

FOR APPROVAL**PUBLIC****OPEN SESSION**

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
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PRESENTER: Same as above
CONTACT INFO:

DATE: March 13, 2020 for March 31, 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Proposal to Change Parchment and Transcript Terminology for Recognizing Juris Doctor Graduates with High Academic Achievement, Faculty of Law

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs has the authority to approve policy matters affecting earned degrees, diplomas and certificates, including their design and issuance of replacements. (*AP&P Terms of Reference, Section 4.7*)

GOVERNANCE PATH:**1. Academic Policy and Programs [for approval] (March 31, 2020)****PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

In January 2001, Academic Board approved a proposal from the Faculty of Law to use the recognition “with Honours” on the parchments for high achieving graduates.

On March 11, 2020 the Faculty of Law Faculty Council unanimously approved the proposal to change the terminology recognizing high academic achievement of Juris Doctor graduates from “with Honours” to “with Distinction.”

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Law Faculty proposes to change the existing terminology recognizing Juris Doctor (JD) graduates of high academic standing upon graduation from “with Honours” to “with Distinction,” effective June 2020.

In January 2001, Academic Board approved that the Faculty of Law use, where appropriate, the terminology or degree citation designation “with Honours” on the parchments and transcripts of JD graduates.

The Faculty wishes to change the degree citation from “with Honours” to “with Distinction” because the division feels this terminology better reflects the high academic achievement of its graduates. The change will also avoid confusion with the level of recognition relative to the grading scale used in the JD degree program. In the grading scale, a grade of Honours (H) is the second highest grade, which is below the highest possible grade of High Honours (HH).

The Faculty of Law consulted with current JD students and there was little feedback.

This change will apply to all students graduating in June 2020 and onward. It will not apply to students who graduated prior to June 2020.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no additional costs associated with the implementation of these policies.

RECOMMENDATION:

Be it Resolved:

THAT the proposal to change the parchment and transcript terminology from “with Honours” to “with Distinction” for eligible graduates of the Juris Doctor degree in the Faculty of Law be approved, effective June 2020.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Proposal to change the terminology of “with Honours” to “with Distinction” for Juris Doctor (JD) degree program graduates

Proposal:

The Law Faculty proposes to change the degree citation recognizing Juris Doctor (JD) students' high academic standing on their parchment and transcript upon graduation, effective June 2020. In January 2001 Academic Board approved the use, where appropriate, of the degree citation designation, "with Honours" on the parchments and transcripts of JD Faculty of Law graduates. The Faculty wishes to change the degree citation from "with honours," to "with distinction" in order to better recognise undergraduate students' high academic standing at graduation. The terminology the Faculty proposes ("with distinction") is already approved for use at the University in other divisions.

In 2012 the Faculty of Law changed its gradescale to the alternate grade scale in the *University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy* (see section 1.3 ii) that includes the following marks: HH (High Honours); H (Honours) P (Pass); LP (Low Pass) and F (Fail). Because "H" or "Honours" in the grade scale is not the highest mark available, the Faculty of Law would like the terminology parchments to use "with distinction", to better identify the high level of achievement of these students. This change will apply to all students graduating in June 2020 and onward. It will not apply to students who graduated prior to June 2020.

All students in progress have been given notice of the change. They were invited to respond, but there were very few comments.

Students who have completed the JD requirements and are on track to graduate with high academic standing are selected for degree citation recognition by the Faculty's Academic Standing Committee. The Academic Standing Committee reviews the transcripts of all the law students every year, selecting approximately ten percent of the highest performing students in each cohort (1L, 2L, and 3L) to earn high academic standing for that year. Students who earn high academic standing in two or more years graduate with high academic standing. This practice is not changing.