

Academic Policies Committee
January 13th, 2014

Charge:

Please review the Drop/Add Period described in the Academic Catalog and canvas faculty opinion to consider the advantages and disadvantages of altering the current practice of allowing three days for drop/add during the short Winter and Summer terms. If the committee believes the schedule should be changed, please offer a revision to the Senate for consideration. Please plan to report to the Senate by February 25, 2014.

The Academic Policies Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the current drop/add period for winter and summer short semesters (winter sessions are customarily 14 meeting days while summer sessions are 20 days), and *determined that the three day period should be shortened to two days*. This conclusion was reached after considering and addressing many factors involved.

Students need to have time both for advisement regarding class needs/placement and to meet a professor and review a syllabus, so having a one-day drop/add period is impractical. At the same time, the current three day period enables students to miss the equivalent of three weeks of a given semester, and is thus excessive in relation to the one week drop/add period of a traditional fall/spring semester. Catching up three weeks of work in the shorter semester is a huge challenge, if not impossible (in the case of, for example, classes where labs are set-up and required). The middle ground of a two day drop/add period satisfies both the students' need for advising and class meeting experience and the need for the students to be present in class. Students need to have the time and opportunity actually to attend the class.

Given the length of class offerings in winter and summer, only one change of class will probably be possible under the proposed shorter drop/add period. Given the more limited time to enroll in and move between classes, some students may find their time to degree expanded. Students on probation need to be able to find the best course fit for their academic success; reducing the drop/add period makes the decision-making process more time constricted. However, students are surely liable to be more successful if they are required to be present in a class from its beginning. There is a potential loss of revenue to the University if the shortened drop/add period does not allow all students time to enroll in a class.

The administrative challenge will be compressed under the proposed reduction of drop/add period too. Chairs, Deans, and Advising Coordinators will have a smaller time window in which to guide and place students for their best academic outcomes. The registrar's office and departmental offices will be fully engaged as soon as the University reopens in January, particularly, and will need to be fully staffed at the start of summer sessions too. Other administrative work is also involved in adjusting the drop/add period, since refunds, veterans' benefits, and financial aid are all tied to the drop/add and beginning and end of semester dates.

Faculty who wish to allow students to add their class beyond the established proposed two day drop/add period will still be able to use the drop/add form to allow for faculty exceptions. Of the 96 faculty who answered the question in the APC's non-empirical survey last year, "Are you in favor of the drop/add period for winter and summer sessions being reduced from 3 days to 2 days?", 67.7% said yes. The full comments from the survey are attached below.

Winter & Summer Drop/Add Period Adjustment

1. Are you in favor of the drop/add period for winter and summer sessions being reduced from 3 days to 2 days?

Answer Options

Response Percent

Yes

67.7%

No

32.3%

answered question
skipped question

2. Additional Comments:

Answer Options

Response Count

24

answered question

24

skipped question

73

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	Nov 22, 2013 7:02 PM	This would be a definite improvement. An argument for a one day period (at least in the winter term) could be made; three days is definitely too long. Two days makes up 10% of the summer term (and 13% of the winter term), compared to the 7% in the spring fall. Two days in summer or (especially) winter is more than long enough.
2	Nov 21, 2013 7:41 PM	Far too much material is covered for students to catch up after 3 days.
3	Nov 19, 2013 3:48 PM	I'd reduce it to one day if I could.
4	Nov 18, 2013 6:47 PM	By the third day, they've already missed a substantial amount of class.
5	Nov 14, 2013 9:30 PM	Students who come in late miss a substantial amount of work. In one day we cover one weeks worth of lecture and lab. Miss three days and you are setting them up for failure.
6	Nov 14, 2013 7:51 PM	It seems to me it would allow winter classes (particularly) to have the legitimacy of one day being the equivalent of one week.
7	Nov 14, 2013 5:40 PM	The session is very short. Students should benefit from having a couple extra days to study the syllabus and consider if they will be able to meet expectations.

8	Nov 14, 2013 5:02 PM	<p>-It is unfair to the students. If they do not add until the 3rd day, it is like missing the first 2 weeks of the course. Often some assignment due dates have already passed by that point. It is also very difficult for any student to get up to speed on a course this quickly, so it is often very difficult for them to do well on the next few assignments after they add the course.</p> <p>-It is unfair to the instructor. No matter how they resolve the situation, they will have to treat this student differently than all the other students in the course. One option is to let them turn things in late, which creates more work for the instructor, and gives the student an unfair advantage over the students who met the deadline (as well as forcing them to do twice as much work during those first few days after they add the course). The other option of the instructor is to not let the student make up any work they have missed, which creates an ethical dilemma when they assign final letter grades.</p> <p>-An additional factor to consider is that many students order their textbooks after they add a class. Even if they buy the book the same day they add the course, it puts them behind an additional day. Increasingly though, students order the book from a website which may take up to a week to deliver the textbook, which means a late-adding student may not get their textbook until the course is at least half over.</p> <p>-Yes, there is a difference between 2 and 3 days (just as their is between 2 and 3 weeks into the Fall or Spring semester). The short courses in the Winter work wonderfully for students who are prepared to start the course on the first day, and I feel this option should be reserved for those students who are prepared to start the course when it begins.</p>
9	Nov 14, 2013 3:49 PM	I don't feel particularly strong one way or the other, but there was no "undecided" option.
10	Nov 14, 2013 3:42 PM	If anything, it should be extended, not reduced. Although a lot of course material is covered in 2-3 days, our students aren't very reactive nor are they good time managers.
11	Nov 14, 2013 3:18 PM	Three days is roughly equivalent to three weeks during a regular semester, so that seems too long... I do think that extending the W date by a day or two might be a good idea though. At present, I don't think it extends as long (in a relative sense) as the W date during the regular semesters.
12	Nov 14, 2013 3:16 PM	By the third day, it would be equivalent of three weeks into the fall/spring session. I would prefer it be after the first day.
13	Nov 14, 2013 3:13 PM	I teach a summer class and I would rather keep it at 3 days.
14	Nov 14, 2013 3:12 PM	Yes, for winter as it is shorter, but No for summer.

15	Nov 14, 2013 2:56 PM	When teaching science labs many crucial basic techniques are taught during the first couple days of class. Students who miss those first days are at a disadvantage for the rest of the term. Because of equipment and supply requirements it's extremely difficult to arrange for a redo or makeup for those first labs when they cover a time frame of 3-4 hours each. I would like to see the drop/add for winter and summer term reduced to 1 day. The course content delivered in each day of winter and summer term is approximately equivalent to the amount of content given in a week of the regular semester. As such, I would ideally like see the drop/add for winter/summer reduced to 1 day making it equivalent to the one week of drop/add during the regular semester.
16	Nov 14, 2013 2:51 PM	I think it's hard enough to decide whether to stay in class after only three days, even during the shortened winter and summer sessions. I don't see any problems in keeping the drop period as it is currently constituted.
17	Nov 14, 2013 2:48 PM	Missing one day is the same as missing a week. We only allow one week in the fall and spring...so two days is fair.
18	Nov 14, 2013 2:38 PM	How does this help students?
19	Nov 14, 2013 2:38 PM	Actually I think it should only be one day. If each day is the equivalent to an entire week during the regular semester, then even 2 days means someone has missed 2 weeks worth of material!
20	Nov 14, 2013 2:23 PM	Absolutely in favor of a shorter time period. For example, this Wintermester 2014 has drop/add open until Jan. 6. Classes start on Jan 2nd. I do an online course and by Jan 6th someone that registers has missed almost 1/4 of the class (as online runs through the weekend etc.). While they can make up some of the work, quite a bit of that first material will be missed by them. PLEASE shorten the drop period for these short sessions.
21	Nov 14, 2013 2:21 PM	In these cases, each day of lecture is the equivalent of one week of lectures. So a three day drop/add period is equivalent to letting a student drop a class after three weeks into a semester. So I think two days is very reasonable.
22	Nov 14, 2013 2:07 PM	no opinion since I have not taught in these sessions
23	Nov 14, 2013 2:04 PM	This makes perfect sense. I'd even be in favor of changing it to one day. If we are to go by COMAR, one day of a winter class is equal to one week of a regular semester. It is ludicrous to be expected to catch a student up on three weeks of class material in such a short teaching session.
24	Nov 14, 2013 2:03 PM	This is a waivable policy regardless.

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Response Count

65

31

96

1