA falls below 2.0 will be given an Academic Warning. If the student's cumulative GPA is not raised above 2.0 by the end of the following semester, the student will be placed on Academic Probation, at which time the student will be invited by the Associate Dean to meet with the College Standards Committee to discuss reasons for his/her poor academic performance. The student will be removed from probation at the end of the next semester if his/her cumulative GPA is raised to 2.0 or above. If the student fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.0 by the end of the probationary period, s/he will be removed from the DVM program. A student will also be removed from the program if, following a period of academic probation, his/her cumulative GPA again falls below 2.0. Furthermore, at the end of the third year, any student failing to achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.0 will be removed from the program.~~

~~A student who receives an "F" in a required (core or track) course will be removed from the program. A student who receives an F in an elective course will be removed from the program if s/he is not in good academic standing (i.e. has received an academic warning or is on academic probation).~~

~~Three (3) D grades (D+, D, D-) in any course delivered within a single semester (i.e., not cumulative) for semesters 1 through 6 will result in dismissal from the program.~~

~~It is the student's responsibility to contact the Course leader to discuss progress or difficulties in any course.~~

The Office of ~~the Associate Dean for~~ Academic Affairs reviews the scholastic records of all first **through** third year students at the end of each semester. **Students will be placed on academic concern, academic probation, reviewed for academic dismissal, or be automatically dismissed for academic cause under the following circumstances.**

Academic Concern:

- any student whose semester grade point average falls below 2.5.

Academic Probation:

- any student who receives an academic concern for two (2) consecutive semesters or a D grade while on academic concern;
- any student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 2.5 for semester 2 or any semester thereafter;
- any student who receives two (2) D grades in one semester.

Reviewed for Academic Dismissal:

- any student who receives an academic probation for two consecutive semesters or a student that receives a D grade while on academic probation may be dismissed for academic cause. These students will need to petition the Standards Committee for continuation in the program.
- any student who has a cumulative grade point average between 2.25 and 2.5 at the end of semester 6 will undergo review before progressing to fourth year.

Automatic Dismissal for Academic Cause:

- any student who accumulates five (5) D grades or more;
- any student who receives three (3) D grades or more in core and track courses in any one semester;
- any student who receives an F or failing grade in a core or track course;
- any student failing to achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.25 by the end of semester 6.

Students who receive an academic concern notice will be required to meet with the associate dean of professional programs to discuss reasons for poor performance and supportive services for improvement of performance.

Students on academic probation will be required to meet with the Standards Committee to discuss reasons for poor performance and plans for improvement to avoid dismissal. Students placed on either academic concern or academic probation will need to identify a faculty mentor with whom to meet on a regular basis.

The student will be removed from academic concern or probation status at the end of the next semester if his/her cumulative GPA is raised to 2.5 or above and he/she does not receive a D grade.



Change in Academic Progress Standards as Outlined in the DVM Student Handbook for the VMRCVM

Board of Visitors
March 28, 2011

Dr. Jennie Hodgson
Associate Dean, CVM



BACKGROUND

- Unique features of the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) program include:
 - ✓ a year long clinical placement after 3 years of pre-clinical training;
 - ✓ the North American Veterinary Licensing Exam (NAVLE), which students are required to sit and pass.
- The VMRCVM has established college specific standards for academic progress in the pre-clinical years to determine satisfactory progress towards the clinical year as well as potential attainment of the NAVLE.



BACKGROUND

- These standards for academic progress should also detect “**students at risk**” of dismissal on academic grounds.
- Earlier identification of students at risk would allow improved assistance and remediation of these students, or if not successful, earlier dismissal with less accrual of debt.
- The VMRCVM has concerns with the current standards, and specifically with the detection of students at risk early in the DVM program.



PROPOSAL

- The new standards for academic progress in semesters 1 through 6 of the DVM program:
 - ✓ include use of higher GPA threshold and/or the number of D grades for detection of students at risk;
 - ✓ a series of Academic Warning, Academic Probation, and Academic Review, which incrementally warn students regarding their academic performance and outline mechanisms for mentoring and remediation;
 - ✓ place the duty of care on the college.

- The college recommends these standards apply to students who entered in Fall 2010.