



Overview of Senate Actions, 2021-2022

Below is a summary of actions taken by the University Senate that have ramifications for BSOS faculty, staff, and students.

Adoption of an Interim Policy on Criminal Background Checks

Change: In April, the Senate approved a revised version of an interim Policy on Criminal Background Checks. The policy requires background checks for most new faculty and staff hires who have been extended an offer of employment conditional on passing the background check. Current UMD employees who are changing positions, or who have been employed at UMD within the past 18 months, will not undergo a check, nor will hourly student workers or graduate assistants. Checks are conducted by a third-party vendor, and results are reviewed by University Human Resources, who communicates to the hiring official whether or not the hire can proceed. Finalists have the opportunity to dispute the accuracy or completeness of the background check and provide additional information for the university to consider. Decisions on whether or not a particular conviction would prevent employment must take into account the specific duties and responsibilities of the position in question.

Background: In September 2021, the president implemented the Policy on Criminal Background Checks on an interim basis pending Senate review. The Senate's Faculty and Staff Affairs Committees were charged with reviewing the policy and recommending revisions or other administrative actions.

More Detail: [Senate Document #21-22-21](#)
[Minutes from the 4.26.22 Senate Meeting](#)

Change to the Minimum Grade Necessary for a "Pass" Notation

Change: In September 2021, the Senate approved a change in the minimum grade equivalent associated with a "Pass" notation from a D- to a C-.

Background: Students have the option of selecting the pass/fail grading option in certain elective courses within their program. The selection must be made by the end of the schedule adjustment period. Students using this option complete all assignments and their work in the course is assigned a letter grade using normal grading procedures. Any grade of C- or better (previously D- or better) is converted into a "P" (pass); grades of D+, D, D-, and F remain as given.

More Detail: [Senate Document #20-21-38](#)
[Minutes from the 9.8.21 Senate Meeting](#)

Creation of a Policy on Equitable Access to Scholarly Articles

Change: In April, the Senate approved the adoption of a new Policy for Equitable Access to Scholarly Articles Authored by University Faculty. The policy is intended to “remove price and permission barriers related to discoverability, access, and cost for anyone seeking access to UMD’s peer-reviewed scholarly articles.” It does so by automatically granting the university a nonexclusive license to scholarly articles published by faculty members.

Background: In April 2020, the University Library Council formed the Publishing, Access, and Contract Terms (UMD PACT) working group, which was tasked with developing a framework for expanding access to scholarship produced by UMD faculty.

More Detail: [UMD PACT website](#)
[Senate Document #21-22-31](#)
[Minutes from the 4.6.22 Senate Meeting](#)

Creation of a University Privacy Policy

Change: In December 2021, the Senate approved the adoption of a new Privacy Policy. The policy establishes principles regarding the collection and use of personally identifiable information, principles that address respect, equity, transparency, and responsibility, and that limit data collection and usage to information that “is relevant to accomplish clearly defined outcomes that support the University’s mission” ([IV.A.5](#)). The policy also establishes and defines an “Expectation of Privacy,” and indicates how policy violations will be addressed.

Background: In fall 2020, the Senate received a proposal calling for the creation of a university-level privacy policy, and noting that the lack of a formal policy could complicate the institution’s ability to meet regulatory compliance obligations and potentially threaten its ability to conduct sponsored research. The IT Council was charged with consulting with a range of stakeholders and subject-matter experts and proposing a policy.

More Detail: [Senate Document #20-21-15](#)
[Minutes from the 12.9.21 Senate Meeting](#)

Upcoming Changes to the General Education Diversity Requirement

Change: In March, the Senate approved a series of principles and recommendations associated with the Gen-Ed diversity requirement. These recommendations will guide the work of a Diversity Education Task Force, which will develop a final set of overarching changes for Senate approval in the coming year(s). General changes will include:

- The Understanding Plural Societies category would be relabeled Understanding Structures of Racism and Inequality and would include one required learning outcome focused on systemic racism.
- The Cultural Competence category would be relabeled Navigating Diverse Social Environments, and instructors would have a larger set of required skills-oriented learning outcomes from which to select at least one.

The full list of recommendations can be found in Appendix 3 of Senate Document #20-21-10 (linked below).

Background: Following the murder of Lt. Collins and in light of pervasive concerns about the racial climate on campus, the president and provost convened two taskforces. One of these – the Diversity Education Task Force (DETF) – was tasked with considering how these concerns could be addressed through the Gen-Ed program.

More Detail: [Senate Document #20-21-10](#)
[Minutes from the 3.1.22 Senate Meeting](#)