

Registrar Toews,

Thank you for your prompt and detailed response to the Senate's inquiry regarding the circumstances and general practices regarding the Grade Change Policy. The faculty appreciate the work you do on behalf of Southeastern's students and faculty, and the information you have provided underscores the importance of maintaining accurate records of attendance and notifying the Registrar's office when students stop attending a class.

However, having read your response, the Senate's core objection remains the same - that regardless of the individual circumstances and while it was done indirectly by a change in enrollment status, the net effect was to override a faculty member's final determination of a course grade without their notification or consent.

While a faculty member's final grade determination is not absolute, changes to the final grades are initiated by faculty - either by the originating faculty member via the grade change form, or by the Academic Appeals Committee/Graduate Council (whose authority to override the original determination is explicitly granted by the official representative body of the faculty). In both cases there is feedback to the faculty member and the department chair, and the long-standing practice of the Academic Appeals committee is to solicit both information from the faculty member and their opinion on the appeal before making a determination. When a faculty member wants to change a grade from their own courses the grade change form need not go to Academic Appeals or the Graduate Council as it is not a matter of overriding the instructor's judgment.

That said, the Senate does not object to the more general practice granting of exceptions to the withdrawal dates in the academic calendar, provided that:

- 1) Such exceptions do not effect a change in a "final" grade, regardless of processing status. Exceptions which would change a "final" grade should be done via the grade change form (if the faculty member is willing) or the existing appeal process (if not).
- 2) Records are kept to help address equity or accreditation issues that may arise in the future.

The Senate's recommendation would be to:

- 1) Formalize the Registrar's authority to grant exceptions to the withdrawal dates on the academic calendar, with the provisos above, by incorporating it into the position description in APPM 2.3.1.
- 2) Update the withdrawal policy in the Student Handbook/Course Catalog to let all students know the option to ask for an exception exists and what the necessary requirements are (documentation, etc.).
- 3) Periodically send summary statistics on the exceptions to an appropriate faculty body (such as Academic Council).
- 4) If possible with the new Colleague system, have automated notices sent to faculty about roster changes in their courses during the course period.

Recommendation 3 will hopefully better communicate the work the Registrar's Office does to the faculty and further emphasize the importance of attendance tracking.

Sincerely,

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