



University Council

September 15, 2023

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2023-2024

Susan Sanchez, Chair

Agricultural and Environmental Sciences – Kylee Duberstein

Arts and Sciences – Jonathan Haddad (Arts)

Paula Lemons (Sciences)

Business – Karen Aguar

Ecology – Amanda Rugenski

Education – Amy Murphy

Engineering – Kun Yao

Environment and Design – Katherine Melcher

Family and Consumer Sciences – Sheri Worthy

Forestry and Natural Resources – Gino D'Angelo

Journalism and Mass Communication – Yan Jin

Law – Joe Miller

Pharmacy – Michelle McElhannon

Public and International Affairs – Rongbin Han

Public Health – Pamela Orpinas

Social Work – Harold Briggs

Veterinary Medicine – Shannon Hostetter

Graduate School – Rodney Mauricio

Ex-Officio – Provost S. Jack Hu

Undergraduate Student Representative – Gabriella Lewis

Graduate Student Representative – TBD

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal to revise Policy 4.02-3, University Policy on Course Drops and Withdrawals, will be an agenda item for the September 22, 2023, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting. This policy revision was approved by the Educational Affairs Committee at their August 28, 2023, meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Sanchez, Chair

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu

Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro



## University Council

August 28, 2023

Agricultural and Environmental Sciences – Susana Ferreira  
Arts and Sciences – Erin Dolan  
Jennifer Rice  
Business – Margaret Christ (chair)  
Laura Little  
Education – Janette Hill  
Engineering – Brock Woodson  
Family and Consumer Sciences – Sheri Worthy  
Forestry and Natural Resources – Nick Fuhrman  
(also representing Ecology)  
Journalism and Mass Communication – Shira Chess  
Public and International Affairs – Alexa Bankert  
Provost- Jack Hu  
Social Work- Rachel Fusco  
(also representing Public Health and Environment and Design)  
Veterinary Medicine – Susan Sanchez  
(also representing Law and Pharmacy)  
Undergraduate Student Representative – Vacant  
Graduate/Professional Student Representative – Samantha Khatri

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal recommends a revision to Policy 4.02-3, University Policy on Course Drops and Withdrawals, whereby petitions for retroactive hardship withdrawals will be evaluated by the Office of Student Care and Outreach instead of the Educational Affairs Committee.

Currently, the Retroactive Hardship Withdrawal policy states that the Office of Student Care and Outreach may only initiate a student hardship withdrawal if the request is made and processed before the withdrawal deadline of the following semester. Experience demonstrates that many students, particularly those wrestling with emotional or psychological issues, fail to grasp the magnitude of their problems as they are occurring. It is only after a period of reflection that students come to terms with their situations and reach out for help regarding withdrawal. Those students who seek a *retroactive* hardship withdrawal must petition the Educational Affairs Committee who will then review and vote to approve or deny the request. The proposed change in the Retroactive Hardship Withdrawal policy will allow those students to have access to the same level of consideration and accommodation as do students who choose to exercise a hardship withdrawal.

There are several important issues that call into question the practice of faculty evaluating hardship withdrawal requests.

- The Educational Affairs Committee Petitions Subcommittee consists of a rotating group of faculty members who serve throughout the year, with each meeting involving a different group of committee members. Collectively, faculty do not have the knowledge or training to fairly and consistently evaluate what constitutes a hardship for

students. Thus, each meeting operates with different standards such that a situation that is approved one month may not be approved the following month.

- Forcing students to relive their traumas with individuals who have minimal, if any, training or experience helping students overcome trauma can be unproductive and even destructive. Once a student has completed an appeal to the Educational Affairs Committee, there is no outreach to students following the appeal. The staff of the Office of Student Care and Outreach are trained and have many years of experience in working with at-risk students and those who experience various difficulties. They are well-qualified to fairly evaluate these situations and determine whether they warrant a hardship withdrawal. [https://studentaffairs.uga.edu/site/directory\\_department/sss\\_cat](https://studentaffairs.uga.edu/site/directory_department/sss_cat)
- Faculty are mandatory reporters; the process of evaluating hardship withdrawal requests may require mandatory reporting, of which students may be unaware when they make the withdrawal request.

Importantly, the Office of Student Care and Outreach follows the same guiding principles as does the EAC appeals committee in (a) requiring documentation of hardship, (b) considering only those hardships which have had a major impact on a student's academic performance, and (c) disallowing selective withdrawal except in unusual circumstances (e.g., PE course withdrawal due to injury). Indeed, 95% of the appeals for retroactive hardship withdrawal are approved by the Petitions Subcommittee, which may be a higher rate of approval than those from Student Care & Outreach. In this way, we believe that the standards applied to a Retroactive Hardship Withdrawal are the same, regardless of whether they are evaluated by the Office of Student Care and Outreach or the EAC.

#### **Recent History of Hardship Withdrawal Policy**

Historically, all hardship withdrawal requests that were made after the deadline, which was at the midpoint of the semester, were reviewed and adjudicated by the Educational Affairs Committee (EAC). To better serve students and streamline the processing of these requests, the EAC changed the withdrawal deadline to later in the semester and gave Student Care & Outreach (SCO) the authority to handle hardship withdrawals until grades were submitted. After that point, the EAC continued to evaluate retroactive hardship withdrawals. The reasoning for this was that such requests were considered as a category of a grade change, which required some level of faculty oversight because any decisions to change grades would involve overturning faculty decisions. Through the ongoing evaluation of retroactive hardship withdrawal requests, it has become apparent that the EAC decisions regarding these withdrawals hinge on whether the requesting student's situation or circumstances constitute a hardship, rather than student performance (i.e., grades). Thus, the EAC seeks to change the withdrawal policy so that these decisions can be made by individuals with the requisite knowledge and expertise to evaluate hardship.

Sincerely,

Margaret Christ, Chair  
Educational Affairs Committee

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu  
Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro

## Proposed Revisions

### ACADEMIC AFFAIRS POLICY 4.02-3, UNIVERSITY POLICY ON COURSE DROPS AND WITHDRAWALS

Students who withdraw from courses before the withdrawal deadline (two weeks after the midpoint, as specified by the official calendar) will receive a grade of W. Withdrawals from courses will not be permitted after the withdrawal deadline except in cases of hardship as determined by Student Care and Outreach (SCO) within the Division of Student Affairs. Students with an active financial or registration hold on their record must clear that hold before being able to withdraw from their coursework.

Students may drop one, some, or all of their classes during the drop/add period. Courses dropped in this manner do not appear on a student's transcript and are not considered as hours attempted for financial aid purposes. No grade is assigned for such courses. However, a student who wishes to withdraw from a course after the last day of the drop period for a term must withdraw through ATHENA (Online Student Information System).

If the student withdraws before the semester's withdrawal deadline, the student will receive a grade of W. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course due to excessive absences as defined in the course syllabus, and the student will receive a grade of W.

If the student does not initiate the withdrawal, the Registrar will notify the instructor and the student of the withdrawal.

If a student experiences significant personal hardship (e.g., medical or family emergency, prolonged illness), SCO can approve a hardship withdrawal from all courses in the term for which a student is currently registered **or in previous semesters (retroactive hardship withdrawals)**. In the case of an approved hardship withdrawal from all courses, the Registrar will assign grades of W for those classes. The instructor must be informed of the assignment of the W grade. ~~The deadline for final approval of a hardship withdrawal by SCO is the withdrawal deadline of the semester following the semester for which the hardship withdrawal is sought (e.g. withdrawal deadline of summer semester is the deadline for a spring semester hardship request). If the hardship withdrawal process is not complete by the withdrawal deadline of the following semester, a student must appeal for a retroactive hardship withdrawal from the Educational Affairs Committee.~~

**Retroactive hardship withdrawals are rarely granted if it has been more than two years since the last day of class for which the withdrawal is sought. Extraordinary justification must be shown. In the case of approved retroactive hardship withdrawals, the Registrar will assign a grade of W. The instructor who originally assigned the grade must be informed of the change of grade.**

A hardship withdrawal cannot ordinarily be used to withdraw selectively from some courses while remaining enrolled in other courses. Selective withdrawal will be permitted only under

exceptional circumstances. In these cases, SCO will document the hardship and work with the Registrar's Office to assign a withdrawal grade for each course.

Each year **during the fall semester**, SCO will submit a written report to the Educational Affairs Committee summarizing the number of hardship withdrawals granted (both complete and partial) within the past year and, in the case of partial hardship withdrawals, the circumstances justifying the use of a partial withdrawal.

~~Appeals for retroactive hardship withdrawals must be directed to the Educational Affairs Committee. Retroactive hardship withdrawals are rarely granted if it has been more than two years since the last day of class for which the withdrawal is sought. Extraordinary justification must be shown. In the case of approved retroactive hardship withdrawals, the Registrar will assign a grade of W. The instructor who originally assigned the grade must be informed of the change of grade.~~

If a student is suspended by the Office of Student Conduct following a violation of the University's Code of Conduct not related to academic dishonesty, the Office of Student Conduct may facilitate a University-initiated withdrawal from courses for which a student is registered for the term. The Registrar will assign grades of W for those classes. The instructor must be informed of the assignment of the W grade.

All probation and exclusion rules apply regardless of the circumstances of the withdrawal. For more information, see [General Academic Regulations related to Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal](#).

No student shall be withdrawn from a course for lack of a prerequisite after the end of one calendar week from the beginning of the term.

No refund is available for a reduction in hours due to individual course withdrawals that occur after the drop/add period.

Students should be aware that a reduction in their hours might result in the loss of full-time student status and thus affect their financial aid, scholarships, athletic and ticket eligibility, University housing accommodations, use of University resources and access to University facilities, immigration status for international students, Veterans Educational Benefits. Students should contact the appropriate office and their academic advisor with questions about the impact of their withdrawal from a course before initiating a withdrawal. Students who are returning from academic dismissal are advised to consult with their academic advisor prior to withdrawal because violation of the minimum enrollment requirements can lead to a second dismissal from the University. Veterans and dependents of veterans who receive educational benefits must notify the Veterans Education Benefits Area in the Office of the Registrar of any course load reductions.

## Revised Policy

### **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS POLICY 4.02-3, UNIVERSITY POLICY ON COURSE DROPS AND WITHDRAWALS**

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Students may drop one, some, or all of their classes during the drop/add period. Courses dropped in this manner do not appear on a student's transcript and are not considered as hours attempted for financial aid purposes. No grade is assigned for such courses. However, a student who wishes to withdraw from a course after the last day of the drop period for a term must withdraw through ATHENA (Online Student Information System).

If the student withdraws before the semester's withdrawal deadline, the student will receive a grade of W. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course due to excessive absences as defined in the course syllabus, and the student will receive a grade of W.

If the student does not initiate the withdrawal, the Registrar will notify the instructor and the student of the withdrawal.

If a student experiences significant personal hardship (e.g., medical or family emergency, prolonged illness), SCO can approve a hardship withdrawal from all courses in the term for which a student is currently registered or in previous semesters (retroactive hardship withdrawals). In the case of an approved hardship withdrawal from all courses, the Registrar will assign grades of W for those classes. The instructor must be informed of the assignment of the W grade.

Retroactive hardship withdrawals are rarely granted if it has been more than two years since the last day of class for which the withdrawal is sought. Extraordinary justification must be shown. In the case of approved retroactive hardship withdrawals, the Registrar will assign a grade of W. The instructor who originally assigned the grade must be informed of the change of grade.

A hardship withdrawal cannot ordinarily be used to withdraw selectively from some courses while remaining enrolled in other courses. Selective withdrawal will be permitted only under exceptional circumstances. In these cases, SCO will document the hardship and work with the Registrar's Office to assign a withdrawal grade for each course.

Each year during the fall semester, SCO will submit a written report to the Educational Affairs Committee summarizing the number of hardship withdrawals granted (both complete and partial) within the past year and, in the case of partial hardship withdrawals, the circumstances

justifying the use of a partial withdrawal.

If a student is suspended by the Office of Student Conduct following a violation of the University's Code of Conduct not related to academic dishonesty, the Office of Student Conduct may facilitate a University-initiated withdrawal from courses for which a student is registered for the term. The Registrar will assign grades of W for those classes. The instructor must be informed of the assignment of the W grade.

All probation and exclusion rules apply regardless of the circumstances of the withdrawal. For more information, see [General Academic Regulations related to Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal](#).

No student shall be withdrawn from a course for lack of a prerequisite after the end of one calendar week from the beginning of the term.

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Students should be aware that a reduction in their hours might result in the loss of full-time student status and thus affect their financial aid, scholarships, athletic and ticket eligibility, University housing accommodations, use of University resources and access to University facilities, immigration status for international students, Veterans Educational Benefits. Students should contact the appropriate office and their academic advisor with questions about the impact of their withdrawal from a course before initiating a withdrawal. Students who are returning from academic dismissal are advised to consult with their academic advisor prior to withdrawal because violation of the minimum enrollment requirements can lead to a second dismissal from the University. Veterans and dependents of veterans who receive educational benefits must notify the Veterans Education Benefits Area in the Office of the Registrar of any course load reductions.