

FACULTY MEETING
April 9, 2010

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC STANDING
MOTION 1 - Academic Honors Criteria

Motion:

CAS moves that the College Honors criteria be modified and moves that the Skidmore College Catalog be amended as follows:

Old Language:

College Honors: Seniors with distinguished academic records may graduate *cum laude* (3.40–3.66 GPA), *magna cum laude* (3.67–3.79 GPA), or *summa cum laude* (3.80–4.00 GPA) upon the recommendation of the Committee on Academic Standing and with the approval of the faculty.

New Language:

College Honors: Seniors with distinguished academic records may graduate *cum laude* (3.650-3.749 GPA), *magna cum laude* (3.750–3.899 GPA), or *summa cum laude* (3.90–4.00 GPA) upon the recommendation of the Committee on Academic Standing and with the approval of the faculty.

Rationale:

In 1992 following the faculty approval of the current College Honors criteria, 19.4% of graduates earned Latin Honors. Over time this percentage has increased to a high of 50.2% in 2009. As promised at the May 2009 faculty meeting, CAS has reviewed the College Honors criteria. The proposed revisions to the GPA standards restore the distinction to a Skidmore Degree with Honors. Data for the past three years indicates that using the proposed standards cited above, approximately 20% of graduates would have earned honors with the new criteria (8.6% *cum laude*, 9.3% *magna cum laude*, and 2.0% *summa cum laude*).

CAS discussed using percentiles to determine honors. Our peer institutions do not seem to favor one criterion over the other. CAS determined that the GPA standards were more in-line with Skidmore standards for other honorary awards which are also determined by GPA: Periclean Honor Society, Honors Forum, and Departmental Honors.

CAS discussed the GPA standard for Departmental or Program Honors. The percentage of graduates receiving Departmental Honors has not seen as much inflation as the College Honors values--29.3% of graduates earned Departmental or Program Honors in 2009 compared to 27.0% in 1994. In addition to the 3.5 GPA, most departments and programs have additional internal criteria. For these reasons, CAS does not recommend a change to the Departmental or Program Honors GPA criterion. However, since CAS discourages departments from altering their own GPA standards, CAS would be willing to entertain modifying the Departmental or Program Honors GPA criterion should this be the desire of the faculty.

Timeline: These changes would be effective beginning with the Class of 2014.