

From: Kurt Ludwick, Chair, Academic Policies Committee
To: Darrell Mullins, President, Faculty Senate
Date: February 12, 2007
Re: Request to review suggested revisions to the grades “F” and “WP/WF” in the SU Catalog

Dr. Mullins,

In November ‘06, you forwarded to this committee a request from the Dean’s Council to consider its suggested revisions to the definitions of the grades “F”, “WP” and “WF” in the SU Catalog. Here are the committee’s responses to these suggestions:

From Dean’s Council – Item 1: On Page 50 of the 2005-2007 SU Catalog, our undergraduate grading system is defined. We noted for the grade of 'F' that it states, "The F grade is also given for late or unofficial withdrawals." We understand "unofficial withdrawals" to mean that the student has not opted for a 'W' before the end of the Schedule Adjustment Period, or the student stopped coming to class and did not make proper appeal through a dean's office for a waiver of policy. But what's a "late withdrawal?" If they stop coming to class & performing required materials, the student will receive a 'F' for the course. There was no late withdrawal. So we ask that the sentence above say only that "The 'F' grade is also given for unofficial withdrawals."

Academic Policies Committee Response: The committee agrees that the definition of the “F” grade in the SU Catalog needs to be clarified. However, we believe that the requested modification does not go far enough. The problem is that there is no formal definition of the term “*unofficial withdrawal*” in the SU Catalog; this omission could easily lead to inconsistent interpretation and application of the “F” grade.

Therefore, the Academic Policies Committee recommends the following revision to the SU Catalog and to the SU Faculty Handbook. (Text to be removed is crossed out. There is no new text to be added.)

F - Failure. Inadequate achievement. ~~The “F” grade is also given for late or unofficial withdrawals.~~

From Dean’s Council – Item 2: The 'WP/WF' grades. The Catalog currently states on Page 50, WP/WF - "Official withdrawal from the university after the Schedule Adjustment Period, denoting passing or failing status at the time of withdrawal." To give deans working with faculty more options to handle the wide variety of appeal cases they deal with, we recommend that the phrase "from the university" be dropped. Official withdrawal after the end of the Schedule Adjustment Period means it must be approved by a dean. Right now with the current Catalog wording, the dean's only options for these appeals are denial or a 'W.' An approved appeal would appear on the student's transcript as the same 'W' a student gets when they drop a course during the Schedule Adjustment Period. With having the 'WP/WF' as possibilities for individual courses, the dean in consultation with the faculty member can define to a little better degree the student's academic situation when they withdrew.

Academic Policies Committee Response: The Academic Policies Committee recommends the following revision. (Text to be added is in italicized boldface. Text to be removed is crossed out.)

WP/WF - Withdrawal Passing/Withdrawal Failing.

Official withdrawal ~~from the University~~ ***from a course*** after the schedule adjustment period, denoting passing or failing status at the time of the withdrawal.

As a side note – this revision would correct the current discrepancy between the WP/WF definition in the SU Catalog and the WP/WF definition in the SU Faculty Handbook. (The revised definition is taken directly from the current version of the SU Faculty Handbook.)

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Ludwick
Chair, Academic Policies Committee