

TO: SUNY Cortland Faculty/Staff
FROM: Educational Policy Committee
DATE: February 16, 2024
RE: Revisions to the Course Withdrawal policies

Origin

The Educational Policy Committee (EPC) was given a formal charge by the Faculty Senate on September 6, 2022 to review "...the No Withdrawal policy regarding students who have been found in violation of the academic integrity policy. The policy has been moved to the Catalog, section F.04. This charge does not require any changes to the policy, simply to review the policy to determine if we wish to maintain it as is or make some change."

Rationale

The following factors were deemed to be highly important to the proposed changes.

- Withdrawal from a course will not clear an academic integrity violation since there is a well-established precedent of holding students responsible for academic integrity standards even when they are not enrolled in a class. Under the current system, students not enrolled in a course can be, and have been, charged with academic integrity violations by an instructor even when they are not enrolled in that instructor's class (e.g. for knowingly helping another student cheat on an assignment/exam).
- The potential for a lengthy appeal process, which is often resolved in the subsequent semester, means that a finding that is overturned by the Academic Grievance Tribunal (AGT) would unfairly penalize a student by not allowing the student to withdraw from a course despite their innocence.
- The system for processing withdrawals does not function in such a way that supports the current policies. That is, an instructor's denial of a withdrawal request does not halt the process, and it is not clear how the process could be fixed to ensure that this becomes a functional component of the approval chain.
- The reference to withdrawal during an active AGT process is not referenced in the AGT policies, but is only housed within the withdrawal policies in the catalog.

Conclusion

In the light of the prior points and following discussions since receiving the charge with the chairs of the AGT (both current and former) and the associate deans, the EPC has concluded that the prohibition on withdrawal following an academic integrity violation should be **removed** from our policies. Importantly, it is also deemed essential that withdrawal from a course does not stop the misconduct charge from moving forward and being added to the student's AGT record. If approved, this will be directed to AGT and Registrar for consideration of additional changes to policy and procedure.

Catalog Section F.04

Catalog Sections F.04 and N.09: Withdrawal from a course after official change of schedule period

Current Catalog Policy	Proposed Catalog Policy
<p>SUNY Cortland Policy: The letter X indicates official withdrawal from a university course without academic penalty. Grades of X will be awarded for courses that are withdrawn after the official drop and add period, the first full week of the semester for semester courses or before the second class meeting of modular or quarter courses.</p> <p>Students are not allowed to withdraw from classes the last three weeks of semester courses — after Nov. 15 in the fall and April 15 in the spring. Due to fluctuating dates, withdrawal deadlines for Summer and Winter Sessions will be established prior to the term.</p> <p><i>Note: A student who has been found in violation of the academic dishonesty code loses the opportunity to withdraw from the course in which the violation occurred.</i></p> <p>Impact of X Grades on Financial Aid: Grades of X are considered attempted but not completed for the purpose of calculating Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for Financial Aid Eligibility. The policies regarding SAP for State and Federal Financial Aid are detailed in this catalog. The most common financial aid impact from course withdrawal in a single semester is a loss of TAP eligibility for the following semester. However, a pattern of withdrawal and/or failure across more than one semester may result in the loss of all future aid eligibility, including student loans. It is strongly recommended that students consult with a financial aid advisor if withdrawal will reduce the total completed credit hours for the current semester to less than 12.</p>	<p>SUNY Cortland Policy: The letter X indicates official withdrawal from a university course without academic penalty. Grades of X will be awarded for courses that are withdrawn after the official drop and add period, the first full week of the semester for semester courses or before the second class meeting of modular or quarter courses.</p> <p>Students are not allowed to withdraw from classes the last three weeks of semester courses — after Nov. 15 in the fall and April 15 in the spring. Due to fluctuating dates, withdrawal deadlines for Summer and Winter Sessions will be established prior to the term.</p> <p><i>Note: A student who has been found in violation of the academic dishonesty code loses the opportunity to withdraw from the course in which the violation occurred.</i></p> <p><i>Note: A student who has been found in violation of the academic dishonesty code academic integrity by the course instructor may withdraw from a course up to the official withdrawal deadline. Course withdrawal is separate from the Academic Grievance Tribunal (AGT) process (SUNY Cortland Handbook, Section 340.03). Violations of academic integrity policy remain part of a student's permanent record following withdrawal from a course.</i></p> <p>Impact of X Grades on Financial Aid: Grades of X are considered attempted but not completed for the purpose of calculating Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for Financial Aid Eligibility. The policies regarding SAP for State and Federal Financial Aid are detailed in this catalog. The most common financial aid impact from course withdrawal in a single semester is a loss of TAP eligibility for the following semester. However, a pattern of withdrawal and/or failure across more than one semester may result in the loss of all future aid eligibility, including student loans. It is strongly recommended that students consult with a financial aid advisor if withdrawal will reduce the total completed credit hours for the current semester to less than 12.</p>

