

TO: LSU Law Center Faculty and Students

FROM: Lee Ann Wheelis Lockridge  
Interim Dean

DATE: April 24, 2020

RE: Scholarship Policy for Returning Students: Academic Year 2020–21  
Retaining and Restoring Scholarship Funding after Spring 2020  
Pass/No Credit Grading

In order to most equitably and appropriately balance the interests of our students with our duty to take care with the resources entrusted to us by the State and private donors, all in the context of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and myriad effects it has had on our returning students, the LSU Law Center is deferring certain scholarship retention and restoration decisions until after Fall 2020 grades are in, as further explained below. This deferral allows for those scholarship decisions to be made on a determination of cumulative GPA after the Fall 2020 semester for returning students who have merit-based scholarship support using the Law Center's standard policy. A full explanation follows.

On April 1, 2020, the Law Faculty voted to apply mandatory pass/fail grading to all courses for the Spring 2020 semester. This will be recorded on student transcripts as pass/no-credit (P/NC) grading in order to ensure no effect on GPAs in light of LSU's existing grading programs and the vote of the faculty, which was for no effect on student GPA to occur with either outcome. On April 3, 2020, the Law Faculty voted to defer ranking and cumulative GPA calculations until the end of the Fall 2020 semester—a consequence of a spring semester with P/NC grading. In light of these academic policy decisions, both made in the context of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and unavoidable changes to modes of Spring 2020 course instruction and examination, additional modifications to standard scholarship policy are in order.

When the Law Center's returning students, namely the current 1L and 2L classes, entered as first-year students in either August 2019 or August 2018, the scholarship policy for merit-based scholarships provided:

Recipients are required to maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.75 or higher to retain the full scholarship amount for the following academic year. For purposes of scholarship renewal, a student's cumulative GPA is determined at the end of the spring semester of each academic year. Thus, all scholarships awarded to entering first year students will be maintained in full for a minimum of two semesters if the student remains enrolled.

If a student does not achieve a 2.75 cumulative GPA at the end of the first year of law school, the scholarship will be renewed at one-half (50%) of the initial award amount for the second year of law school. Any student failing to meet the 2.75 cumulative GPA requirement at the end of the second year will have the award renewed at one-half for the third year of law school. If a student whose scholarship has been decreased at the end of the first year of law school achieves a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or higher at the end of the second year of law school, the scholarship will revert to its original, full amount for the third year of law school. It is LSU Law's policy to reduce, not revoke, conditional scholarships for failure to meet retention requirements. No student who remains enrolled in good standing will have his or her initial scholarship eliminated after the first year of law school.

As noted above, because there will be no numeric Spring 2020 grades as a result of the policy decision to use mandatory pass/no-credit grading in Spring 2020, determinations of whether rising 2L and 3L students with scholarships subject to the policy have met the 2.75 cumulative GPA threshold are being deferred until after Fall 2020 grades are in. This means scholarship retention and restoration will occur in very early January 2021—allowing both Summer 2020 grades (if any) and Fall 2020 grades to be considered in place of the absent Spring 2020 grades.

*In balancing the interests of students and as stewards of resources, the 2020-21 scholarship retention and restoration policy for returning students affected by Spring 2020 pass/no-credit grading is as follows:*

Rising 2L and 3L students (current 1L and 2L students) holding these scholarships will retain them in their current amounts for the Fall 2020 semester. Students who do not meet or exceed a cumulative 2.75 GPA at the end of the Fall 2020 semester will have their scholarships reduced *prospectively* beginning with the Spring 2021 semester. The LSU financial aid office will work with those students both before and after that time to address the contingency.

Rising 3L students (current 2Ls) who have previously had their scholarships reduced on the basis of their 1L grades will also have their cumulative GPAs reassessed after Fall 2020 grades are in. If they attain a 2.75 cumulative GPA in January 2021, their scholarships will be *retroactively* restored to cover the entire 2020-2021 academic year. The LSU financial aid office will work with those students on the details of that restoration.

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