

**ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF
UW-SEATTLE UNDERGRADUATES:
REPORT TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION
COORDINATING BOARD**

**Report Prepared by the:
Task Force on the Academic Progress of UW-Seattle Undergraduates**

**University of Washington
Seattle, Washington**

January 2004

Academic Progress of UW-Seattle Undergraduates

Table of Contents

Topic	Page
Task Force Members	iii
Executive Summary	iv
I. Academic Progress of Undergraduate Students and E2SSB 5135	1
II. Academic Policies of the University of Washington	3
A. Policies on accumulation of academic credits and the timely completion of baccalaureate degrees	3
B. Policies on withdrawing from classes and/or dropping academic credits	4
C. Policies on academic probation	4
III. Characteristics of Students Affected by Academic Progress Policies	5
A. Students exceeding 125 percent of credits required by degree	5
B. Students withdrawing from classes or dropping credits	8
C. Students on academic probation	8
IV. Implementation and Impact of the UW's Policies on Academic Progress	10
A. Implementation of the 105- and 210-credit rules	10
B. Reinstatement of students dropped for low scholarship	11
V. Barriers to Completion of Degree Programs	12
A. Restricted access to courses	12
B. Restricted access to majors	13
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations	14
Appendices	
Appendix I – UW Satisfactory Progress Policies	18
Appendix II – UW Academic Progress Communications	19
Appendix III - Data for Attributes of Students Affected by Academic Progress Policies.	20
Appendix IV – Data for 2002 and 2003 addressing E2SSB 5135	26

TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF UNDERGRADUATES

MEMBERS

Nancy (Rusty) Barceló, Vice President for Minority Affairs, Co-Chair
George Bridges, Dean of Undergraduate Education and Vice Provost, Co-Chair

Frank Ashby, Director, Student and Community Relations, College of Engineering
Laura Avila, Academic Counselor-Lead, Undergraduate Advising
Enrique Bonus, Associate Professor, Department of American Ethnic Studies
Jody Burns, Director, Academic Services, Department of Psychology
Sam Castic, Director of Faculty, Administration and Academic Affairs, ASUW
Judith Clark, Director of Academic Advising and Student Services, School of Art
Gail Dubrow, Professor, Department of Urban Design and Planning
Brittany Goodnight, President, ASUW
June Hairston, Academic Counselor for Student Counseling Services, Office of
Minority Affairs
Jacqueline Hoekstra, Academic Counselor, Business School
Derek Huoth, Student
Paul LePore, Assistant Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Barry Minai, Director, Instructional Center, Office of Minority Affairs
Kelli Jayn Nichols, Academic Counselor-Lead, Department of Bioengineering
Alfredo Padilla, Student Senate, ASUW
Mona Pitre-Collins, Director, Undergraduate Scholarship Office
Scott Winter, Academic Counselor-Lead, Undergraduate Advising

Ex-Officio

Jan Carline, Professor, Medical Education
Robert Corbett, Coordinator of New Programs, Office of the Provost
Ken Etzkorn, Director Curriculum Planning and Special Programs, Undergraduate
Education
Phillip Hoffman, Director, Office of Institutional Studies
Emile Pitre, Assistant Vice President, Office of Minority Affairs
Carolyn Plumb, Senior Lecturer, Law School, Technical Communication
Tim Washburn, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Services
Debbie Wiegand, Director, Academic Counseling, Undergraduate Education

ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF UW-SEATTLE UNDERGRADUATES: REPORT TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, the Washington State Legislature enacted a bill to develop and assess policies that “ensure that undergraduate students enrolled in degree or certificate programs complete their programs in a timely manner” (E2SSB 5135, Section 1). Subsequently, interim University of Washington Provost David Thorud established the Task Force on Academic Progress of UW Undergraduates to study academic challenges University of Washington undergraduates encounter in completing their degrees and propose remedies to address these challenges.

Academic Progress Policies of the University of Washington

Current University policies related to academic progress are listed below. In the past few months, the university has increased communication with students about these policies.

- *Declaring a major.* Students must declare a major by the time they have earned 105 academic credits.
- *Completing a degree.* The credit limit for completing a degree is 210, which is 30 credits beyond the minimum requirement of 180 credits for most degrees.
- *Dropping/adding credits.* During the first 2 weeks of each quarter, students may withdraw from classes without restriction. Between the end of the 2nd week and the end of the 7th week, students may take *one* drop *annually*. They also can withdraw from *all* courses through the last day of instruction by withdrawing from the university. Students may add courses in the 1st week and with the instructor’s permission in the 2nd and 3rd weeks of the quarter.
- *Academic probation.* If a student earns less than a 2.00 grade point average (GPA) in the first quarter, the student receives an academic warning. The student is put on probation if s/he does not earn a cumulative GPA of at least 2.00 for the subsequent quarter. If the student receives below a 2.5 for any quarter while on probation, the student is dismissed from the university.

Student Characteristics and Policy Implementation

Declaring a major. Some students do not declare a major by the time they have earned 105 academic credits. Prior to 2003, the University implemented the 105 credit rule by placing holds on the registration of students with more than

105 credits and no declared major, requiring them to meet with an academic adviser. Advisers have become more proactive with students who do not have a major and now deny requests for a pre-major extension (so the student can register) in cases where the student stands little chance of admission to a department.

Completing a degree. A small percentage of students do not graduate within the 210 credit limit: between 5 and 6 percent of UW seniors have more than 225 credits. Students with 225 academic credits generally have the following characteristics:

- They have somewhat higher grade point averages
- They enrolled at UW with substantially more transfer and/or Running Start credits
- They are more likely to pursue two or more undergraduate degrees
- They are more likely to have studied abroad
- They reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the student body as a whole

Beginning winter quarter 2003, the University informed all undergraduate students with more than 210 credits that they could not register for future quarters unless they filed an application to graduate at the end of spring quarter or summer quarter, or filed a graduation plan approved by their college dean.

Drop policy. Approximately 6 percent of University students drop 25 percent or more of their credits before grading. These students tend to have the following characteristics:

- They typically complete their undergraduate degrees *within* the University's credit limits
- They have somewhat lower grade point averages

Academic probation. Students on academic probation for more than one quarter represent only about 1 percent of the student body. These students tend to have the following characteristics:

- They typically complete their undergraduate degrees *within* the University's credit limits
- They enroll with a similar number of transfer credits as other students
- Disproportionately consist of students from underrepresented minority groups
- Disproportionately are males

Students dropped from the UW for low scholarship have the right to petition the University's Reinstatement Committee for readmission. Prior to spring 2003, this committee readmitted many of these students. However in spring 2003, the

committee adopted policies that deny reinstatement except under extraordinary circumstances.

Barriers to Academic Progress

Oversubscribed courses and high demand degree programs can create barriers for students. When students experience delays of one or more quarter in enrolling in courses, they may accumulate credits in areas unrelated to their field of interest.

With recent reductions in university budgets and the ensuing loss of permanent faculty and staff positions, the demand pressure on competitive departments has increased. Some students reapply (repeatedly) to their preferred major, spending up to one additional year completing courses that they believe will increase their chances for admission.

Recommendations

In the next few months, the University of Washington Task Force on Academic Progress will finalize its recommendations. These recommendations will concentrate on the following areas of institutional concern:

- Strategies to enhance academic advising
- Mechanisms to more accurately project course demand
- Identifying institutional practices and/or structures that impede access to courses
- Strategies to enhance instructional capacity (permanent) in areas with longstanding student demand

ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF UW-SEATTLE UNDERGRADUATES: REPORT TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

I. Academic Progress of Undergraduate Students and E2SSB 5135

The Washington State Legislature enacted Engrossed Second Senate Substitute Bill 5135 (E2SSB 5135) to develop and assess policies that “ensure that undergraduate students enrolled in degree or certificate programs complete their programs in a timely manner.” (E2SSB, Section 1). The legislation also requires that:

Section 2. 1) Each four-year institution and the board of community and technical colleges shall report to the higher educating coordinating board by January 30, 2004 on the policies developed under section 1 of this Act. The report shall include baseline data on the number and characteristics of students affected by the policies.

2) In the report, each four-year institution shall also describe policies developed and actions taken by the institution to eliminate barriers to timely completion of degree programs including reducing the occasions where students cannot enroll in courses needed for their major due to over-enrollment .

In July 2003, Interim University of Washington Provost David Thorud established the Task Force on Academic Progress of University of Washington Undergraduates (Task Force) for the following purposes:

- Responding to the reporting requirements of E2SSB 5135
- Identifying deterrents to completing undergraduate degree programs
- Assessing the causes of these difficulties
- Proposing remedies to facilitate progress to degree while not compromising the quality of undergraduate academic programs

The Task Force will study these issues through the remainder of the 2003-2004 academic year, submitting a final report to the Provost on June 30, 2004.

The remaining sections of the present report provide information requested by the Legislature in E2SSB 5135. Section II describes current University of Washington policies on academic progress to degree. Section III summarizes information on the

number and characteristics of students affected by the policies. Section IV reviews the current implementation and impact of the University's policies on academic progress. Section V describes existing institutional structures that may impede students' progress to degree. The final section of the report summarizes preliminary findings about the academic progress challenges of undergraduates at the University of Washington and outlines the remaining work of the Task Force.

II. Academic Progress Policies of the University of Washington

In 1987, the University of Washington established policies to encourage timely progress to degree. Enacted by the University of Washington Faculty Senate and approved by the President, the policies (exhibited in Appendix I) cover three general areas:

- Accumulation of academic credits and the timely completion of baccalaureate degrees
- Dropped courses and academic credits
- Academic probation

A. Policies on accumulation of academic credits and the timely completion of baccalaureate degrees

Limit for declaring a major—105 credits

University of Washington students must declare a major by the time they have earned 105 academic credits. A warning letter is sent to students who have not yet declared a major as they approach the 105-credit limit. Students who have completed 105 credits and have not declared a major have a hold placed on their registration; they are not permitted to register for courses until they declare a major or meet with an adviser and receive a pre-major extension. Some students delay declaring a major because they want to improve their academic record. Others need some additional time to complete coursework prerequisite to admission to a major. Pre-major extensions are granted if the adviser concludes that the student is pursuing a reasonable goal and has a good chance of gaining admission to the intended major.

Limit for completing a baccalaureate degree—210 credits

Students are also expected to complete their undergraduate degree programs within 30 credits beyond the minimum required for the degree. Since most degrees require 180 credits, students generally must complete their programs by the time they earn 210 credits. Undergraduates who are in the process of completing 210 credits are notified by email the third week of the quarter that they must contact their adviser to submit an application to graduate within two quarters or develop a graduation plan. The student's college or school must approve graduation plans. Students ineligible to graduate will be permitted to register for succeeding quarters only if they receive approval from their department and college to continue. Approval to enroll beyond 210 credits generally may not extend beyond two additional quarters.

B. Policies on withdrawing from classes and/or dropping academic credits

Dropping and adding classes

University of Washington Students may withdraw from classes without restriction through the 14th calendar day of the academic quarter (10th day of classes). No record of the dropped course(s) is recorded on the transcript. Students may add classes without restriction through the 7th calendar day of the quarter and, with the instructor's permission, through the 21st day of the quarter.

Late withdrawal from classes and the annual drop

Each University student is afforded *one* "annual drop" per academic year, enabling him/her to withdraw from one course after the 14th calendar day of a quarter (10th day of classes), but no later than the end of the 7th week of the quarter.

A student may withdraw from *all* courses through the last day of classes by withdrawing from the University for that quarter. Students who withdraw from all classes between the 8th & 30th calendar day of the quarter are required to pay half tuition. Students who withdraw from all classes after the 30th calendar day of the quarter are required to pay full tuition.

The University withholds registration from those students who repeatedly withdraw from all courses. If a student wishes to continue, she/he must meet with an academic adviser to discuss and formulate his/her academic plans and goals. Following this discussion, the University may afford the student an additional opportunity to register for subsequent quarters.

C. Policies on academic probation

If a University of Washington undergraduate earns a grade point average (GPA) below 2.00 in his or her first academic quarter, he or she receives an academic warning. If the student does not earn a cumulative GPA of at least 2.00 by the end of the next quarter, the student is placed on academic probation. An undergraduate student is placed on academic probation at the end of any quarter (except the first quarter at the University) in which his or her cumulative GPA falls below 2.00.

Students remain on probation until the cumulative GPA is raised to at least 2.00 provided they achieve at least a 2.50 GPA for each subsequent quarter that the cumulative GPA remains below 2.00. If a student earns less than 2.50 GPA for any quarter of probation, that student is dismissed from the University for low scholarship.¹

¹ A student who has been dropped under the low scholarship rules may be readmitted to the University only at the discretion of the dean of the school or college to which readmission is sought. A student readmitted under these rules re-enters on academic probation. A readmitted student is dropped if he or she fails to attain either a 2.50 GPA for the following quarter's work or a cumulative UW GPA of 2.00 at the end of that quarter. The student is removed from probation at the end of the quarter in which a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or better is attained

III. Characteristics of Students Affected by Academic Progress Policies

This section of the report reviews information on students who are affected by the University's academic progress policies. Concentrating on the attributes of these students, the section is divided into three parts:

- **Students exceeding 125 percent of credits required by their degree program**
- **Students withdrawing from classes**
- **Students on academic probation**

A. Students exceeding 125 percent of credits required by their degree program

In any given academic quarter, students with 125 percent of the number of credits required for graduation (225 or more credits) represent between 5-6 percent of the total population of students who are seniors. A majority of these students graduate within 1-2 quarters of reaching the University's upper limit of 210 credits.

Table 1 exhibits the number of seniors with more than 225 credits for each spring quarter in the academic years 1998-2003. Of those students with 225 or more credits in the spring of 2003, 67 percent graduated by the end of summer quarter, 2003 (Appendix IV Table IV-1a through Table IV – 1c exhibit the total number of seniors with more than 225 credits for each quarter of academic years 2001-02 and 2002-03).

Table 1: UW-Seattle Seniors with 225 or More Academic Credits

Spring Quarter	Total Seniors	With 225 or more credits	% With 225 or More Credits
1999	8648	506	5.85%
2000	8732	533	6.10%
2001	8807	510	5.79%
2002	9001	511	5.68%
2003	9373	549	5.86%

Compared to seniors with fewer than 225 credits, those with 225 or more:

- Begin study at the university with substantially more transfer and/or Running Start credits, averaging 42 credits from community colleges or other four-year institutions or for those transferring from Running Start programs, 44 credits (Appendix III, Table III-5 and Table III-11)
- Are more likely to pursue more than one degree (Appendix III, Table III-10)

- May have studied abroad or participated in experiential learning programs such as research or service while enrolled at the university, accumulating additional academic credits for these experiences (Appendix III, Table III-3)
- Divide proportionately between majority (Caucasian) and underrepresented minority student groups (Appendix III, Table III-14)

In some cases, individual students who exceed credit limits have undertaken remarkable programs of study. Three student profiles illustrate how academically rigorous programs – in which students pursue multiple degrees, foreign study or learning opportunities beyond the classroom – can heighten credit loads.

Matthew Alexander graduated from the University of Washington in 2002 with slightly more than 225 credits. He graduated with a single major, and a minor.



Matthew Alexander

- Graduated summer 2001
- 11 quarters on the Dean's List
- Majored in Psychology with a minor in Public Health and Community Medicine
- Completed all requirements for admission to medical school
- Awarded one of twelve 2002 George Mitchell Scholarships
- Tutored elementary students in Costa Rica
- Served as a translator for physicians and public health workers in Guatemala and Honduras
- Received Mary Gates Leadership Scholarship and Edward E. Carlson Leadership Award for establishing Students Advocating Global Equality (SAGE)
- Worked as an AIDS Care team leader for Multifaith Works in Seattle
- Served as a youth mentor at El Centro de la Raza, a Seattle community organization
- Received a Fulbright Fellowship to investigate the ways Columbian people are embracing and resisting globalization

Allison Van and Ruchi Kapoor graduated from the University of Washington with more than 225 credits. Both earned bachelors degrees with more than one major.



Allison Van

- Graduated Cum Laude spring 2003
- Majored in Biology, Community & Environmental Planning, and Environmental Studies, with a Minor in Quantitative Science
- Worked as a National Communication Specialist for an environmental non-profit
- Worked as a Public Involvement Research Fellow for the US EPA
- Internship at the National Marine Fisheries Service
- 2000 – Received the S. Sterling Munro Public Service Award
- 2001 – Received a Mary Gates Leadership Grant
- 2002 – Received a Udall Scholarship and a Truman Scholarship
- Currently working in Washington DC as a Truman Fellow for the National Rural Funders Collaborative



Ruchi Kapoor

- Graduated autumn 2003
- 8 quarters on the Dean's List
- Majored in Bioengineering and Neurobiology
- Honors Student
- Teaching Assistant for the UW Robinson Center's summer Robotics class
- Volunteered with ESL junior high
- Received a Mary Gates Research Training Grant and a UW Engineered Biomaterials Research Grant
- Will enter an MD/PhD program in autumn 2004

A challenge in achieving greater efficiency in the academic progress of undergraduates is insuring that all students may pursue and complete rigorous programs of study and learning.

B. Students withdrawing from classes or dropping credits

Students who withdraw from classes or drop 25 percent or more of their academic credits during the grading period represent approximately 6 - 7 percent of the total population of students enrolled each Spring Quarter, and up to 9 percent in any given academic year. Table 2 exhibits the total number of undergraduate students enrolled each spring quarter 1999-2003 and the number of students who dropped 25 percent or more of their course credits (Appendix IV, Table IV-2 exhibits the total number of undergraduate students enrolled for the academic years of 2001-02 and 2002-03 and the number of students who dropped 25 percent or more of their courses).

Table 2: UW-Seattle Students Who Drop More Than 25% of Their Credits Before Grading

Spring Quarter	Total Enrolled	Drop 25% or More	% Who Drop 25% of Credits	Average GPA	Average Total Credits
1999	23214	1553	6.69%	2.83	100.6
2000	23519	1621	6.89%	2.83	99.1
2001	23672	1538	6.50%	2.85	99.3
2002	24699	1566	6.34%	2.87	104.2
2003	24717	1519	6.15%	2.91	107.4

These students:

- Typically, complete their undergraduate degrees *within* the University's credit limits (Appendix III, Table III-2)
- Earn somewhat lower grade point averages (Appendix III, Table III-2 and Appendix IV Table IV-2)

C. Students on academic probation

Over the last five years, an average of approximately 2 percent of all enrolled students at UW-Seattle have failed – in more than one academic term – to earn the minimum grade point average (2.0). The University placed these students on academic probation. Table 3 exhibits the number of students enrolled in an academic quarter (for the years 1999-2003) who have been placed on academic probation at least once at some point in their studies at the university.

**Table 3: UW-Seattle Students On
Academic Probation More Than One
Quarter**

Spring Quarter	Total Students Enrolled	Number of Students On Academic Probation	Percent of Students On Academic Probation
1999	23214	500	2.15%
2000	23521	502	2.13%
2001	23675	537	2.27%
2002	24699	541	2.19%
2003	24717	519	2.10%

Of the students with one or more academic terms on probation, less than 1 percent (in any year) remain on academic probation for two terms successively (Appendix IV Table IV-3).

Students on academic probation for more than one quarter:

- Typically complete their undergraduate degrees within the University's credit limits (Appendix III, Table III-4)
- Disproportionately consist of students from underrepresented minority groups (Appendix III, Table III-14). Although this disproportionality is of concern, it should be noted that in absolute terms, 85 out of 1,903 (4.5%) underrepresented students fall within this low scholarship category. Profiles of these students reveal personal, financial, and other hardships occurring at a higher rate than for other students
- Disproportionately are males

In summary, each of the three populations of students – those who exceed 125 percent of the credits required by their degree programs, those who routinely withdraw from classes or drop 25 percent or more of their credits, and those who remain on academic probation – have unique attributes and/or experiences which impede academic progress or result in excessive credits. For example, many of these students bring college credits earned from community colleges or other institutions to the university. Many others pursue multiple degrees. Finally, many pursue experiential learning opportunities beyond their ordinary studies (such as study abroad) that significantly enhance the educational value of their studies. These experiences contribute to the accumulation of academic credits beyond the minimum required for graduation.

Students who frequently withdraw from classes typically progress through their studies more slowly than others. Further, the act of enrolling and then withdrawing from classes reduces others' access to courses. Finally, students on academic probation in any term constitute a very small proportion of the student body. Those on probation for two terms successively constitute an even smaller percentage. The latter group of students either

leaves the University prior to graduating or graduates with an excessive number of credits.

IV. Implementation and impact of the University's policies on academic progress

This part of the report describes recent changes in implementation of the academic progress policies at the UW, particularly over the past year, and the impact those changes have had on the experiences and academic progress of undergraduate students.

A. Implementation of the 105- and 210-credit rules

The University faculty senate enacted the University's academic progress requirements for undergraduates in 1987. Prior to 2003, the University implemented the 105-credit rule by placing holds on the registration of students with more than 105 credits and no declared major, requiring them to meet with an academic adviser. Students exceeding the 210-credit limit for graduation were informed by the Registrar that they must complete their degree requirements and graduate.

Increased monitoring of undeclared majors with more than 105 credits

In previous years, there was little institutional support for refusing to grant a premajor extension. As a result, academic advisers sometimes granted extensions beyond the 105-credit limit for students with no declared major, even if their chance of being accepted to their major of choice may have been slight based on cumulative GPA and/or grades in prerequisite courses. In 2003, with increased institutional support, advisers became more proactive with students in discussing their choice of major. Advisers now deny requests for pre-major extensions in cases where the student stands little chance of admission to their preferred major.

Registration holds on students exceeding 210 credits

Beginning winter quarter 2003, all undergraduate students with 210 or more credits were informed that the University would prevent them from registering unless they filed an application to graduate at the end of spring or summer quarter, or filed a graduation plan approved by their college dean.

Increased communication with students about academic progress

From the inception of the satisfactory progress policies in 1987, the University communicated with students about declaring a major and graduating:

- Students with 90 credits who had yet to declare a major were advised that they must declare a major by the time they complete 105 credits or apply with an adviser for extended pre-major status

- Students with 105 credits were advised that a hold would be placed on their registration unless they declared a major or applied for extended pre-major status
- Students in excess of 210 credits were advised that they should complete their degree requirements and graduate

In autumn quarter 2003, the University increased communication with students about academic progress:

- Students with 165 credits were sent a message congratulating them on nearing graduation and reminding them to apply for graduation
- Students with 195 credits and no graduation application on file were advised that if they did not apply to graduate or file an approved graduation plan by the time they completed 210 credits a hold would be placed on future registration
- Those students with 210 credits and no graduation application or plan were warned that a hold would be placed on their registration immediately unless they applied to graduate within two quarters or filed a graduation plan approved by their college dean

B. Reinstatement of students dropped for low scholarship

Any student dropped from the university for low scholarship has the right to petition the University's Reinstatement Committee for readmission to the university. Prior to spring term of 2003, the Reinstatement Committee periodically readmitted students even after a second, third or even fourth experience of being dropped for low scholarship. In spring 2003, the committee adopted policies that deny reinstatement except under extraordinary circumstances. Presently, students dropped by the University are advised to take a one-year break from academic life or to enroll at a community college and reapply for reinstatement when they have proven their ability to be successful.²

² Even though University policy states that students on probation must achieve at least a 2.5 GPA each quarter on probation to avoid being dropped, many students were routinely reinstated if they achieved between 2.0 and 2.5. This practice has been discontinued. All of these students must now go through the reinstatement petition process.

Students who have been dropped for the first time and have less than 60 credits are usually not reinstated if it appears that they could complete the prerequisite courses for their intended major at a community college. Their chance of reinstatement improves if they wait out the year and present a good record from the community college.

Students who are dropped within 3 quarters of graduation must submit a detailed graduation plan approved by the departmental adviser along with their reinstatement petition. All students must submit an academic success contract as part of their petition. This contract could include any number of actions on the part of the student such as submitting a hardship withdrawal petition, attending Study Smarter workshops, reducing work hours, and reducing credit load.

The reinstatement of students previously dropped for low scholarship has become more difficult, especially if they have been dropped recently. While they may apply for reinstatement if they wait a year, their record and academic goals are examined closely and future reinstatements may not be granted.

V. Barriers to Completion of Degree Programs

Oversubscribed courses and high-demand degree programs are currently institutional barriers that delay some undergraduates' academic progress. As students seek access to these courses and programs, they often wait to register, accumulate credits in other fields, and occupy places in courses that students with other interests may seek. This section of the report reviews how these institutional barriers influence undergraduate academic progress at UW-Seattle and how the University addresses instances where student demand for courses and majors exceeds capacity.

A. Restricted access to courses

Many undergraduate programs at the University of Washington require structured sequences of courses that build on each other (for example, in science, engineering, and language majors) or a set of background courses that students must complete prior to entering advanced work in the major.³ When demand for these background courses exceeds capacity, access diminishes and becomes an obstacle to timely completion of degree programs. Students may experience delays of one or more quarters in enrolling in these required courses. As they wait, they may accumulate academic credits in areas unrelated to their primary fields of interest. Thus, inadequate space in prerequisite or "gateway" courses may significantly hinder students' progress to degree.

Among gateway courses at UW-Seattle, demand remains heavy for introductory biology, chemistry, mathematics, English composition, computer science, physics, and economics. With recent reductions in University budgets and the ensuing loss of permanent faculty and staff positions, the demand on capacity in these areas has significantly increased.

In recent years, the University's response to this pressure has relied heavily on the reallocation of temporary instructional funds. Administrators have redirected these funds to support additional teaching assistants and part-time instructors, enabling departments to increase class sizes and/or offer additional sections of high-demand lower-division courses. Further, temporary resources have also been used to expand and enhance academic advising to undergraduates.

The Task Force is currently reviewing other strategies for addressing pressure for specific courses. Among the strategies under consideration are:

- Restricting access to entry-level background courses to give priority to freshmen and sophomores

³ For professional programs (business, engineering, health sciences, architecture), the list of requirements can be extensive

- Improving methods for predicting student demand for courses
- Restricting the repetition of courses by students (to create additional spaces in high-demand prerequisite courses)

B. Restricted access to majors

Demand for some majors (e.g. professional programs such as architecture, business, engineering, and nursing; and some liberal education majors such as art, biology, and communication) may also exceed capacity. Despite some increased permanent support for some “high demand” programs in recent years, many departments must restrict access to their degree programs. For these programs, admission is competitive based on grades in prerequisite courses, preparation for the major and other factors.

Such restrictions on access impede progress to degree, particularly for those students who are not competitive for their preferred majors and who have not seriously considered alternative degree programs. Some students reapply (repeatedly) to their preferred major, spending up to one additional year completing courses that they believe will increase the likelihood of admission. Other students shift to alternative degree programs and, in some instances, must complete new prerequisites in order to gain entry.

Like oversubscribed gateway courses, demand for some majors at UW-Seattle has increased significantly in recent years. Student demand for art, biology, business, computer science, communication, psychology and economics exceeds current capacity. Other majors are similarly impacted. Unlike pressure on gateway courses, demand for majors results primarily from limited access to upper-division classes. Expanding enrollments in these majors is difficult because tenure-line, permanent faculty teach most of the courses at the upper-division level. Recent reductions in University budgets and the ensuing loss of permanent faculty and staff positions have exacerbated the problem.

Over the next few months, the Task Force will consider additional approaches to addressing demand for specific majors. Among the areas the Task Force will examine are:

- Improved assistance to sophomores and juniors selecting majors
- Course access pressures within high demand majors
- Permanent resource needs of majors in highest demand
- Improved mechanisms to direct students to majors and programs with additional capacity
- Improved methods for predicting demand for majors

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

This final section reviews conclusions about the academic progress of undergraduates enrolled at UW-Seattle and makes specific recommendations for continued study by the Task Force on the Academic Progress of Undergraduates.

First, the university's academic progress policies offer clear benchmarks for students completing undergraduate degrees. The credit limits for declaration of major and completion of baccalaureate degrees accommodate most students and degree programs. In previous years, the University has implemented the policies liberally, accommodating students whose programs of study exceed the academic credit limits or whose experiences result in academic withdrawal or probation. However, as demands for access to the University have increased and resources become seriously constrained, implementation of the policies has focused on assisting students to complete their degree programs in a timely manner and on restricting course withdrawal and reinstatement following academic dismissal from the University.

Second, only a small percentage of students come under the scope of policies governing academic progress, course withdrawal or academic probation. Most UW-Seattle students graduate within 1-2 quarters of reaching the established credit limits, few withdraw from classes excessively, and only a small percentage remains on academic probation for more than one quarter.

Typically, the students who exceed credit limits bring transfer credits (in the form of advance placement, Running Start, or other community college credits), pursue multiple degrees, or participate in opportunities for experiential learning (that enhance their education). Students of color are no more likely than Caucasians to experience delays in academic progress except the small percentage dropped for achieving below the minimum grade point average.

Because many students transferring from community colleges do not move directly into majors of interest, they occupy critical spaces in courses typically reserved for freshmen and sophomores. Similarly, many students with Running Start or advance placement credits expect that they will have access to the same courses (and other academic opportunities afforded entering freshmen with no transfer credits). Occupying these spaces creates demand on courses that ultimately impedes the academic progress of all students seeking prerequisite classes for entry to majors.

Third, other institutional forces exacerbate delays in undergraduates' academic progress. As permanent instructional budgets have diminished, demand pressure on critical gateway and requisite courses in fields of intense student interest has increased. Providing adequate access to these courses is proving increasingly difficult. Although the University has allocated temporary resources to address the problems of some critical lower-division courses, recent reductions in permanent faculty have significantly diminished instructional capacity in some courses and some degree programs. Restoration of these positions may prove necessary if the University is expected to increase access to its courses and degree programs.

Another institutional force that impedes academic progress, at least in terms of the University's current academic progress policies, is the changing nature of undergraduate education. As students participate increasingly in learning opportunities beyond the classroom such as international study, undergraduate research, internships, and community service, they accumulate credits beyond those required for graduation by their degree programs. These experiential learning programs significantly enhance the quality of student learning but may also increase student credit totals upon graduation.

Finally, as the nature of the undergraduate student population changes and becomes increasingly diverse, the University must insure that its policies are sensitive to differences in students' backgrounds, learning styles and access to economic resources. These differences may contribute heavily to students' academic success and their ability to take full advantage of resources available to assist them in completing their degree programs.

In the coming months, the University Task Force will finalize its recommendations on the academic progress of undergraduates. The recommendations will concentrate on the following institutional concerns:

- Strategies to enhance academic advising
- Mechanisms for more accurately projecting course demand
- Practices and/or structures that impede access to courses
- Strategies to enhance instructional capacity (permanent) in areas with longstanding student demand

As part of its work in developing these recommendations, the Task Force will specify measures for enhancing academic advising that offer students more assistance in academic planning along with guidance on the selection of undergraduate majors. An area of focus will be advising for students who transfer to the University of Washington with college credits – community college transfers and Running Start students – but no declared field of interest. Another area will be intensive advising for students who are extended pre-majors.

An equally important area is projecting student demand for critical gateway and requisite courses. The Task Force will recommend procedures for projecting course enrollments, based on the size of the student population and course-taking preferences, at least one year in advance. Further, the Task Force will develop recommendations, in consultation with the University's Enrollment Management Committee, for temporary steps that the central administration and individual colleges may take to ensure adequate allocation (or reallocation) of resources to meet student demand.

Because institutional practices and structures contribute to delays in degree programs by exacerbating demand pressures on courses and majors, the Task Force will also focus on the most serious and tractable of these practices. The University practices of allowing juniors and seniors to complete entry-level courses, of enabling students to repeat courses multiple times, and of affording students opportunities for multiple degrees and majors will be among the institutional practices examined.

Lastly, the Task Force will make recommendations about permanent institutional resource allocations and/or reallocations that align with and that diminish barriers to critical gateway courses and degree programs. These recommendations will be made in consultation with college administrators and department chairs in those fields experiencing the greatest demand.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON SATISFACTORY PROGRESS
POLICIES

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON HANDBOOK:
Volume Four, Part III, Chapter 20: Satisfactory Progress

Chapter 20**SATISFACTORY PROGRESS**

Students admitted to the University to pursue baccalaureate degrees are expected to make satisfactory progress toward the attainment of that degree, and are expected to enter a major and graduate after a reasonable number of credits.

A. By the time undergraduate students have completed 105 credits, they either must be accepted in their major or have their pre-major status extended temporarily by an adviser.

B. Students shall graduate with their first baccalaureate by the time they have completed 30 credits beyond the credits required for the first degree or concurrent degrees. Departmental advisers may grant extensions beyond the 30-credit limit.

C. Postbaccalaureate students are expected to be preparing for admission into a degree program, seeking an additional bachelor's degree, or working toward a certificate. Students admitted as "postbaccalaureate-undeclared" must declare a major by the time they have earned 30 credits beyond their last degree, and once a degree objective has been declared, must make progress toward that degree as evidenced by the courses they have completed satisfactorily. College advisers may grant extensions beyond the 30-credit limit.

D. Students who do not declare a major by the time they have earned 105 credits, or who have exceeded the graduation credit limits, or who have not been accepted in a major as fifth- year or postbaccalaureate students, will have a "hold" placed against registration, beginning the following quarter.

E. The Committee on Admissions and Academic Standards may terminate a student's enrollment if the student demonstrates lack of academic progress as evidenced by repeated course(s) or University withdrawals and cancellations. The student may be reinstated with the approval of the student's college and the Committee. EOP students may be reinstated in consultation with the Office of Minority Affairs.

APPENDIX II

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON ACADEMIC PROGRESS
COMMUNICATIONS

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR						
SATISFACTORY PROGRESS POLICY PROCESSING						
	90 EARNED CREDITS (Pre Majors)	105 EARNED CREDITS (Pre Majors)	165 EARNED & CURRENT QUARTER CREDITS	195 EARNED & CURRENT QUARTER CREDITS	>210 EARNED & CURRENT QUARTER CREDITS ¹	EXTENDED PREMAJOR EXPIRATION
QUARTER	EACH PROCESS IS RUN ON FRIDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF THE ACADEMIC QUARTER (NO SUMMER)					
AUTUMN	Email Notification	Email Notification Holds Placed	Email Notification	Email Notification	Email Notification & hold placed. Students with a degree application or graduation plan on file with a current or future expiration quarter/year are not included.	Registration Holds (Manual Process)
WINTER	Email Notification	Email Notification Holds Placed	Email Notification	Email Notification	Email Notification & hold placed. Students with a degree application or graduation plan on file with a current or future expiration quarter/year are not included.	Registration Holds (Manual Process)
SPRING	Email Notification	Email Notification Holds Placed	Email Notification	Email Notification	Email Notification & hold placed. Students with a degree application or graduation plan on file with a current or future expiration quarter/year are not included.	Registration Holds (Manual Process)

¹ STUDENTS WHOSE DEGREE QUARTER OR GRADUATION PLAN EXPIRATION DATE IS REACHED ARE NOT PERMITTED TO REGISTER FOR A FUTURE QUARTER (EXCEPT SUMMER).

APPENDIX III

ATTRIBUTES OF UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON STUDENTS
AFFECTED BY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICIESTable III-1: UW-Seattle Ratio of Registered to
Withdrawn Courses

Academic Year	Total Course Registration	Total Course Withdrawals	Percent of Total
1995-96	276,122	14,251	5.2%
1996-97	293,850	14,361	4.9%
1997-98	279,996	11,704	4.2%
1998-99	278,080	10,343	3.7%
1999-00	279,843	10,737	3.8%
2000-01	282,928	9,968	3.5%
2001-02	294,407	10,419	3.5%
2002-03	298,064	10,079	3.4%

Table III-2: UW-Seattle Graduating Seniors Who Have Dropped
More Than 25% of Their Credits Before Grading at Some Point

Academic Year	Number of Graduating Students Who Dropped 25% or More	Average GPA	Average Transfer Credits	Average Extension Credits (includes AP & Running Start)	Average Total Credits	Average GPA of all students
1998-99	1064	3.08	35.96	2.35	202.19	3.11
1999-00	985	3.11	39.37	2.33	202.79	3.12
2000-01	686	3.12	41.86	2.22	200.94	3.13
2001-02	422	3.16	45.72	2.86	200.74	3.14
2002-03	139	3.25	47.06	3.15	207.68	3.16

Table III-3: UW-Seattle Students on Probation for Two Consecutive Quarters

Spring Quarter	Students	Total Undergraduate Enrollment	Percent Of Total	Average Total Credits
1999	124	23,213	0.53%	76.9
2000	114	23,519	0.48%	67.1
2001	141	23,672	0.60%	70.9
2002	94	24,696	0.38%	74.2
2003	89	24,717	0.36%	80.4

Table III-4: UW-Seattle Graduating Students Who Have Been on Probation 2 or More Consecutive Quarters

Spring Quarter Non Running Start	Number of Students Graduating	Average Credits at Probation	Upon Graduation				
			GPA	UW Credits	Transfer	Extension	Total
1998	19	74.7	2.64	136.9	42.4	1.9	181.2
1999	17	80.2	2.48	155.9	37.8	1.8	195.5
2000	19	94.6	2.44	160.6	38.6	0.5	199.7
2001	14	130.8	2.25	135.9	49.5	2.1	187.5
2002	4	146.1	2.18	110.8	73.1	1.3	185.2
2003	4	160.8	2.07	159.8	23.3	7	190.1

Running Start

1998	1	138.0	2.53	126.0	79.0	0.0	205.0
1999	2	60.0	3.10	149.5	50.0	0.0	199.5
2000	3	82.3	2.94	163.0	53.0	1.7	217.7
2001	2	106.0	2.60	96.5	90.0	0.0	186.5
2002	2	131.5	2.24	128.5	62.5	0.0	191.0
2003	0	0.0					

Table III-5: UW-Seattle Graduates Who Bring Transfer or Extension Credits to the University

Academic Year	Number of Graduating Students	Average Number of UW Credits	Average Number of Transfer Credits	Average Number of Extension Credits (includes AP / IB)	Average Total Credits
1998 - 99	5804	147	46.2	2	195.2
1999 - 00	5760	169.9	45.2	2.3	195.4
2000 - 01	5898	170.5	42.9	2.6	195
2001 - 02	6024	172.4	44	2.7	196.7
2002 - 03	6288	173	42.2	2.6	197.7

Table III-6 Total Earned Credits For UW-Seattle Graduating Students by Transfer Status

Academic Year	Number of Graduating Students	Number With No Transfer Credits	Average Total Credits	Number with Transfer Credits	Average Total Credits
1998 - 99	5804	1957	186.3	3847	199.8
1999 - 00	5760	2074	185.5	3686	200.9
2000 - 01	5898	2221	186	3677	200.4
2001 - 02	6024	2167	189.9	3857	200.5
2002 - 03	6288	2301	190.4	3978	201.9

Table III-7: UW-Seattle High and Low Scholarship Students

Spring Quarter	Enrolled Undergraduates	Number of High Scholarship Students	High Scholarship* Students as Percent of All Undergraduates	Number of Low Scholarship Students	Low Scholarship** Students as Percent of Undergraduates
1999	23,214	5439	23.4%	646	2.8%
2000	23,521	5596	23.8%	648	2.8%
2001	23,675	4929	20.8%	582	2.5%
2002	24,699	6208	25.1%	632	2%
2003	24,717	6486	26.2%	415	1.7%

* High Scholarship Students—at least 12 graded credits for the quarter with a GPA of 3.50 for the quarter.

** Low Scholarship Students—less than a 2.00 GPA for the quarter.

Table III-8: UW-Seattle Students Graduating With a Single Degree and One Major

Academic Year	Number of Students	Average GPA	Average Total Credits	Number of students in Excess of 125%	Average GPA
1998 - 99	5187	3.22	191.1	436	3.19
1999 - 00	5121	3.24	191.4	477	3.24
2000 - 01	5216	3.24	190.5	455	3.27
2001 - 02	5270	3.23	192.2	475	3.23
2002 - 03	5394	3.23	192.7	500	3.29

Table III-9 UW-Seattle Students Graduating with a Single Degree and More Than One Major

Academic Year	Number of Students	Average GPA	Average Total Credits	Number of Students in Excess of 125%	Average GPA
1998 - 99	245	3.38	195.6	9	3.47
1999 - 00	269	3.39	195.5	10	3.35
2000 - 01	270	3.39	194.9	9	3.59
2001 - 02	301	3.35	194.4	8	3.34
2002 - 03	391	3.39	198	24	3.39

Table III-10: UW-Seattle Students Graduating With More Than One Degree

Academic Year	Number of Students	Average GPA	Average Total Credits	Number of Students in Excess of 125%	Average GPA
1998 - 99	372	3.38	252.9	77	3.36
1999 - 00	370	3.39	250.1	79	3.35
2000 - 01	412	3.41	251.1	83	3.37
2001 - 02	453	3.44	250.5	88	3.44
2002 - 03	503	3.44	251.5	99	3.42

Table III-11: UW-Seattle Graduating Students Who Bring Running Start Credits to the University

Academic Year	Number of Students	Average Transfer Credits (Including Running Start Credits)	Average Total Credits	Number in Excess of 125% of Minimum	Average Total Credits of Those in Excess of 125%
1998 - 99	255	46.3	197.7	17	235.6
1999 - 00	364	43.3	204.6	36	243.4
2000 - 01	414	44.5	204.9	50	247.5
2001 - 02	503	46.1	207.7	69	248.2
2002 - 03	639	44.3	210.8	85	254

Table III-12: UW-Seattle Running Start Students Who Withdraw from 25% or more of Credits Prior to the Grading Period

Spring Quarter	Total Students Who Withdraw Over 25%	Total With Running Start Who Withdraw Over 25%	Percent of Running Start Students Who Withdraw Over 25%
1999	1553	121	7.8%
2000	1621	160	9.9%
2001	1538	158	10.3%
2002	1566	173	11.0%
2003	1519	177	11.7%

Table III-13: UW-Seattle Students Graduating With Foreign Study Credits

Academic Year	Number of Students	Average Foreign Study Credits	Number of Students in Excess of 125%
1998-99	415	18.53	139
1999-00	460	19.17	122
2000-01	553	18.79	171
2001-02	603	19.06	193
2002-03	716	18.97	203

Table III-14 Racial and Ethnic Diversity of UW-Seattle Students at Risk

	Percent of all Undergraduates (Spring 2003)	Percent Dropped-Low Scholarship (Spring 2003)	Percent > 225 Credits (Spring 2003)	Percent on Probation More Than Once (Spring 2003)
Caucasian	53.9%	38.9%	49.9%	38.4%
Asian	23.9%	32.1%	25.2%	34.7%
Hawaiian /Pacific Islander	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	1.2%
Hispanic	3.6%	6.6%	4.6%	5.3%
Native American	1.0%	2.8%	2.0%	1.5%
African American	2.6%	7.6%	1.5%	8.4%
Other	11.3%	9.3%	15.0%	8.7%
Foreign	3.2%	2.1%	1.2%	1.8%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

APPENDIX IV

Data for 2002 and 2003 Addressing E2SSB 5135

Table IV-1a: UW-Seattle Students with 225 or More Credits

Autumn Quarter	Total Seniors	Seniors With 225 or more credits	Percent of Seniors With 225 or More Credits
2002	7583	318	4.2%
2003	7738	329	4.3%

Table IV-1b: UW-Seattle Students with 225 or More Credits

Winter Quarter	Total Seniors	Seniors With 225 or more credits	Percent of Seniors With 225 or More Credits
2002	8424	396	4.7%
2003	9373	429	4.6%

Table IV-1c: UW-Seattle Students with 225 or More Credits

Spring Quarter	Total Seniors	Seniors With 225 or more credits	Percent of Seniors With 225 or More Credits
2002	9001	511	5.7%
2003	9373	549	5.9%

Table IV-2: UW-Seattle Students Who Drop More Than 25% of Their Credits Before Grading

Academic Year	Total Enrolled *	Drop 25% or More	% Who Drop 25% of Credits	Average. GPA	Average Total Credits	Average GPA of all students
2001 - 02	76659	6030	7.9%	2.87	100.6	3.13
2002 - 03	76780	5674	7.4%	2.88	104.9	3.15

Table IV-3: UW-Seattle Students On Academic Probation Two or More Quarters

Academic Year	Total Students Enrolled *	Number of Students On Academic Probation	Percent of Students On Academic Probation
2001 - 02	76659	203	0.3%
2002 - 03	76780	213	0.3%

* Total students enrolled was obtained by adding together the total enrolled for autumn, winter and spring quarters. No adjustment has been made for duplication of students across the three quarters.