

**Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee and the Council on Student Conduct
Expectations and Accountability**

PROPOSAL TITLE: Revise Section 3-404 of the Student Code, Bronze Tablet

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Proposal to revise the Bronze Tablet eligibility criteria in Section 3-404 of the Student Code for students graduating in Summer, 2030 and later.

JUSTIFICATION:

The first Bronze Tablet, although it was not yet named the Bronze Tablet, was awarded in 1924 to seniors who were in the upper three percent of their class in both junior and senior years. In 1938, the award began to be referred to as the Bronze Tablet and the eligibility requirements have not substantially changed since the 1965-1966 Catalog.

There are several challenges related to awarding the Bronze Tablet under the current criteria. It is impossible to limit the recipients to exactly the top three percent of each college's graduating class due to the number of students who earn the same GPA. In some colleges, even a 4.00 GPA requirement results in more than the top three percent of students receiving the award. In other cases, less than the top three percent receive the award because dropping the GPA cutoff by 1/100th of a point would result in awarding the Bronze Tablet to significantly more than the top three percent of the graduating class. Additionally, students do not have a clear goal to work towards because the GPA cutoff changes from year to year.

Including transfer credit has become increasingly problematic. If a student completes a college course while in high school, the grade earned can prevent a student from meeting the college GPA cutoff. The growth of dual credit enrollment programs will likely increase the number of students entering Illinois with some transfer credit. Additionally, international transfer courses receive credit rather than a grade, which does not affect a student's overall GPA, while domestic transfer courses receive a grade, which does affect a student's overall GPA.

In Spring, 2024 a working group with representatives from each of the undergraduate colleges and schools, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of the Registrar was formed to review and

revise the current eligibility criteria. That group recommended implementing new criteria effective for students graduating in Summer, 2030 and later. If approved, the new criteria will be published in the Student Code beginning in Fall, 2026 to inform students matriculating in Fall, 2026 and later of the new requirements without changing the requirements for continuing students who graduate prior to Summer, 2030.

The working group made the following recommendations:

1. Exclude transfer credit and courses completed at any post-secondary institution prior to high school graduation from the student's cumulative GPA for the purposes of this award. Excluding transfer credit and courses completed while in high school ensures the Bronze Tablet recognizes academic achievement while an undergraduate student at Illinois.
2. Require at least 30 earned University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign GPA hours through the academic term prior to the student's graduation term. Requiring at least 30 earned Illinois GPA hours continues to allow students a final semester to complete the 45-hour residency requirement.
3. Require a 4.00 cumulative grade-point average, excluding transfer courses and courses completed prior to high school graduation, for all work completed at Illinois through the academic term prior to their graduation term. Establishing a minimum GPA eliminates the problems related to attempting to recognize the top three percent of the graduating class for each college or school and gives students a clear goal to work towards. The current minimum GPA requirements have been steadily increasing since at least 2014 and in 2025, six of the ten colleges and schools required a 4.00 GPA, two required a 3.99 GPA, and one required a 3.98 GPA. Publishing a transparent 4.00 minimum requirement allows undergraduate students and their families to better understand the Bronze Tablet eligibility requirements at the time of matriculation.

Please see the attached proposed revisions to 3-404 of the Student Code.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE TERM: Summer, 2030

Proposed Revisions to Section 4-404 of the *Student Code*

§ 3-404 University Honors – Bronze Tablet

a. For students graduating Spring, 2030 and earlier

1. Sustained academic achievement is recognized by inscribing the student's name on the Bronze Tablet. To qualify, undergraduate students must:
 - A. have at least a 3.5 (A = 4.0) cumulative grade-point average for all work taken at the university through the academic term prior to their graduation term; and
 - B. rank, on the basis of their cumulative grade-point average (including University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and transfer work, if any) through the academic term prior to their graduation term, in the top 3 percent of the students in their graduating class.
2. Transfer students, in addition to meeting the general rules for qualification, must satisfy two additional requirements: (1) they must have cumulative University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign grade-point averages as high as the lowest ones listed for students in their college who qualify on the basis of having completed all of their work at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; and (2) they must earn twenty-five or more semester hours at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign through the academic term prior to their graduation term.
3. For the purpose of this award, college graduating class means all students receiving bachelor's degrees from the same University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign college between July 1 of each year and June 30 of the next.
4. For the purpose of this award, academic term prior to graduation means: for August graduates, the preceding spring semester; for December graduates, the preceding summer session; for May graduates, the preceding fall semester. The list will be determined each year following the availability of grades for the fall semester.

b. For students graduating Summer, 2030 and later

1. Sustained academic achievement is recognized by inscribing the student's name on the Bronze Tablet. To qualify, undergraduate students must:
 - A. have a 4.0 cumulative grade-point average, excluding transfer courses and courses completed prior to high school graduation, for all work taken at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign through the academic term prior to their graduation term; and
 - B. complete at least 30 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign credit hours, taken for a letter grade (A through F), through the academic term prior to their graduation term; and

- C. have an awarded bachelor's degree at the end of their graduation term.
2. For the purpose of this award, graduating class means all students receiving bachelor's degrees from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign between July 1 of each year and June 30 of the next.
3. For the purpose of this award, academic term prior to graduation means: for August graduates, the preceding spring semester; for December graduates, the preceding summer session; for May graduates, the preceding fall semester. The list will be determined each year following the availability of grades for the fall semester.