

## Resolving Repeat Issues at Mt. SAC





Bob Hughes, 1/16/2015

### Issue:

Mt. SAC has had an ongoing issue with incorrect GPA calculations for students who have repeated classes. AP 4225 states the following:

*Students will be allowed up to two substandard grades for the same course; however students will only be allowed to repeat the same course twice to alleviate substandard grades, for a maximum enrollment of three times. The previous grade and credit will be disregarded in computing the student's GPA each time the course is repeated, such that the highest grade will count toward the grade point average. The student's permanent academic record will be annotated such that all course work that has been taken and forgiven or repeated will remain legible, ensuring a true and complete academic history.*

In Banner, repeated courses are marked to be either 'Included' or 'Excluded' from the GPA calculation. Here is an example of this issue (from the SHACRSE screen in Banner):

Select	Term	Part of Term	Campus	Level	CRN	Subject	Course	Section	Hours	Grade	Grading Mode	Repeat	Course Title
	201310	1	MS	CR	10203	SOC	1	01	3.000	C	S	I	Sociology
	201220	1	MS	CR	21813	SOC	1	11	3.000	F	S	E	Sociology
	201140	1	MS	CR	40462	SOC	1	14	3.000	F	S	I	Sociology
													

In this case, the student took SOC 1 three times. The first two times the student received an 'F'. The third time, the student received a 'C'. However, the first 'F' grade is still marked with an 'I' in the 'Repeat' column which indicates that it is being considered in the GPA calculation for the student. It should be disregarded in order to be compliant with AP 4225. This student had attempted 87.5 units, passed 58.5 units and has a GPA incorrectly calculated at 2.30. By excluding the first 'F' grade, the student's GPA is corrected to a 2.42.

### History:

This issue was brought to IT's attention the summer of 2012. On 8/2/12, Antonio Bangloy opened a ticket with Ellucian to investigate the setup of Banner and the rules for repeat processing. Beverly Heasley worked with Ellucian rep Sara Corbisiero through August and September. Details from the case show that we tried several different configurations in Banner to resolve the issue, with no resolution. On October 1, 2012, IT delivered a list to A&R of all students admitted Summer 2009 and later who had two or more repeats of a course. As a result, A&R began an evaluation of 43 students who appeared to have an incorrect GPA based upon the issue above. An additional 12 students were reviewed by Financial Aid to determine if they may have improperly been placed on probation. On 10/22/12 we closed the ticket with Ellucian without receiving a programmatic solution. Ellucian could not diagnose a defect that was causing our issue, and could not provide a configuration change that would permanently address the situation.

### Current Issue:

Every time grades are posted, there is a possibility that some students who have successfully completed a class previously failed more than once would have an incorrect GPA. A query run on 1/14/15 shows 16 students in the database with a passing grade and a prior unsatisfactory grade in a repeated course impacting the student's GPA. An additional 91 students have multiple unsatisfactory grades in repeated courses with GPA impact without subsequent passing grades.

I have determined that given the complexity of GPA calculation and repeat rule process in Banner that creating a custom solution to correct this issue would be futile. The hours spent programming and testing the solution, along with maintaining a fix through all subsequent upgrades of the Banner Student module, would far outweigh the effort it would take for a staff member in A&R to review and correct a manual exception list each semester. It would also involve opportunity costs for the college; each hour spent researching, testing, and programming a fix that would be of no effect to 99.9% of the students and hinder progress on reducing the IT Project backlog (currently at 125 items).

A&R has requested that we hire a consultant to diagnose and correct this issue. Given the scope of the problem, this does not appear to be the most cost effective or prudent decision.