

Policy recommendation:
Refunds, drop policy, and the “W” symbol

Replaces S05-12 and F04-2

Background: University policy S05-12 set the guidelines and some procedures for a refund schedule for students when they drop a course as well as for use of the “W” symbol on transcripts. According to that policy, instructors were permitted to drop students from in-person courses if they had not attended the first class meeting. Since that time, however, online courses have become far more prevalent, which has led to the question of how to track student commitment to a course that does not meet in person. This policy revision adds a clause to determine how students establish a committed presence in online courses (section 2b below).

In this policy, names of certain units and the signifying number of a CSU executive order have been updated, and editing changes have been made. Also, University policy S05-12 “modified” University policy F04-2. However, S05-12 reiterated F04-2 almost in its entirety, with certain revisions, and thus should have “replaced” F04-2 (not just “modified”). This policy rescinds both S05-12 and F04-2.

Resolved: 1. That the attached be adopted as University policy.

 2. That S05-12 and S04-2 be rescinded.

Approved: April 13, 2015
Vote: 11-0-0
Present: Amante, Campsey, Feist, Frazier (chair), Hernandez, Huang,
 Kress, McPherson, Rees, Sofish, Walters
Absent: Branz (non-voting), Brooks, Bruck (non-voting), Kelley, Miller,
 Sullivan-Green
Financial impact: None
Workload impact: None

Refunds, Drop Policy and the "W" Symbol

1.

- a) For regular state supported semesters, refund regulations for the CSU system are prescribed by the California Code of Regulations Title V, Section 41802 and applicable CSU Chancellor Executive Orders. In particular, at SJSU, the principles for refunds include the following:
 - i. Dates for full refunds shall be as close as possible to the first day of instruction (not the first course meeting), but shall in no case be more than five business days before the first day of instruction;
 - ii. Information regarding refunds shall be stated clearly and disseminated widely as early as possible so that students and departments can plan in a timely manner. For regular state supported sessions, all refund information will be posted in all versions of the Schedule of Classes where fee and payment information is publicized. The information will also be detailed on the Bursar's website.
- b) Title V, Section 41802 states that for self-support, special sessions and extension course fees, refunds shall be made in accordance with policies and procedures established by each campus. At SJSU, the refund procedures shall be established by the International and Extended Studies Office, and shall include the following:
 - i. Dates for full refunds for self-support, special sessions, and extension courses shall be as close as possible to the first day of instruction (not the first course meeting) for those events but shall in no case be more than five business days before the first day of instruction;

2. Dropping and adding courses shall follow this schedule:

- a) Census Day is the 20th day of instruction.
- b) Six instructional days before Census Day, i.e. the 14th day of instruction, is the last day for the student to add a class; this is also the last day for an instructor to drop a student who fails to establish a committed presence in the class. "Establishing a committed presence" is defined as the following:
 - In-person courses. Attending the first class meeting or, failing that, informing the instructor prior to the second class meeting of the reason for any absence and the intention to continue in the class.
 - Online courses. One of the following: completing a class assignment; informing the instructor of the intention to continue in the class; three hours of logged time on the learning management system with verifiable activity (e.g. chat session, discussion board entries).

- c) Eleven instructional days before Census Day, i.e. the 9th day of instruction, is the last day to drop a class without a "W" notation.
- d) Exceptions to the last day to add: Departments will be requested to submit to the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs a list of courses that have not yet been opened prior to the 14th day of instruction. Examples of such classes are
 - ones in which students sometimes are unable to add on time due to negotiating placements with schools or internships;
 - classes that are identified two to three weeks into the semester as being needed to support a student's success in a class in which they are already enrolled (e.g. Comm 80).

GUP will determine the academic appropriateness of these courses, and if they are deemed appropriate, GUP will give the approved list to the Registrar and the Bursar's Office, which will develop a procedure to add students between the 14th day of instruction and census.

3. After the 9th day of instruction (eleven instructional days before Census Day), a student may withdraw from class only for "serious and compelling reasons," which shall be defined as circumstances and genuine emergencies beyond the student's control.
4. These circumstances must be documented with such evidence as death certificates (or equivalent) of immediate family members, letters from employers, or notes from doctors. Failure, or anticipated failure, in the course, or non-attendance, are not valid reasons for withdrawing from a course.
5. The Associate Vice President for Graduate and Undergraduate Studies shall develop a list of acceptable circumstances for withdrawal, guidelines for certification of said circumstances, petition forms to be issued to all colleges (which shall include space to state the reasons for the proposed withdrawal and the current grade the student is earning), and appropriate sanctions for those students submitting fraudulent certification.
6. The President shall appoint one or more individuals (in accordance with Executive Order 1037) to administer course and university withdrawals. These individuals will be responsible for distributing and receiving petitions, verifying certification, and approving withdrawals. A department, school or college, (hereafter referred to as an academic unit) that wishes to be exempt from this provision and to administer course and university withdrawals itself may apply for an exemption for a period of three years by submitting a written statement to the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, explaining how an exemption best serves the unit's academic mission. Upon receipt, the Associate Vice President of the Office of GUP shall either approve or deny the exemption

request. If the exemption request is approved, the exempted academic unit's highest ranking administrative officer shall have the authority to approve or deny late drop petitions for their courses for a period of three academic years, beginning with the semester the exemption request was granted. The highest ranking administrative officer for a department is the department chair; for a school, the highest ranking administrative officer is the program director; and for a college, the highest ranking administrative officer is the dean. Within 3 working days of approving or denying a late drop petition, an academic unit shall convey the decision to the President's appointee using electronic mail and also send to the President's appointee the original, signed late drop petition and a copy of all other supporting materials related to the late drop petition. In the event of an approved late drop petition, upon notification by the administrative unit, the President's appointee shall then immediately notify the appropriate administrative units of the late drop decision.

7. In the case of course withdrawals, students must first obtain the faculty member's signature. This signature indicates that the student has been advised of his/her options regarding the course. Students will be advised about the possible negative impact of the "W" on their transcript and where appropriate, be encouraged to consult with Academic Advising and Retention Services. If a faculty member does not sign the petition, the matter will be resolved either by the President's appointee or the highest ranking administrative officer for the exempted academic unit. The President's appointee or the highest ranking administrative officer of the exempted academic unit will verify the certification that the student uses to indicate "serious and compelling" reasons for needing to withdraw before signing the petition.
8. When a "W" appears on a student's transcript, the transcript will contain a notice that withdrawals at San Jose State University are given only for circumstances beyond the student's control, and not for any other reason, including academic performance. The "W" will remain uncouncted in the student's GPA, as before.
9. The option of the Incomplete remains as before.
10. A "WU" remains appropriate to assign when a student, who is enrolled on Census Day, does not successfully petition for a "W" but fails to complete course requirements and those assignments that were completed were insufficient to make normal evaluation of academic performance possible.