



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto at Mississauga, and University of Toronto at Scarborough: Proposed changes to rules governing course withdrawal dates.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee has authority to approve amendments to divisional academic regulations.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

HIGHLIGHTS:

Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS), University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM), and University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC) propose to change the academic regulations concerning withdrawal from courses.

All three academic divisions have concerns with the current petitions process. There is an identified need to provide an appropriate mechanism for students, with the assistance of their college registrars, to remedy situations where the student is struggling, has fallen irretrievably behind, or is overwhelmed by personal or other circumstances.

At present, the deadline for withdrawal from courses without academic penalty at UTSC is at the end of the tenth week of classes (Drop Date); at UTM and FAS it is the end of the ninth week of half courses and the 23rd week of full courses. (The differences in dates reflect differences in divisional calendars and term dates.) Students are required to petition to drop a course after this deadline. If their petition is granted, students receive a grade of *withdrawn without academic penalty* (WDR) for the course.

The attached proposals, from each division, recommend the extension of time that a student be allowed to withdraw from a course without having to petition. For UTSC this would mean students would have until the day before the examination period begins to drop a course. At UTM and FAS, students would have until the last day of classes to drop a course. Students would receive a *Late Withdrawal after the Drop Date* (LWD) grade for the course. This course status will have no effect on the GPA or other elements of the academic record.

A student whose courses are beyond repair will be able to minimize the long-term damage, consolidate his or her academic load and focus what time and energy remains during the Study Period and the Exam Period on the salvageable courses, because an immediate response to the situation is available. Such approvals will be accompanied by appropriate advising, and students will be expected to learn from their experience so as not to repeat the behaviour that produced the problems. Those who have fallen behind with assignments or are not at all prepared to write exams in their courses will be expected to make use of this remedy, and subsequent petitions for deferred exams or extensions will be viewed more strictly in light of it. Should a student encounter problems requiring a remedy beyond the 3.0 FCEs, the normal petition process will remain available.

There has been extensive consultation on the proposed change, including with Department Chairs, the Tri-Campus Decanal Committee and the Tri-Campus Undergraduate Issues Committee. These proposals have the approval of all three Governance bodies (UTSC Academic Committee, December 4, 2007, with amendments approved on January 29, 2008; FAS Faculty Council on February 4, 2008; and UTM Erindale College Council on February 28, 2008).

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

There are no new/additional financial resources required. The course status of LWD will be newly created to facilitate the need to count such withdrawals. This will be a university-wide administrative registrarial change as non-grade designations fall within the administrative appendix to the University of Toronto *Grading Practices Policy*.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs approve:

The changes the academic regulations concerning withdrawal from courses at the Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto at Mississauga and University of Toronto at Scarborough, as outlined in the attached proposals, effective for the 2008 Summer Session.