3.21 Undergraduate Student Academic Forgiveness Program Policy: ADDENDUM

[Note: The information below would not be part of the official UNI policy but is provided here for further information and clarification. Comments relating to the information below will also be accepted and appreciated.]

Checklist

The below text is intended to serve as draft text for the form submitted requesting Academic Forgiveness, to further ensure students have an understanding of the implications of the request they are making.

Students considering pursuing Academic Forgiveness must be aware of the implications of being granted Academic Forgiveness.

In order to be eligible for Academic Forgiveness students must:

- Have prior enrollment, without graduation, as an undergraduate student at UNI.
- Be non-enrolled for four consecutive calendar years or longer.
- Have a university account free from holds.

I understand the following: (please initial/mark next to each)

- Academic Forgiveness will remove previously completed coursework from the GPA of the semester I select.
- Academic Forgiveness is for one academic semester.
- I will only be considered for Academic Forgiveness once during my academic career.
- Academic Forgiveness is irreversible and final.
- I have read the Academic Forgiveness policy.
- I must complete 12 credit hours in my re-enrollment within two calendar years.
- I will not be considered for a tuition refund.

To be considered for Academic Forgiveness, I have taken the following steps (in order):

1. Met with the academic advisor in the Office of Academic Advising responsible for assisting students with Academic Forgiveness.
2. Met with the Office of Financial Aid to understand any impact Academic Forgiveness may have on my aid eligibility.
3. Met with the academic advisor for my major/minor and understand the implications on my coursework.
4. Met with the record analyst in the Office of the Registrar responsible for assisting students with Academic Forgiveness.
FAQs

1. **What purpose does an Academic Forgiveness policy have?**
   Academic Forgiveness serves as an opportunity for a focused “restart” for a semester of coursework after a time away from the institution of four years or longer.

2. **How does an Academic Forgiveness policy differ from other policies and practices currently at UNI?**
   Academic forgiveness fills a void left by the Undergraduate Student Request process and students who are academically suspended from the institution.

   The Undergraduate Student Request process requires students to submit documentation of their extenuating circumstances and entails a process of consultation and due diligence in an adjudicated review. Not all students with a poor academic performance went through a documented extenuating circumstance.

   Students who are academically suspended from the University of Northern Iowa have the opportunity appeal to come back through the Committee on Admission, Readmission, and Retention. Admittance through this committee does not change any part of the students’ academic record, or provide them with any restart.

3. **How does the proposed UNI Academic Forgiveness policy differ from similar policies at other Regent’s institutions?**
   Both the University of Iowa and Iowa State University have forgiveness (or other similarly named) policies. Some of the common elements across policies include identification of a separation period, former student status, future GPA impact, and one time only application. UNI’s proposed policy utilizes an articulated common path of clearly specified qualifications (e.g., single semester of coursework; LAC coursework impacts) and outlines specific considerations unique to UNI practices and policies. The intent is to create a clear and common pathway of consideration and minimize layers of review if meeting eligibility requirements and given clear information of the policy impact on academic degree completion.

4. **Does an Academic Forgiveness Policy impact the academic integrity of our curriculum and programs at UNI?**
   The proposed academic forgiveness policy would not impact the permanent record of grades for the one semester of courses from an approved semester of forgiveness. Original grades will remain on the official transcript and a notation of academic forgiveness and the effective date noted. Students will still be required to meet the 120 hours required for graduation and the credit hours earned in a forgiveness semester will not be counted towards this total.

   Departments retain curricular decisions regarding courses in the forgiveness semester that satisfied departmental major or minor requirements. A successfully completed sequence course in the major or minor impacted by academic forgiveness (i.e. during the semester forgiveness is requested) must be approved for waiver or substitution by the department for the major/minor degree requirement. End of program requirements (e.g. student teaching or culminating field experience) may not be eligible for forgiveness, dependent on the policies established by the programs/departments.

   Academic forgiveness would not be considered in a semester in which a student has an Academic Ethics violation of level 3 or higher.
5. Why does the Academic Forgiveness proposed policy include a separation period of 4 years from the Institution? What happens if the student attended another institution during the time of separation from UNI?

A separation period of four years was identified as a period of time supporting maturation and/or focus supporting intention and informed decision-making for the returning student prior to return to UNI for degree completion. Other Regent’s institutions have identified similar separation periods (e.g. Iowa State, five years and University of Iowa College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, four years).

Students are eligible for Academic Forgiveness if they have completed at least one full-time semester as a UNI student and have met the separation period as well as the other eligibility requirements. Attendance at another institution does not preclude a student from forgiveness consideration. Students must, however, successfully complete a minimum of twelve hours within two calendar years following the forgiveness designation and complete their degree at UNI in order for Academic Forgiveness designation to remain in effect.

6. Why does the Academic Forgiveness proposed policy address a single semester of consideration versus a number of credit hours across semesters?

One semester of coursework was selected to support a process of determination of forgiveness eligibility that is both intentional and streamlined in order for a student to restart their academic career in a timely manner. All courses, regardless of grade, are applied in a semester of Academic Forgiveness. The complexity of other potential forgiveness considerations (e.g. packaging multiple courses across multiple semesters) would likely involve additional campus resources in the intake and additional advisement for students. With a more case-by-case versus common qualifications process, an adjudication or review process and resources would likely be needed to determine approval and or impact on the student’s degree completion with other academic university practices and policies, also impacting a decision timeline process.

7. What implications are there for Academic Advising for students for degree completion for students who apply for Academic Forgiveness?

Students seeking academic forgiveness are directed to start the process by meeting with an academic advisor from the Office of Academic Advising and then a representative of their major department to understand the implications for their specific academic record as well as to develop a plan towards degree completion.

8. Are there any implications for student academic planning for departments and academic programs resulting from the proposed Academic Forgiveness policy?

Departments or programs will be consulted by returning students who are considering application for Academic Forgiveness to determine the impact of the policy on their degree completion in the major (minor) area or program. Departmental/program decisions/judgment related to courses taken during a semester of intended Academic Forgiveness consideration might involve areas related to: (1) completed courses in the proposed forgiveness semester that are prerequisite classes to subsequent courses in the program (e.g., recency of coursework; original grade of prerequisite class and future coursework requiring the prerequisite class, etc.); (2) experiential-based courses identified in a proposed forgiveness semester (e.g. policies or practices regarding exit or specific field-based courses such as student teaching, culminating or other internships, etc.); (3) consistency and process for departmental/program review or advisement for Academic Forgiveness inquiries.

9. How would the application process and decisions for Academic Forgiveness be addressed?

The Office of the Registrar will undertake responsibility for the intake and recording of completed Academic Forgiveness applications.

The academic forgiveness policy was developed with the intention of being qualification driven rather than through an approval process, subject to one or more individual’s approval or an adjudicated review process. Informed process and impact information of the policy impact on an individual student’s academic
planning/program completion is afforded to the student in advance of the application. If the student meets the criteria, as outlined in the policy, the student will be approved for academic forgiveness.

Decisions regarding individual courses will be made in alignment with the policy and other university policies.

10. Does UNI respect the forgiveness policies from other institutions upon admission? If the Academic Forgiveness (or related policy) is noted on the transcript of the granting institution, UNI will honor it at Admissions. Typically grades are removed from the semesters affected, however, each school has their own policy regarding this.