

FEC Amendments in red

Date: September 4, 2013
To: Eddy Souffrant, Faculty President
From: Brian Cooper, Chair, FAPSC
Re: Motion to establish a new Withdrawals policy

Over the past two years, a working group charged by FAPSC has been reviewing academic policies related to course repeats and withdrawals. The first year was spent investigating these issues internally. By the fall of 2012 (when I became chair of FAPSC), it had become clear that UNC Charlotte would have to make policy changes in these areas to comply with the system-wide "Academics First" initiative. So the second year was spent working toward these anticipated changes.

On January 24, 2013, the UNC General Administration (GA) transmitted a revised system policy (400.1.5: Fostering [Undergraduate] Student Success; "Transmittal #81.pdf") to member institutions. These policy changes are based on recommendations made by a system-wide committee chaired by our own Provost Lorden. The policy directed President Ross to "establish regulations to implement the requirements of this policy." These regulations ("Transmittal #83.pdf") were finally sent on May 2, 2013. UNC Charlotte was already in compliance with most of them, with the exceptions of a newly required cap on course withdrawals and an earlier withdrawal deadline.

The regulations strongly constrain our new policy. For the withdrawal cap, they state:

"These policies must specify up to four courses or up to 16 semester credit hours as the maximum number of such withdrawals permitted over the course of a student's degree or degrees."

Exceptions are allowed for "serious extenuating circumstances." For flexibility, the working group greatly prefers a 16-hour model to a 4-course model, and FAPSC concurs. We also recommend that the new limit be implemented for *all* students (for consistency of message), but not for W's in courses prior to fall 2014.

For the deadline, the regulations state:

"Campus policies must include a deadline for such withdrawal at a date no later than the completion of 60% of the term [excluding reading day and the exam period]."

This is a little earlier than our current deadline for withdrawing from a course while retaining other courses, and eliminates our current and even later deadline for withdrawing from all courses. There is no distinction between such withdrawals, either in the deadline or in the way they are counted against the 16-hour career limit. Again, the only exceptions are for serious extenuating circumstances. The distinction was artificial anyway: withdrawing from all courses never really meant "withdrawing from the university," even though it was often discussed in those terms. Terminating other financial obligations (student housing, etc.) is a separate, administrative process.

The draft policy is appended. Many other details in the policy are also highly constrained by the regulations. The actual policy is only the statement under roman numeral II. The other sections are explanatory material maintained by Academic Affairs, for which FAPSC decided to recommend a starting point. We strove for maximum clarity to students, which is why we included two examples in the policy itself. We also sought to protect students by trying to

require greater transparency in the process of petitioning for consideration of extenuating circumstances.

Draft policy approved by FAPSC on August 30, 2013.

UNC Charlotte Academic Policy: Withdrawals

I. Introduction

The UNC General Administration established several new policies and regulations to be implemented by all campuses in the UNC system by fall 2014, with the goal of fostering undergraduate student success. UNC Charlotte was already in compliance with most of these regulations. This policy brings our campus into full compliance by placing limits on course withdrawals and by changing our withdrawal deadline.

II. Policy Statement

Students are expected to complete all courses for which they are registered at the close of the "add/drop" period. These courses will appear on the transcript, count as attempted hours, and except for withdrawals allowed under this policy, receive grades used in the GPA calculation. Undergraduate students may receive a grade of W for no more than 16 credit hours over their academic careers. Students who withdraw under approved extenuating circumstances will receive "WE" grades that do not count against this 16-hour limit. Both types of withdrawal are subject to all financial aid and satisfactory academic progress rules.

WITHDRAWAL WITH EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES. Students who experience serious extenuating circumstances (personal or medical crisis or military deployment) may petition for a withdrawal that does not count against their career W limit. Procedural details and advice should be obtained from the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students is responsible for developing and communicating standards and procedures in conjunction with the Colleges that govern these decisions. The student is expected to submit the petition during the term the crisis begins, ~~and should expect to withdraw from all courses in that term.~~ If approved, a grade of WE will be recorded for each course—the "E" is an annotation for "extenuating circumstances." Courses marked WE do not count in GPA or tuition surcharge calculations. Appeals of negative decisions are handled by the Office of the Provost. If denied, the student might still be able to withdraw under the policy for withdrawal without extenuating circumstances, described below.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES. Every student is allowed a few opportunities to withdraw from any class for any reason (and receive a grade of W), subject to the following conditions:

Deadline. The deadline to withdraw from one or more courses (including withdrawing from all courses) is 60% of the way through the term, which for fall or spring semesters is during the 9th week. The precise date for each term will be published in the academic calendar. After this deadline, withdrawal will only be allowed for approved extenuating circumstances.

Grade of W. A grade of W will be recorded for each withdrawal without extenuating circumstances. Courses marked W do not count in GPA calculations but do count in tuition surcharge calculations.

W-limit hours. Students are allowed to receive a grade of W for no more than 16 credit hours over their academic careers. Students may only withdraw from a course if they have enough remaining "W-limit hours," as shown in the following examples:

- A student has already received W grades for 14 credit hours and thus has only 2 W-limit hours left. The student may not withdraw from a 3-credit course, but could withdraw from a 1- or 2-credit course.

- Another student has 12 remaining W-limit hours and is currently taking five 3-credit courses. The student would like to withdraw from all courses but lacks approved extenuating circumstances, and thus must choose at least one course in which to stay enrolled.

Students who are unable to withdraw from a course but stop attending anyway must accept whatever grade the instructor assigns (most often an F) for their partial work.

III. Definitions

- **Add/drop period** – the time during which students may add or drop courses without a record or academic penalty, also called the “course adjustment period.”
- **Drop** – cancel enrollment in a course before the published add/drop deadline (through the 8th instructional day of fall or spring semesters).
- **Withdraw** – cancel enrollment in a course after the add/drop period but before the published withdrawal deadline (during the 9th week of fall or spring semesters) and receive a grade of W.
- **Academic career** – the period during which a student is working at this institution toward completion of one or more baccalaureate degrees.
- **W-limit hours** – the maximum number of credit hours (currently 16) for which students are allowed to receive a grade of W over their academic careers.
- **Serious extenuating circumstances** – personal situations that, upon administrative approval, allow students to withdraw late (if necessary) and to receive “WE” grades that do not count against their W-limit hours.
- **Tuition surcharge** – an extra charge on attempted hours beyond a specified career limit, as detailed here:
<http://registrar.uncc.edu/common-requested-information/tuition-surcharge>

IV. Policy Contacts

- **Authority:** Faculty Council [Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Committee]
- **Responsible Office:** Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- **Additional Contact(s):** Office of the Registrar

V. History

- Approved: Month xx, 2013

VI. Related Policies, Procedures, and Resources

- [Registration](#)
- [Grading](#)
- [Termination of Enrollment](#)
- [Office of the Registrar FAQs About Academic Suspension](#)
- [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#)

VII. Frequently Asked Questions

- **Which students are covered under this policy?**
 This policy applies to all undergraduate students at UNC Charlotte for grades recorded for fall 2014 or later.