March 29, 2004

TO: Fiona Liken, Director
    Curriculum Systems

FROM: Cheri Hoy
    Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Retention Requirement
    Undergraduate Major: Health Promotion and Education

Attached is a letter from Dr. David Hayes, Undergraduate Coordinator, Health Promotion and Behavior requesting an overall 2.7 GPA (as part of their entrance requirements) be maintained prior to admission to their final professional development courses. This request was denied earlier this year and you suggested he write an appeal for review by your Curriculum Committee. I have reviewed and support the request.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

CH:ct

Attachment
March 25, 2004

TO:        Fiona Liken
            Director, University Curriculum Systems

FROM:    David M. Hayes, Undergraduate Coordinator
           Department of Health Promotion and Behavior

SUBJECT: Retention Requirement
           Undergraduate Major: Health Promotion and Education

Our request:

That the overall 2.7 GPA (as part of our entrance requirement) be maintained/achieved prior to admission to our final professional development courses HPRB 3400 or 4400, and 5560 (internship) or 5460 (student teaching). This represents only 1 professional preparation course prior to a field placement for either of our two emphasis areas (school certification or community/worksite). Students would be well advised for other related coursework, if necessary, to continue movement toward graduation requirements prior to this professional sequence.

With approval, we would like to have this change occur concurrently with the recently approved entrance requirements to begin summer, 2004, if possible.

Justification:

The Department of Health Promotion and Behavior (HPRB) submitted a proposal for a change in entrance requirements for its undergraduate major (Health Promotion and Education) which was recently approved. In part, the entrance requirement included an overall GPA of 2.7.

A separate, but important related issue is the retention of students once accepted into the major. The HPRB department feels strongly that measures are taken to assure not only the better quality students at UGA who wish to major in health promotion and education have access to the major, but that only those who continue to perform well within the major be able to continue within the program. The HPRB department believes it should be a privilege earned and not a right to gain access to professional development courses within our major that demand rigor and valuable, limited instructional resources and field placement sites (labor intensive courses and professional experiences). Further, students who invest themselves in their professional development (as our program is a professional training program), best represent the department and the university during field placements, internships, and ultimately in the workplace. This
retention policy is an attempt by our department to increase the quality of professionals entering the field (in response to increased state and national trends toward increased standards in our professional preparation).

Most of our HPRB students maintain at least a 2.7 overall GPA and also tend to do quite well in their professional development classes—although, not all. Students should feel proud and competitive based on their demonstration of professional preparedness. The value of any degree is relative to the competitiveness of the selection and retention expectations. Students ultimately are in the position to rise to the challenges or not. Our current overall 2.5 GPA requirement prior to internships or student teaching has motivated students to “tow the line” in order to complete the program and to graduate in a timely fashion. That sense of “standard”, we believe, is healthy as one of a variety of benchmarks. **Increasing the GPA retention standard to at least equal to that of the entrance requirement reasonably supports our quality improvement efforts.**

The undergraduate program in HPRB is working hard to continually develop appropriate performance indicators within courses and field work experiences as expected by university and professional standards. Since our major is based within the competencies outlined by our profession, our plan is to assess and evaluate our students with increasing rigor. Although a GPA does not always best represent a student’s potential success within the field, it does in a general sense reflect the overall investment made toward one’s studies, etc. The HPRB department would like to have our students who meet our entrance requirement standards minimally maintain that level of commitment throughout our program. Holding this standard as a minimum helps to impress the importance of productivity and quality of work as important professional values required in the workplace. The university should value, welcome, and promote (as it often does) demanding undergraduate programs. In addition, the encouragement of the maintenance of higher GPA’s better ensures students who may wish to attend graduate school achieve this goal.

Other majors with retention requirements including GPA:

There are a variety of majors in departments across campus, particularly those of professional development, utilizing reasonable qualifiers to suggest their major was for the serious and professional preparation-oriented student. **Some** of the majors that I noted as having retention policies including the maintenance of minimally required GPA’s are:

- Communication Sciences and Disorders (2.75 entrance and maintenance)
- Criminal Justice (GPA requirement before internship)
- Early Childhood (GPA 2.75 and same for entrance to teacher ed (which is higher than the state minimum of 2.5 and maintain to move from one level to the next)
- English Education (GPA of 2.6 and must be maintained)
- Foreign Language Education (GPA of 2.6 must be maintained)
- Special Education (GPA part of retention with other qualifiers)

I noted at the time there were other majors with various retention clauses, but not specific to GPA. I did not list those here.
Please note that we are opting for the maintenance of the 2.7 overall GPA versus a letter grade standard per course to avoid issues of grade inflation, students pressuring faculty and instructors toward letter grade changes, etc. We feel the 2.7 maintenance provides a more overarching picture and more flexibility in grading outcomes without any one grade in a particular course weighing too heavily on continuation within the program.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this matter. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 542-4369 or dmhayes@uga.edu.