

ACADEMIC SENATE  
of  
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN LUIS OBISPO

AS-103-80/IC  
November 18, 1980

RESOLUTION REGARDING GUIDELINES FOR WITHDRAWAL  
FROM CLASSES AFTER THE CENSUS DATE

Background: A student may currently petition to withdraw from a class after the census date, but prior to the start of the eighth week. According to the catalog, the petition will be approved and the withdrawal authorized "only if there are serious and compelling reasons for the withdrawal in the judgment of the instructor and the department head." The petition requires the signature of both the instructor and the department head.

The definition of "serious and compelling reasons" recommended by the Academic Council in December 1976 were approved by President Kennedy in February 1977. But the definitions were never addressed by the Academic Senate nor have they been published in the catalog. In January 1980, the CSUC Academic Senate recommended local campus Senates to develop guidelines for evaluating the "serious and compelling reasons."

- WHEREAS, The university is impacted and many courses are oversubscribed, students should be expected to make a commitment to their courses prior to the census date; and
- WHEREAS, The university recognizes that there are "serious and compelling" reasons for which a student might need to withdraw from a class or classes; and
- WHEREAS, Each student should have available both the procedures and the kinds of reasons the university considers sufficiently serious and compelling to warrant withdrawal; and
- WHEREAS, The instructor of the course is the proper person to be consulted on the options available to the student with respect to progress within the course; and
- WHEREAS, The student's advisor is the proper person to be consulted concerning the ramifications of dropping a particular class or classes in terms of progress toward graduation; and
- WHEREAS, Neither the instructor nor advisor should be in the position of evaluating the serious and compelling reason for the petition to withdraw; and
- WHEREAS, The Academic Council has determined that the department heads are able to evaluate the serious and compelling reasons for withdrawal petitions; therefore be it.

## WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

RESOLVED: That the following procedures for withdrawing from classes after the census date be adopted and be included in the catalog and the Campus Administrative Manual.

Procedure: Any student wishing to withdraw from a class after the census date, but prior to the start of the eighth week of a quarter must petition to do so. Withdrawal petitions are available at the Records Office.

- a. The student shall consult with both the instructor and his/her advisor for the purposes of reviewing progress in the course, progress toward graduation, and the effect of withdrawing from the course.
- b. Approval or disapproval of the petition is granted by the instructor's department head. The student must present the petition with an explanation of the nature of the serious and compelling reasons. Confidentiality when the reasons are personal can be protected by having the appropriate Health Center or Counseling Center official verify that there are serious and compelling reasons to withdraw. Verification of other reasons may be required at the discretion of the department head. After any appropriate consultation, the department head shall approve or deny the withdrawal petition in accordance with the guidelines set forth below.

and be it further

RESOLVED: That the following guidelines for interpretation of "serious and compelling reasons for withdrawal" be adopted and be included in the catalog and Campus Administrative Manual:

### Guidelines for Serious and Compelling Reasons

After the census date a student may not drop a class and receive a "W" on the permanent record unless there is a "serious and compelling" reason. Whether the reason advanced by a student is in fact serious and compelling is a matter that requires judgment and interpretation.

It is not possible to describe in advance all the reasons that are acceptable or not acceptable as serious and compelling. The guidelines below should serve to illustrate the intent. Each case should be considered on its own merits.

1. Medical. Serious illness or injury of the student or of his/her immediate family which has resulted in inability to make up course material missed. Verification by the University Health Center or by the student's personal physician may be required.
2. Financial. For many different reasons a student's financial situation may become so critical that withdrawal from the University is the only recourse. In other cases, withdrawal from a part of the student's course list may be indicated. A student who requests withdrawal after the census date for financial reasons must offer an explanation for his decision to withdraw and may be asked for verification.
3. Personal. Problems of a psychological or other personal nature may indicate withdrawal from a course in order to preserve reasonable progress toward a student's educational goals. Depending upon the nature of the problem, appropriate verification by the University Counseling Center or the Health Center may be required.

There may be other serious and compelling reasons to withdraw from classes. Each such case is to be considered on its own merits.

It should be emphasized that poor grades, irregular attendance, or dissatisfaction with the course are not in themselves sufficient reasons to withdraw after the census date. The official drop period--the first three weeks of each quarter--is the proper time to evaluate preparation level, time commitment, normal progress, interest, etc., for each class.

Each school may further interpret these guidelines as to what constitutes "serious and compelling" reasons.

and be it further

RESOLVED: That the petition for withdrawal form include statements that:

- a. The instructor and advisor signatures indicate that the proposed withdrawal has been discussed and do not necessarily indicate approval of the withdrawal or acceptance of the serious and compelling reasons for the request.
- b. The department head must either approve or disapprove the petition based on the reasons given and any verification or consultation that is appropriate.
- c. The proper appeal procedure, if deemed necessary by the student, is through the Fairness Board.