Academic Forgiveness is designed to allow students who have gotten off to a bad start a chance to get poor grades out of their grade point average. Nationally, Academic Forgiveness policies arose out of the observation that students who had done badly could give themselves a fresh start simply by transferring to another college. Such a student could start with a new grade point average, but still retain credit for all grades of "C" or better under the transfer policies of most colleges. So the original idea behind academic forgiveness policy was to allow the student what amounted to an internal transfer.

A closely related issue has been addressed by many schools. In the mid-seventies, Bergen adopted a course repeat policy that allowed a student to retake a course and have only the higher grade count in the grade point average. However, while this helps many students, it completely misses the needs of students who initially attempt a major program that proves too difficult. These students, who typically end up dismissed for poor academic performance in their first program, often reapply in another program and frequently do quite well in the new program. However, the grades from the original program attempt stay in their grade point average because it makes little sense to repeat courses that are not required for the student's new program.

Some schools have addressed this issue as a part of the academic forgiveness policy. Typically, a policy states that "grades in courses required by the student's former program that are not required by the student's new program will not be figured in the student's grade point average."

Counselors and faculty advisors have encountered many students for whom the Academic Forgiveness Policy would be a beneficial except for the ten year waiting period. In surveying other colleges' policies, it became clear that most require a three to five year waiting period.

In light of this, we recommend that Bergen's present Academic Forgiveness Policy be replaced by the following:

The Academic Standing Committee unanimously recommends that the following Academic Forgiveness Policy replace the existing policy. The Academic Standing Committee is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

General Provisions

1. The Academic Forgiveness Policy contains two options: OPTION I-Academic Forgiveness based upon past academic performance and OPTION II-Academic Forgiveness based upon change of curriculum.
2. A student may request Academic Forgiveness once under the academic performance option and/or once under the change of curriculum option.
3. If a student requests forgiveness for a course or courses in which she has earned a grade of "D", the credits earned in any such course or courses will be removed from the total credits earned, and the student will receive no credit for the course.
Specific Provisions
Academic Forgiveness: Past Performance
OPTION I

1. After three consecutive years of non-attendance, a student may request Academic Forgiveness based upon past academic performance.
2. The request will be reviewed after the student has completed at least one semester. The student must complete 9 credits and earn a GPA of 2.5 for her request to be approved.
3. When the student's request is approved, grades of "F", "E", "R" and optionally "D" for the courses from the prior attendance period will be removed from the student's Grade Point Average. However, the courses will remain on the students official transcript designated with a special code for Academic Forgiveness.

Specific Provisions
Academic Forgiveness: Change of Curriculum
OPTION II

1. A student may request Academic Forgiveness based upon a change of curriculum at any time after matriculation and after credits have been attempted.
2. If a student's request is approved, grades of "F", "E", "R" and optionally "D" in courses that were required by her former program but are not required by her new program will be removed from the student's Grade Point Average. However, the courses will remain on the student's official transcript designated with a special code for Academic Forgiveness.