

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. June Youatt, Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education
and Dean of Undergraduate Studies

FROM: Dr. Linda O. Stanford, Assistant Provost for Academic Services and
Registrar

RE: Request to Require a Grade-Point of 2.0 in RET 460 for the Bachelor of
Science Degree in Food Industry Management

For Transmittal to the University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP)

The request referenced above is being sent to you for action by the University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP).

UCAP Response Requested:

The Food Industry Management program is requesting a grade-point of 2.0 in RET 460. UCAP previously approved that students must achieve a grade of at least 2.0 or higher in each ABM and FIM course referenced under the requirements in 3. a., including MSC 351, and in all courses taken to fulfill requirements 3. b. and 3.d.

Please ask the UCAP to consider the request of the grade-point requirement in RET 460 referenced above at its meeting on March 30, 2006. Please mail the related materials referenced under the heading Attachments at the end of this memorandum to the members of the UCAP.

The academic program request referenced above will be included on the agenda for the April 20, 2006 meeting of Subcommittee B, University Committee on Curriculum (UCC). Requests that are approved by Subcommittee B on April 20 will be before the Full Committee, UCC, for action on April 27, 2006. Requests that are approved by the Full Committee on April 27 will be included in the September 2006, Report of the UCC to the Academic Council.

If you have any questions about this memorandum or the attached materials, please call me at 5-8420.

Thank you for your help.

Attachments:

1. Request for Changes in an Academic Program form dated November 7, 2005; Bachelor of Science Degree in Food Industry Management and attachments.

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**UNIVERSITY
CURRICULUM
and CATALOG**

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**2.0 Grade Policy in the Department of
Agricultural Economics
STATEMENT FOR UCAP**

- In 2000-2001, the faculty in the Department of Agricultural Economics formally requested that students in the Agribusiness Management (ABM) and Food Industry Management (FIM) majors must achieve a grade of 2.0 or higher in all core courses. This request was made and approved through the University system - including approvals at the College and University-level Curriculum Committees and the Academic Council.
- This change was requested for various reasons, including that demands of the profession, as addressed through industry recruiters, required a level of knowledge and mastery of skills and competencies (as evidenced by grades in core courses). Further, faculty teaching advanced courses, including our capstone courses, continuously voiced concerns that not all students were coming in with sufficient mastering of foundation materials. We could then extrapolate that if students were not always entering the advanced courses prepared, they were not entering the workforce prepared. Finally, we continued to see top companies, who recruit on campus, require minimum GPA's of 3.0 or higher in order to secure interviews. Based on these and other factors, it was our faculty assertion that a 2.0 grade requirement would serve as a motivator for students to perform better in core courses - and the trickle down affect would be a student body that was prepared for advanced courses, mastering the required skills and competencies, and, at graduation, more likely to be career ready.
- Since the 2.0 requirement has been in place, we have had the opportunity to conduct some analysis and show that the hoped-for trickle down affect has occurred. For example, prior to our 2.0 requirement as high as 8% of enrolled course grades for our ABM and FIM majors were less than a 2.0 - since the grade requirement, that percentage has declined to as low as 1.5% on various semesters. Further, we continue to hear from recruiters that our students are performing better in interviews, on internships, and in full-time positions.
- Finally, our department prides itself on excellence which we work to maintain by setting reasonable standards of compliance- standards which are not inconsistent with MSU graduation standards. We know, however, that some students struggle academically. So, in addition to setting a policy to try to motivate students to rise to a higher standard on their core courses, we also have provided services to assist students in achieving these expectations. In 2001, we hired an Industry Relations Coordinator to work with students on connecting with industry and improving their professional development skills to increase their competitiveness in the ever-challenging job market. We also hired a second academic advisor to provide more hands-on service and problem-solving capabilities for our student population.
- Additionally, we developed a Supportive Training to Enhance Performance (STEP) program to work with students who are struggling academically. We found that we were losing up to 25 students per semester because they were being recessed by the university. STEP was developed based on current research on effective retention programs for academically challenged students and best practices across the country. It is the only program of its kind that we are aware of on MSU's campus that is developed within an academic department for its students. The goal of STEP is to develop a customized

learning program for students based on their individual needs to improve students' test taking, time management, goal setting and studying skills as well as to provide the motivation and supportive environment to assist students in developing a more positive and productive self image. The goal of STEP is first to increase the likelihood that students will be successful in the classroom - but, second, and perhaps more importantly, that students will be successful in their career endeavors. Results for STEP participants include statistically significant increases in semester GPA and academic standing, and large increases in retention.

- In summary, we have had excellent success with our 2.0 grade requirement and we have backed that success up with services available to students who struggle to meet this, and overall University, requirements.
- We are requesting a change to our program that involves moving RET/FIM 460 from an elective to a required core course. To make this course consistent with our other core courses, we are requesting that this course be given the 2.0 grade minimum requirement (e.g., students must pass the course with a grade of 2.0 or higher).

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Request to change the requirements for the **Bachelor of Science** degree in **Food Industry Management** in the Department of Agricultural Economics as published on pages 119 and 120 of the 2005-2007 *Academic Programs*, to the following. The University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP) will consider this request at its March 30, 2006 meeting.

- a. Under the heading **Requirements for the Bachelor of Science Degree in Food Industry Management** make the following changes:

- (1) In item 2., change paragraph three to the following:

Students must achieve a grade of at least 2.0 or higher in each ABM and FIM course referenced in items 3. a. including Marketing and Supply Chain Management 351, Retailing 460, and in all courses taken to fulfill requirements 3. b. and 3. d.

- (2) In item 3. a. change the total credits from "38" to "42" and add the following course:

RET	460	Retail Information Systems	4
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- (3) Change item 3. c. to "One of the following courses (3 credits) and delete the following course:

RET	460	Retail Information Systems	4
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Effective Fall 2006.