TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: Committee on Instruction and Curriculum (CIC)

SUBJECT: Academic Renewal Policy

ACTION REQUESTED: Approval by the Senate of the Following Changes; effective Fall 2006:

1. A student may use academic renewal for up to 20 units of coursework.
2. Only grades of D+, D, F and WU qualify for academic renewal. If a student repeats a course in which the grade was C- or better, the grade will be averaged into the GPA.
3. A course may be repeated only once for academic renewal. If a student repeats the course more than once, the grades from all subsequent attempts will be averaged into the GPA.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
On April 20, 2004, in the context of a CSU system-wide review of policies under the rubric “Facilitating Graduation,” the Executive Committee asked CIC to consider changes to our academic renewal policies. “Academic renewal” means that when a student repeats a course, earlier attempts are ignored in the calculation of the G.P.A. even though all grades remain on the student’s record.

03-04 CIC appointed an ad hoc subcommittee for the purpose of reviewing our existing academic renewal policy, consisting of a faculty member, an administrator and an undergraduate student, all of whom were members of 03-04 CIC. The subcommittee researched academic renewal policies at other CSU campuses (where the term “grade forgiveness” is sometimes used to mean the same thing). Although the subcommittee reported back promptly, there was insufficient time to complete the assignment in Spring, so it was postponed until Fall Quarter. 04-05 CIC discussed the matter at its meetings of November 1 and November 15. Senator Frank Lowenthal was invited to the meeting on November 15, at the request of the original referral letter from Julia Norton, the 2003-04 Senate Chair; he participated in the committee’s deliberations.

The changes proposed are very similar to those recommended by the ad hoc subcommittee. The only substantive change made by CIC to the subcommittee recommendations was the deletion of the grade C- from the list of renewable grades in the second recommendation, by a vote of 5-1-2 at the November 15 meeting. C- was
viewed as an acceptable grade, since students may receive credit for it if they take a course on a CR/NC basis.

The proposal represents a significant tightening of existing policy, as shown below.

1. A student may use academic renewal for up to 20 units of coursework.  
   *Current policy sets no limit.*

2. Only grades of D+, D, F and WU qualify for academic renewal. If a student repeats a course in which the grade was C- or better, the grade will be averaged into the GPA.  
   *Current policy automatically qualifies courses with grades of D+ or below for academic renewal. Students must petition to qualify courses with grades of C- or above for academic renewal.*

3. A course may be repeated only once for academic renewal. If a student repeats the course more than once, the grades from all subsequent attempts will be averaged into the GPA.  
   *Current policy sets no limit on the number of times a course may be repeated for academic renewal.*

The proposed changes would make CSUH’s academic renewal policies very similar to those at most other CSU campuses. Our existing policies were far more liberal than those at other campuses.

The rationale for the changes is that, in this time of tight budgets, it is prudent to limit the number of seats in a class filled by students who are repeating the course at the expense of students who are taking the course for the first time. The changes would also send the message to students that we expect more consistent high performance, by making it more difficult to raise the GPA after poor performance.

At the November 15 meeting, CIC considered reducing the number of units a student may use for academic renewal to 10 rather than 20 (see the first recommendation), but defeated this idea by a vote of 1-7-0. The lower limit would have given CSUH a far stricter academic renewal policy than any other CSU campus we surveyed and might have unduly impeded students in achieving their academic goals.

CIC approved the over-all proposal at its November 15 meeting by a vote of 8-0-0.