

SFU

## Senate &amp; Academic Services

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**MEMORANDUM**

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ATTENTION Senate

DATE January 16, 2023

FROM Holly Hendrigan, Chair  
Senate Policy Committee on  
Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries

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RE: President's and Dean's Honour Roll - Revised Terms of Reference – For Information Only

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At the November 21, 2022 Senate Policy Committee for Scholarships, Awards, and Bursaries meeting, the members approved revised terms of reference for the President's and Dean's Honour Roll, effective Fall 2023.



OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR  
Student Services

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**MEMORANDUM**

ATTENTION	SPCSAB	DATE	November 17, 2022
FROM	Steve Birnie & Dina Shafey Student Services		
RE:	Honour Roll Part Time Considerations		

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**Background:**

In 2019, the Registrar's Office (RO) was approached by a student who was registered with the Center for Accessible Learning (CAL). The student had a disability that prevented them from taking more than 9 units per term and their accommodation recognized that 9 units was the equivalent of full-time. This accommodation gave them access to other services on campus available to full-time students, but they noticed they were unable to receive an Honour Roll designation (the student had a very high CGPA) due to the unit requirement. The Registrar agreed to an exception for this case and tasked CAL and staff in the RO with looking to a potential long-term solution. This work slowed with the pandemic, but CAL raised concern that without taking a universal design approach, a solution would be extremely hard to find. The needs of CAL students vary from student to student and even term to term. Special rules for CAL students only would also create potential privacy issues. During this time, a UFV student also reached out to both the Registrar and CAL to challenge SFU on the way it handles Honour Roll for students with disabilities and those socio-economically marginalized (her letter is attached as an appendix with her permission).

In April 2022, a memo came to SPSCSAB outlining a series of potential universal design options for the committee's consideration. Two options in use at other institutions, the gated model and the hybrid model, were selected for further study and to be brought back to committee at a later date. These options are outlined below with a recommendation.

**Options for consideration:**

**1. Implement a Gated Model**

Like U of T, this model sets time and/or unit gates for recognition. U of T, for example, awards Honour Roll when students get to their 5th, 10th, 15th, or 20th degree credit. A system like this uses universal design principles that eliminate the need for creating special categories of student. At SFU, a model like this could be evaluated at 15, 30, 35, 60, units, etc. An analysis of historical data (See Table 1 below) shows that this wouldn't substantially increase the number of students being awarded the honour, but numbers do rise

with allowing high achieving part-time students the ability to be recognized. Numbers are also more evenly distributed across the academic year, a reflection of the fact most students enrolled in summer term courses take fewer than 12 units in that term, so do not qualify under the current rules. They would be likely, however, to break across a gate post.

**Table 1: Comparing current numbers to a gated model for Fall 2009 admits using 15 units as the gate posts**

Current Model Numbers (Admits from Fall 2009 over 7 years)				Gated Model Numbers (Admits from Fall 2009 over 7 years)			
Semester (Term)	Null	DEAN'S	UNIHON	Semester (Term)	Students Evaluated	Dean's Honour Roll	President's Honour Roll
1097	5,859			1097	5,859		
1101	5,351	59	12	1101	5,325	74	23
1104	4,906	57	13	1104	4,553	330	93
1107	4,228	346	82	1107	4,257	336	63
1111	4,029	337	79	1111	4,055	325	65
1114	4,062	53	21	1114	3,910	178	48
1117	3,562	302	88	1117	3,678	226	48
1121	3,366	275	83	1121	3,528	154	42
1124	3,264	64	19	1124	3,016	241	90
1127	2,803	297	81	1127	2,985	157	39
1131	2,633	249	98	1131	2,730	190	60
1134	2,561	65	17	1134	2,220	314	109
1137	2,173	191	62	1137	2,147	218	61
1141	1,889	155	51	1141	1,767	240	88
1144	1,436	29	8	1144	1,184	205	84
1147	1,119	67	18	1147	1,009	138	57
1151	840	39	11	1151	744	110	36
1154	530	12	4	1154	451	76	19
1157	418	16	4	1157	374	45	19
1161	302	14	4	1161	273	35	12
1164	210	1		1164	188	12	11

There are drawbacks to this model. The system is more complicated to understand, and when repeats or elective grade courses happen, it is harder for both students and advisors to find the gate posts. Students at SFU don't tend to take a course load that fits gates neatly so it will be less predictable. Systematically, it will be challenging to code, and so will most likely have to be a more manual process. Finally, as there is a strong desire at SFU to encourage higher course loads, a policy that appears to encourage/reward reductions will potentially face some scrutiny and resistance.

## 2. Implement a Hybrid Model

Like Western and Dalhousie, a hybrid model sets out different sets of requirements for "full-time" and "part-time" students. At Dalhousie, full-time students (those that take at least 9 units each term) can be placed on the Dean's List each term, whereas part-time students are

evaluated once at the end of each academic year (those with at least 9 units over the full academic year are considered and they must have earned a 3.7 in each term). Likewise at Western, part-time students have a unique unit threshold (gated, like the example above) that is different from the consideration for the full-time students.

Western's model is too complicated, combining multiple systems and student statuses. At SFU, a model like Dalhousie's really could easily be implemented. Full-time students\* would get evaluated for placement on the Dean's and President's exactly as is currently done. Part-time students+ would be evaluated at the end of each academic year if the student has completed at least 12 units over the course of that full academic year and have earned a GPA of at least 3.5 in each term.

\* Full-time defined, strictly for Honour Roll purposes, as students who take at least 12 units that are counted towards their GPA in at least 1 term in a calendar year.

+ Part-time defined, strictly for Honour Roll purposes, as students who do not take more than 11 units that are counter towards their GPA in any term in a calendar year.

A model like this is well supported by our 3-term system which allows part-time students ample opportunity to hit a minimum unit threshold (ex. 12 units over the year). It is also much less confusing as a policy than the gated model, and would require fewer changes to administrative systems. There is also less incentive for students to reduce course loads by keeping the current rules in place for those taking 12 units or more each term.

Unfortunately, the hybrid model is not as easily back tested, so there is no table to compare data. But by keeping the current rules and adding additional rules for part-time students, we can expect Fall term numbers to be identical, and higher numbers in Spring and Summer as the part-time students get evaluated.

### **Recommendation:**

We recommend the hybrid model for its strong adherence to universal design and inclusivity while simultaneously offering simplicity over the gated model. A hybrid model would mean no change for students who meet our current Honour Roll requirements, and therefore requires little to no change in systems, procedures, or advice. Adopting this model would simply add an additional qualifying check after the Summer term each year. Students with at least 12 units over the year, but no more than 11 units in any given term, will be considered. If the GPA in each term is a minimum of 3.50, they will get Dean's Honour Roll. If the GPA in each term is a minimum of 4.00, they will get President's Honour Roll. Students with summer term courses would have the award shown with the Summer term, while students without summer term courses would have the award shown on the Spring term. All the other regular rules (i.e. how the units need to count towards the GPA would still apply).

## Proposed Calendar Language:

### Dean's Honour Roll

A limited number of students will be admitted each term to the Dean's Honour Roll, mainly on the basis of excellent work completed in the previous term. This award will be shown on the student's permanent academic record. Admission to the Honour Roll requires that the student meet all of the following criteria:

- must have completed a minimum of 30 units\* at Simon Fraser University by the end of the term being evaluated
- must have completed at least 12 units which are counted toward the grade point average (GPA) in the term being evaluated
- must achieve a minimum term grade point average (TGPA) of 3.50 in the term being evaluated
- must not have received a grade of FD (failed, academic discipline) in any course in the term being evaluated.

**Students who take fewer than 12 units counted towards the grade point average (GPA) in each term over the course of an academic year (Fall – Summer) will be admitted to the Honour Roll on an annual basis provided the student has met all of the following criteria:**

- **must have completed a minimum of 30\* units at Simon Fraser University by the end of the academic year being evaluated**
- **must have completed at least 12 units which are counted toward the grade point average (GPA) in the academic year being evaluated**
- **must not have completed more than 11 units which are counted toward the grade point average (GPA) in any given term in the academic year being evaluated**
- **must achieve a minimum term grade point average (TGPA) of 3.50 in each term courses were completed in the academic year being evaluated**
- **must not have received a grade of FD (failed, academic discipline) in any course in the academic year being evaluated**

Students need not apply for admission to the Honour Roll. Admission is automatic for any student meeting all of these criteria. Faculty of Education students enrolled in the Professional Development Program (PDP) or the Professional Linking Program (PLP) and completing coursework to meet EDUC 404 requirements are not eligible for the Dean's Honour Roll program.

\*Courses where a student has received a P or CR grade will have those course units counted towards the completion of the minimum of 30 units at SFU.

## President's Honour Roll

A limited number of students will be admitted each term to the President's Honour Roll, mainly on the basis of excellent work completed in the previous term. This award will be shown on the student's permanent academic record. Admission to the Honour Roll requires that the student meet all of the following criteria:

- must have completed a minimum of 30 units\* at Simon Fraser University by the end of the term being evaluated
- must have completed at least 12 units which are counted toward the grade point average (GPA) in the term being evaluated
- must achieve a minimum term grade point average (TGPA) of 4.00 in the term being evaluated
- must not have received a grade of FD (failed, academic discipline) in any course in the term being evaluated

**Students who take fewer than 12 units counted towards the grade point average (GPA) in each term over the course of an academic year (Fall – Summer) will be admitted to the Honour Roll on an annual basis provided the student has met all of the following criteria:**

- **must have completed a minimum of 30\* units at Simon Fraser University by the end of the academic year being evaluated**
- **must have completed at least 12 units which are counted toward the grade point average (GPA) in the academic year being evaluated**
- **must not have completed more than 11 units which are counted toward the grade point average (GPA) in any given term in the academic year being evaluated**
- **must achieve a minimum term grade point average (TGPA) of 4.00 in each term courses were completed in the academic year being evaluated**
- **must not have received a grade of FD (failed, academic discipline) in any course in the academic year being evaluated**

Students need not apply for admission to the Honour Roll. Admission is automatic for any student meeting all of these criteria. Faculty of Education students enrolled in the Professional Development Program (PDP) or the Professional Linking Program (PLP) and completing coursework to meet EDUC 404 requirements are not eligible for the President's Honour Roll program.

\*Courses where a student has received a P or CR grade will have those course units counted towards the completion of the minimum of 30 units at SFU.