

Undergraduate Degree Honors: Latin Honors

Proposal 1: 30 Local Units

Policy proposal presented to Academic Standards Committee

07-FEB-2014

Current Policy:

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION: DEAN'S LIST AND LATIN HONORS AT GRADUATION

Policy Number: 100503

URL: <https://policy.nau.edu/policy/policy.aspx?num=100503>

Summary of proposal:

Update the Undergraduate Latin Honors Degree Honor policy to create a clear and published eligibility standard for all students graduating from NAU by:

1. Changing the minimum number of units earned from enrollment at NAU to 30
2. Adding weighted average statement to policy explaining GPA threshold calculation for colleges with less than 300 graduates in an academic year
3. Calculating college-level GPA thresholds based on graduate data from the prior ten academic years
4. No longer excluding students with more than six units of 'F' grade

Rationale for why this new/changed academic policy is being proposed:

1. Set units required from NAU enrollment to 30:

- a. Current policy requires a student to have a minimum of 45 units of credit (units) from NAU enrollment before the student can be evaluated for Latin Honors. This 45 NAU enrollment unit minimum was established prior to NAU's development of distinct transfer agreements with Arizona community colleges for specialized majors that allow students to transfer 75 or more units. There are several 90/30 plans which require a minimum of 30 transfer units.
- b. Because NAU has actively advertised and recruited transfer students for via special agreement transfer plans, students have requested that they be considered for Latin Honors when they achieve the specified GPA thresholds.
- c. As of Fall 2013 there are 24 plans allowing more than 75 units of transfer credit to count toward degree requirements and 2,883 students currently enrolled in those plans. This specific population has been growing year over year.
- d. This policy change would allow students earning post-baccalaureate undergraduate degrees to be considered for Latin Honors.
- e. The table below shows the total number of undergraduate degrees awarded by year and the number of Latin Honors awarded based on current and proposed policy changes for the calendar years 2010, 2011, and 2012. Had the proposed policy been in place for the calendar years 2010, 2011, and 2012, there would have been an increase of 499 (4.4% of total degrees) student degrees awarded with Latin Honors.
- f. Lowering the minimum NAU enrollment unit requirement from 45 units to 30 units would establish one clear standard for all students and would be congruent with NAU's institutional policy requiring a 30 unit minimum of NAU credit for all undergraduate four-year degrees.

2. **Add weighted average statement to policy explaining GPA threshold calculation for colleges with less than 300 graduates in an academic year:**
 - a. In 2013, ASC voted to apply a weighted average GPA calculation for colleges not having the required number of graduates in the look back period to calculate the GPA thresholds. Adding this statement to the policy improves the policy's transparency as to the source of GPA thresholds for new colleges.

3. **Calculate and publish GPA thresholds based on performance of graduates from prior ten academic years**
 - a. Using cumulative GPA values from students who have graduated in the past ten academic years helps to reduce year to year variance in GPA thresholds and provides students with a constant standard for which to strive. Students are confused by the annual variations in GPA thresholds and are disappointed when the threshold changes their senior year and they fail to achieve Latin Honors due to as little as a .01 change in GPA from the previous year.

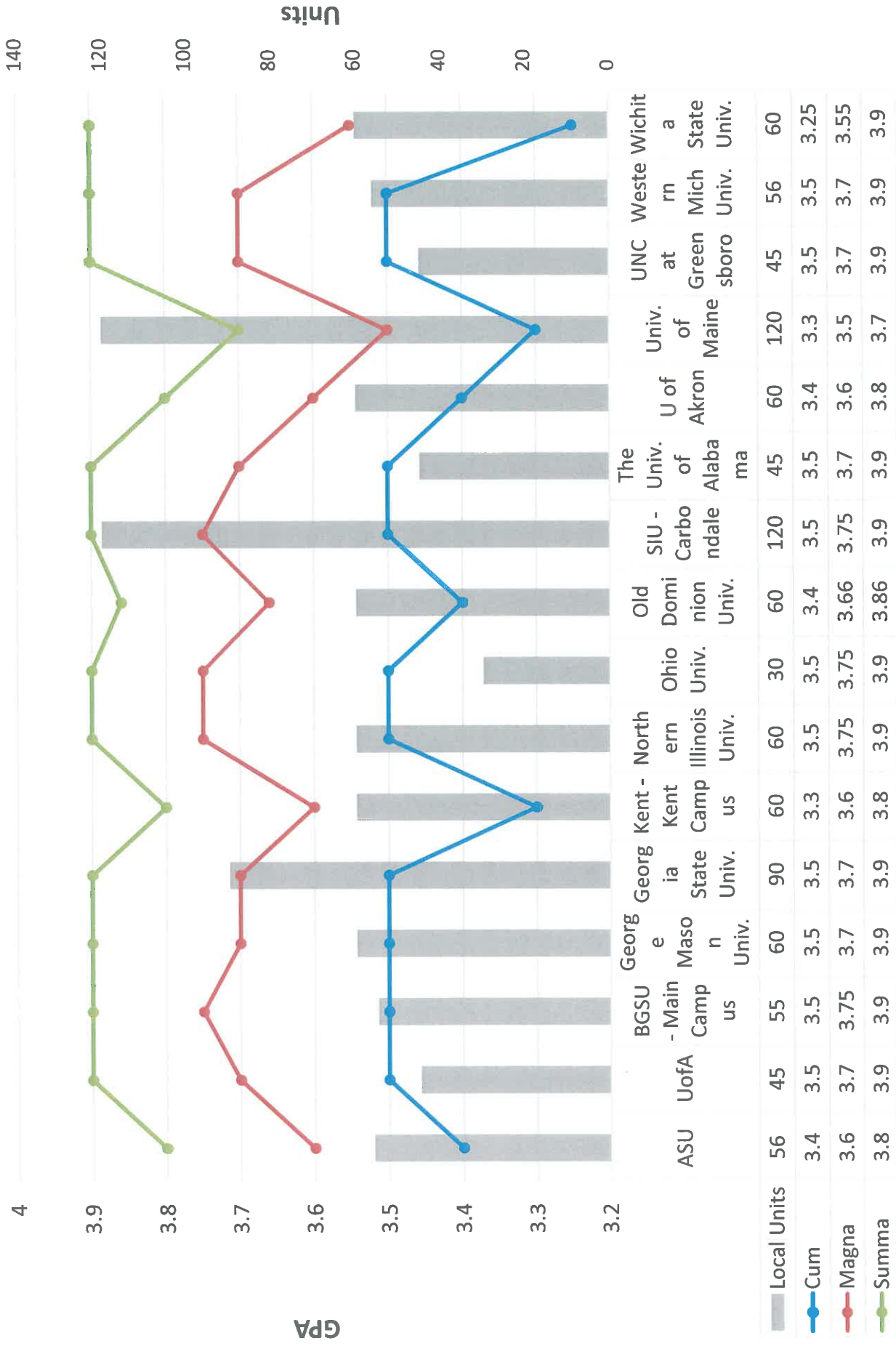
4. **Remove requirement excluding students with more than six units of 'F' grades**
 - a. Students who attend NAU for the majority of their academic career are at a disadvantage to students who transfer for their final semesters at NAU because grades and GPA values earned at external institutions are not included in the calculation of NAU GPA's. A first year student at NAU that has a bad first term but then changes majors and achieves a high GPA in every subsequent term would not be able to graduate with honors, but a transfer student in the same situation would graduate with honors.
 - b. The total number of students affected would be low - 10 out of 11,310 student degrees were excluded from Latin Honors due to having more than six units of 'F' grades between 2010 and 2012 - but the change in policy would have been of significant importance for those 10 individuals.

Comparison Group table.

NAU Latin Honors Peer Review: 04-OCT-2013

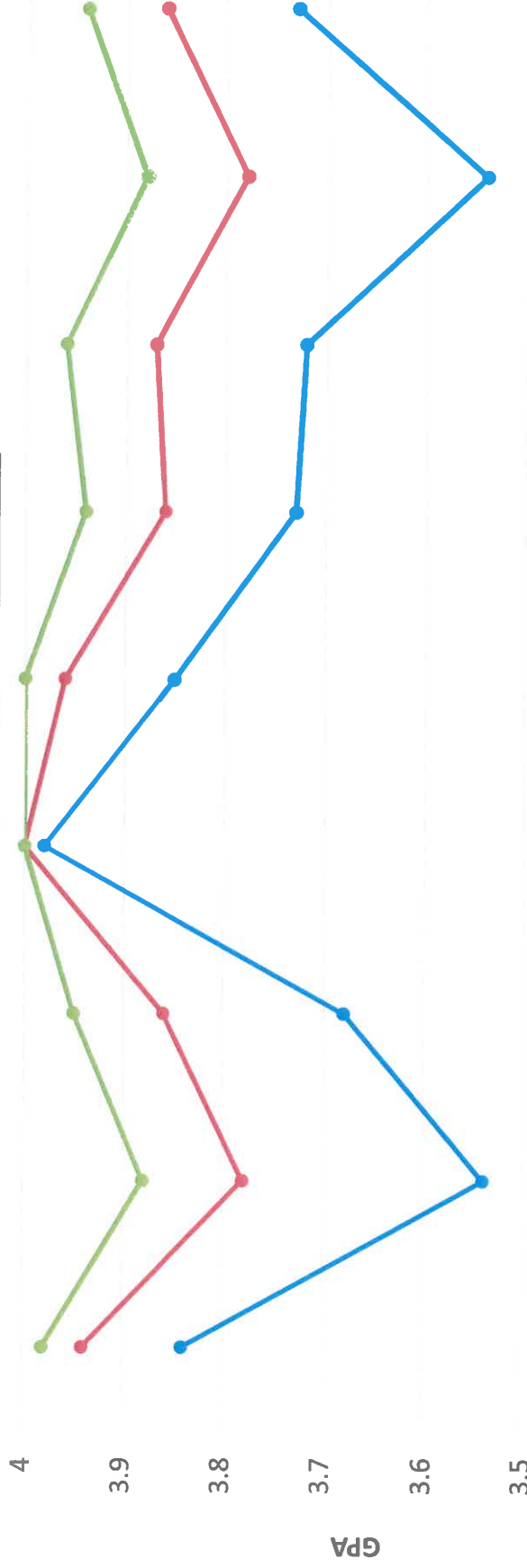
Institution	Cum Laude	Magna Cum Laude	Summa Cum Laude	Local Units Required	Changes per year?	Notes
NAU	Varies per college	Varies per college	Varies per college	45 credits	Yes - Each calendar year based on prior calendar year	GPA threshold varies at college/department/plan level
ASU	3.40 - 3.59	3.60 - 3.79	3.80 - 4.00	56 credits	No	56 unit is firm: No awards when less than 56 local units (no 90/30)
UofA	3.50 - 3.69	3.70 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	45 credits	No	
Bowling Green State University- Main Campus	3.50 - 3.74: 55 TLC	3.75 - 3.89: 83 TLC	3.90 - 4.00: 99 TLC	Varies on total letter-graded credits (TLC)	No	Sliding scale based on units to earn higher award
George Mason University	3.50 - 3.69	3.70 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	60 credits	No	
Georgia State University	3.50 - 3.69	3.70 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	90 credit	No	
Kent State University Kent Campus	3.30 - 3.59	3.60 - 3.79	3.80 - 4.00	60 credits	No	
Northern Illinois University	3.50 - 3.74	3.75 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	60 credits	No	
Ohio University-Main Campus	3.50 - 3.74	3.75 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	48 quarter hours/30 semester hours	No	
Old Dominion University	3.40 - 3.65	3.66 - 3.85	3.86 - 4.00	60 credits	No	
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	3.50 - 3.74	3.75 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	120 semester hours	No	
The University of Alabama	3.50 - 3.69	3.70 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	45 semester hours	No	
University of Akron Main Campus	3.40 - 3.59	3.60 - 3.79	3.80 - 4.00	60 credits	No	
University of Maine	3.30 - 3.49	3.50 - 3.69	3.70 - 4.00	120 credits	No	
University of Nevada-Las Vegas	Varies per college	Varies per college	Varies per college	60 credits	Yes - Each academic year based on prior two academic years	GPA threshold varies at college level
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	3.50 - 3.69	3.70 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	45 hours of work at UNCG	No	Earned the requisite grade point average as well
Western Michigan University	3.50 - 3.69	3.70 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	56 semester hours of credit	No	
Wichita State University	3.25 - 3.54	3.55 - 3.89	3.90 - 4.00	60 credits	No	

NAU Peer Group - GPA Thresholds by Institution



NAU and UNLV college-level GPA thresholds shown on the following pages.

NAU - GPA Thresholds by College - 2013



NAU: 45 Local Units Minimum

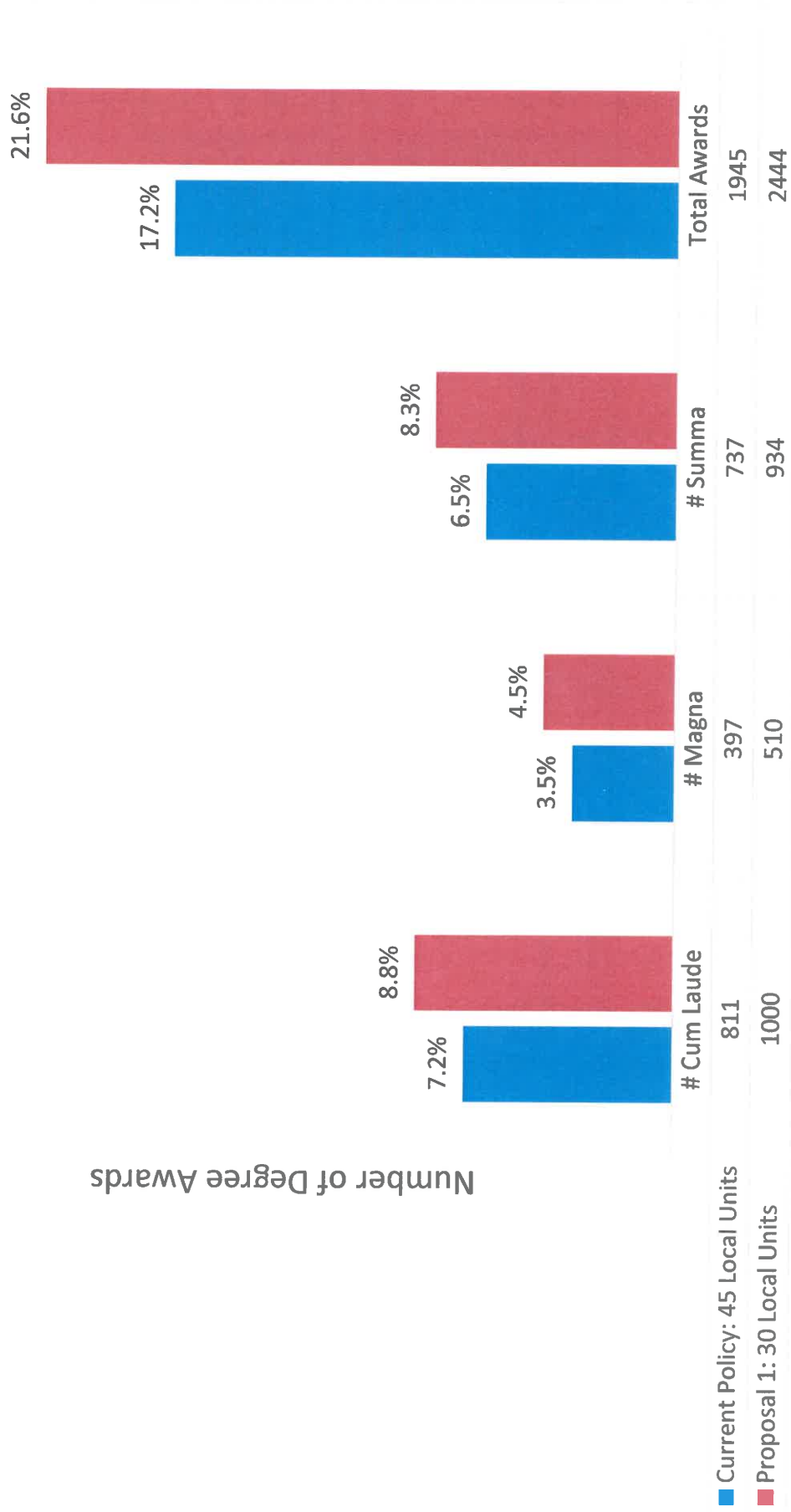
UNLV - GPA Thresholds by College - 2013



UNLV: 60 Local Units Minimum

Degree Awards by Type and Policy

Values are based on the 11,310 degrees awarded between 2010 and 2012



Current Policy: 45 Local Units

Year	Cum Laude		Magna Cum Laude		Summa Cum Laude		Total Awards		Total Degrees
	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	
2010	252	7.3%	117	3.4%	238	6.9%	607	17.5%	3461
2011	259	7.0%	143	3.9%	244	6.6%	646	17.4%	3707
2012	300	7.2%	137	3.3%	255	6.2%	692	16.7%	4142
Total Current Policy	811	7.2%	397	3.5%	737	6.5%	1945	17.2%	11310

Proposal 1: 30 Local Units

Year	Cum Laude		Magna Cum Laude		Summa Cum Laude		Total Awards		Total Degrees
	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	
2010	291	8.4%	145	4.2%	320	9.2%	756	21.8%	3461
2011	332	9.0%	187	5.0%	302	8.1%	821	22.1%	3707
2012	377	9.1%	178	4.3%	312	7.5%	867	20.9%	4142
Total Proposal 1	1000	8.8%	510	4.5%	934	8.3%	2444	21.6%	11310

Proposal 1 vs. Current Policy

Year	Cum Laude		Magna Cum Laude		Summa Cum Laude		Total Awards		Total Degrees
	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	# Awards	% of Total Degrees	
Total Current Policy	811	7.2%	397	3.5%	737	6.5%	1945	17.2%	11310
Total Proposal 1	1000	8.8%	510	4.5%	934	8.3%	2444	21.6%	11310
Change	189	1.7%	113	1.0%	197	1.7%	499	4.4%	11310

Stakeholders, groups or individuals that have been part of the development of this proposal.

- Advisors
- Extended Campuses
- Provost's Office
- Registrar's Office
- Students in 90/30 and other plans allowing transfer credit in excess of 75 units

Contact information:

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Current policy with proposed changes:

Latin Honors

~~When~~ Baccalaureate Latin Honors are designated on commencement programs, diplomas, and transcripts ~~they~~ to recognize outstanding academic achievement by graduating students in relation to their peers' achievement.

Baccalaureate Latin Honors are granted to undergraduate candidates who:

- Successfully complete 45-30 or more units of credit semester hours of earned from enrollment resident work at Northern Arizona University; and
- Have an exemplary grade point average (GPA) meeting the GPA thresholds set for the college owning the student's primary plan for their degree. with no more than six semester units of failing grades for the entire Northern Arizona University undergraduate record, regardless of whether the failing grades were unrepeated, repeated, replaced, or averaged.
- ~~Although failing grades may be repeated for grade replacement or grade averaging, the original "F" grades are still included for purposes of the policy. (Repeating a course in which an "F" grade was earned does not eliminate the "F" grade from inclusion in determining Baccalaureate Honors.)~~

Baccalaureate Honors designations that appear beside student names in commencement programs are ~~tentative-provisional~~ until all final grades are reported and the student's degree is conferred.

General Procedure

Appropriate GPA thresholds are specific to each ~~individual~~ college as determined on a percentage basis (top 5%, 10%, and 20%). These GPA thresholds will be calculated ~~for each year~~ using data from the preceding ten academic years. For colleges with fewer than 300 graduates, a weighted average of all college Latin Honors GPA thresholds will be used to determine the Latin Honors GPA threshold.

~~As an example, for students graduating in Spring 2011, Summer 2011, Fall 2011 and Winter 2011 terms, the thresholds will be calculated using data from the previous year: Spring-Fall 2010, Summer 2010, Fall 2010, and Winter 2010. In subsequent years, the same procedure will be used, with the data advanced by one year. For each graduation period (i.e., Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter), "Latin" honors are awarded based on these guidelines:~~

The calculated GPA thresholds for each college will be published on the Office of the Registrar's website.

- *Summa Cum Laude* will be awarded to candidates whose cumulative grade point average meets or exceeds the 5% threshold for their college.
 - Translated from the Latin, *Summa Cum Laude* means: "With Highest Praise" - and is pronounced: "soo muh koom loud deyh."
- *Magna Cum Laude* will be awarded to candidates whose cumulative grade point average meets or exceeds the 10% threshold for their college (but not the 5% threshold).
 - Translated from the Latin, *Magna Cum Laude* means: "With Great Praise" - and is pronounced: "mag nuh koom loud deyh."
- *Cum Laude* will be awarded to candidates whose cumulative grade point average meets or exceeds the 20% threshold for their college (but not the 10% threshold).
 - Translated from the Latin, *Cum Laude* means: "With Praise" - and is pronounced: "koom loud deyh."