

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 23, 2014

TO: Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and Advisors

FROM: George Gehrels, Chair, Undergraduate Council (UGC)
Celeste Pardee, Assistant Director for Academic Policies and Organizations

RE: **Undergraduate Single Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy Revisions**

In November 2013, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Gail Burd's Ad Hoc Committee on Withdrawal Policies submitted recommendations to revise the Course Drop/Withdrawal Policies to the Undergraduate Council for consideration. Council members approved four specific modifications that affect several Catalog policy pages (see below). With minor revisions by the Academic Deans, UGC's proposal was approved by all appropriate UA committees, concluding with the Faculty Senate on May 5, 2014. The policy revisions apply to all enrolled undergraduate students as of Fall 2014.

Revised Course Drop/Withdrawal Deadlines (and rationale for each):

See [Class Attendance & Administrative Drop Policy](#)

See [Change of Schedule \(Drop/Add\) Policy](#)

- 1) **The first withdrawal deadline is shortened by two weeks. Course withdrawals filed before the end of the 2nd week of classes (the 10th day of regularly scheduled classes) result in cancellation of registration (without a W on the transcript).** *Students are expected to finalize their class schedules in the first two weeks of the semester. The current \$25 course drop penalty discourages some course-hoarding and encourages students to drop excess classes before Day 8. A 10th-day first withdrawal deadline will further reduce course-hoarding/shopping, thereby opening seats in over-enrolled classes. This change will align the UA with several peer institutions that set a first withdrawal deadline at the end of the 2nd week.*
- 2) **The second withdrawal deadline is extended by two weeks--through the 10th week. No Change of Schedule form or instructor approval is needed. Students use UAccess Student Self-Service to withdraw from a course. The grade of "W" is awarded regardless of whether the student is passing at the time of withdrawal.** *Extending the online withdrawal period to the 10th week without any approvals will simplify the process for students, allow more time for instructor feedback on students' class performance, allow students to drop classes without explanation if they have extenuating circumstances that prevent them from completing the class, bring consistency among UA colleges on applying the second drop deadline, and bring the UA into alignment with many peers.*
- 3) **Course drops will be accepted with an instructor's permission via a Late Change Petition to the College Dean from the 11th week through the 13th week; the Dean may submit an approved Late Change Petition to the Registrar through the last day of classes—prior to the exam period. The end of the 13th week is considered the final withdrawal deadline.** *However, if the Dean believes there are extenuating circumstances, the Dean may accept a Late Change Petition between the end of the 13th week and the last day of regularly scheduled classes. All such petitions must be submitted to the Registrar by the end of the last day of classes. Students are expected to make a decision on dropping one or more classes by the 13th week. Because of the volume of Late Change Petitions, some college advisors need a 2-week processing period. [As a reminder of current policy, if a Late Change Petition has not been submitted by the last day of classes and there are extenuating circumstances, students may file a General Petition for a retroactive full withdrawal after the semester ends.]*

New W-Unit Maximum (and rationale):

See [Change of Schedule \(Drop/Add\) Policy](#)

See [Grades and the Grading System](#)

- 4) **An 18-unit maximum applies to the number of course drops—those with a W grade—between the first and final withdrawal deadlines (from the 3rd week through 13th week). This unit cap applies to the student’s UA undergraduate career.** *An 18-unit cap on W grades will encourage students to complete all classes retained beyond the first withdrawal deadline, contribute to wise use of student and University resources, and align UA’s withdrawal policy with that of peer institutions that have capped the number of Ws.*

Management of the Single Course Withdrawal Policies:

- **The course withdrawal deadlines and W-unit cap are applied at the course level**, not the student level. For example, when an undergraduate senior enrolls in a 500-level course, the graduate course drop deadlines will apply.
- **Different withdrawal deadlines apply to graduate courses.** The first course drop deadline (end of 4th week), second deadline (end of 8th week), and final deadline (end of 15th week—prior to the final exam period) that have applied to all students in recent years (prior to the 2014-15 Catalog) will continue to apply to graduate courses in Fall 2014. See the [Graduate Change of Schedule \(Drop/Add\) Policy](#).
- **The GRO filing period will remain the same.** The undergraduate first and second withdrawal deadlines do not affect the GRO filing deadline at the end of the 4th week of classes.
- **The number of W units will be monitored and displayed by UAccess-Student** [pending system modifications]. The UAccess process for monitoring, displaying, and enforcing the W unit cap is under development.
- **The count of W units begins for all undergraduates in September 2014, following the first drop deadline.** All incoming, continuing, and readmitted students will have zero prior course drops, with respect to the new W-unit cap. Thus in the first year, the withdrawal deterrent effect of the cap will be felt primarily by freshmen and less by juniors and seniors.
- **After reaching the W-cap, students who wish to drop another course will have two options:** (1) they can complete the course; or (2) they can file for a complete withdrawal from all courses that semester.

Questions about the revised policies on single course drops/withdrawals may be addressed to Celeste Pardee, Curricular Affairs, at 621-5375, or at cpardee@email.arizona.edu.