

### Proposal Regarding Honors at Commencement for Graduating Seniors

Currently, we count everything, right up to and including May Term prior to graduation. What we have found is that we have a very difficult time getting all of the grades needed to determine honors for every student, and so, because of that, cannot list them with honors, even though without the May Term grade they would have honors. We will often list them as August grads and then add the honors later when we receive the grades.

This happens simply because the deadline for getting the list of graduates and the list of honors to the printer for the Commencement Program is noon on Thursday prior to graduation. Many times it simply is not possible for a faculty member to get the grade in. How often does this happen? The number of students being missed is gradually increasing, and that is simply because now we average over 400 graduates every year. With only a few hours to process all of this, even with all four of us working on it, we often simply can't get it done by the deadline.

What we are proposing is already practiced at BVU and COE. At BVU, they determine honors GPA by April 15 regardless. At COE, they count May Term, but students only have to take two May Terms and most seniors do not take a May Term, so the issue is moot for them. Central counts spring term right up to graduation, but simply list students as graduating with honors, and not which honors.

What we are suggesting is that we simply not count May Term in determining honors for Commencement. We would still count that last May Term for total number of credits, and would request from faculty only notification by Wednesday of those who were not going to pass the May Term. We would then determine honors based upon the end of Spring and Mod 3 grades.

What if?

1. What if a transfer student will only earn 64 credits by counting May Term, and thus be eligible for honors? (answer: we can run easily a report early in the spring of all transfers who are in a position to graduate with honors and within 3 credits of earning 64 at Simpson College. We would then ask that specific faculty member for a grade for that student in that May Term. However, the number of students this would involve is typically 4 or 5. The majority of cases this involves are DAL students who do not take a May Term anyway and who might be taking a Mod 3 class, but we would still count Mod 3.)

2. What if a student is within a thousandth of a point of graduating with honors and with an "A" in May Term would graduate with honors? We would

consider that honors are determined by the end of Spring. If, after graduation and we are clearing the grads (something we do not do until the first week of June anyway) we would see that their honors would shift based upon the May Term grade, we would make the necessary shift in their records. If it added honors, or took away honors, we would make that change in their permanent records. Remember, we are only asking for determining honors for the Commencement Program, not their permanent records.

3. What if a student would fall below honors with a low May Term grade? We would follow the lead of other colleges and consider honors as awarded at the end of Spring, not May. If we discover a change in honors as we clear graduates...(see above) This is common procedure of those colleges that follow this practice.

Why this policy? Simple, with the ever increasing size of the graduating class, we are having to rethink how we prepare for Commencement. Simply put, the practices we are following now come from a time when we had 120 graduates, and the same number of employees to process graduation. We need to find another policy, not for graduating students, but for how we set up Commencement. The Commencement Program has never been a legal document of what a student has earned, it is a document that states what, at that time, a student has earned. This would not change.