

**Label:** UB-52002

**Date introduced:** April 15, 2015

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**Committee:** Academic Affairs

**Draft:** Final

### **Support for Grade Replacement Policy**

**Whereas,** UH's current four and six year graduation rates are currently 16% and 48% respectively, and in the past were even lower; and

**Whereas,** these low graduation rates have had a strong negative effect on UH's academic rankings, funding, and public perception; and

**Whereas,** UH has been ranked 11<sup>th</sup> of the 16 most academically difficult universities in the United States, the only university in Texas to make the list; and

**Whereas,** high course difficulty has contributed a great deal to UH's low graduation rates; and

**Whereas,** earning a higher grade in a course demonstrates a higher degree of mastery in the material, even when retaken; and

**Whereas,** despite gaining more mastery of the material when retaking a course, it is currently impossible to have the first attempt of that course discounted from a student's GPA calculation, even if the student earned no credit on the first attempt; and

**Whereas,** students often drop out of UH as a result of poor performance that UH's current grade policies make impossible to recover from; and

**Whereas,** students struggling in a course are currently faced with the difficult decision of whether to drop the course and delay their graduation by a year or more, or risk the severe damage that a D or an F will cause to their cumulative GPAs; and

**Whereas,** most of UH's benchmark and competing universities that have higher rankings and higher graduation rates have a robust grade replacement policy, including the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University, Louisiana State University, the University of Central Florida, and Arizona State University; and

**Whereas**, even many of the most selective and highly-ranked universities in the US, including Vanderbilt University, Stanford University, and the University of California at Berkeley, have strong grade replacement policies; and

**Whereas**, not having a grade replacement policy puts UH graduates at an unfair disadvantage in the job market against graduates of these many competing universities that have implemented grade replacement; and

**Whereas**, the UH community, including faculty and administration, also harms itself in not having a grade replacement policy by reducing UH's rankings, state funding, and alumni employment and donation prospects; and

**Whereas**, a grade replacement policy will not devalue a UH degree, but will in fact add to its value through the resulting increase in graduation rates and job market competitiveness, as described above.

**Therefore be it enacted by the 52<sup>nd</sup> Administration of the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:**

That a new policy be enacted that enables students to petition to have their first attempt of a course attempted more than once removed from their cumulative GPA calculations.

**Further be it enacted**, that grade replacement petitions will apply to only the first attempt of any course a student attempts more than once, provided that the student is enrolled in or has previously completed the second attempt of the course.

**Further be it enacted**, that a student will be able to replace up to 12 hours of his or her coursework in this fashion.

**Further be it enacted**, that an indicator will be placed next to the grade of any replaced course on a student's transcript, indicating that it has been replaced.

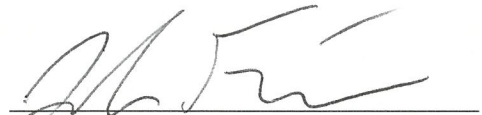
**Further be it enacted**, that in order to avoid potential complications, modification to a student's GPA calculation and earned credit hours resulting from a grade replacement petition he or she filed will not affect past cumulative GPA and earned credit calculations, but only calculations starting with the end of the semester in which the student files his or her petition.

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**Further be it enacted,** that grade replacement petitions will become available to all current and future UH students before November 1, 2015. Petitions filed by students set to graduate in Fall 2015 will be processed with first priority.

**Further be it enacted,** that to be able to process the large initial influx of grade replacement petition forms in a reasonable period of time, the petitioning process and form will be designed to be as simple and efficient as possible.

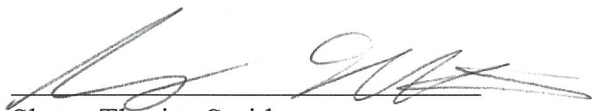


John Fields

Speaker of the Senate

University of Houston – Main Campus

Date of Senate Approval: 04-22-2015



Shaun Theriot-Smith

Student Body President

University of Houston – Main Campus

Date of President's Approval: 04-24-2015

**APPROVED**

Pursuant to Student Government Association Constitution Article IV, § 11, Clause 2, this legislation will be presented to the President of the University. Approval or disapproval by the President of the University, and their response, will be recorded in the Senate Journal on a additional signature attachments to be included with this legislation

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