




**SENATE LEGISLATION APPROVAL**

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Date:</b>              | February 15, 2013  |
| <b>To:</b>                | Wallace D. Loh   |
| <b>From:</b>              | Martha Nell Smith<br>Chair, University Senate  |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Proposal to Implement a Retroactive Withdrawal Policy at the University of Maryland  |
| <b>Senate Document #:</b> | 11-12-30   |

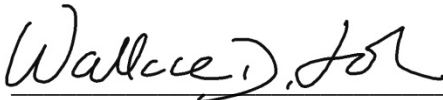
I am pleased to forward for your consideration the attached legislation entitled, "Proposal to Implement a Retroactive Withdrawal Policy at the University of Maryland." Christopher Davis, Chair of the Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee, presented the proposal. The University Senate approved the proposal at its February 14, 2013 meeting.

We request that you inform the Senate Office of your decision as well as any subsequent action related to your conclusion.

Enclosure: Proposal to Implement a Retroactive Withdrawal Policy at the University of Maryland  
 Senate Document # 11-12-30

MNS/rm

- Cc: Mary Ann Rankin, Senior Vice President & Provost  
 Reka Montfort, Executive Secretary and Director, University Senate  
 Juan Uriagereka, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs  
 Terry Roach, Executive Assistant to the President  
 Janet Turnbull, President's Legal Office  
 Elizabeth Beise, Associate Provost for Academic Planning & Programs  
 Sylvia B. Andrews, Academic Affairs  
 Adrian Cornelius, University Registrar  
 Donna Hamilton, Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Approved:  Date: 02-20-2013  
 Wallace D. Loh  
 President



## University Senate TRANSMITTAL FORM

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Senate Document #:</b>           | 11-12-30  |
| <b>PCC ID #:</b>                    | N/A   |
| <b>Title:</b>                       | Proposal to Implement a Retroactive Withdrawal Policy at the University of Maryland   |
| <b>Presenter:</b>                   | Christopher Davis, Chair, Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee   |
| <b>Date of SEC Review:</b>          | February 1, 2013  |
| <b>Date of Senate Review:</b>       | February 14, 2013   |
| <b>Voting (highlight one):</b>      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On resolutions or recommendations one by one, or</li> <li style="background-color: #e0e0e0;">2. In a single vote</li> <li>3. To endorse entire report</li> </ol>  |
|                                     |   |
| <b>Statement of Issue:</b>          | In February 2012, an undergraduate student submitted a proposal to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) regarding the creation and implementation of a retroactive withdrawal policy for the University of Maryland. The proposer asked that the Senate consider recommending a policy that would allow students to retroactively withdraw from a previous semester.  |
| <b>Relevant Policy # &amp; URL:</b> | Undergraduate Catalog, Section 4. Registration, Academic Requirements, and Regulations: Withdrawal and Leave of Absence<br><a href="http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm">http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm</a>  |
| <b>Recommendation:</b>              | <p>The Senate APAS Committee does not recommend the creation of a formal retroactive withdrawal policy. Rather, the committee recommends that the section on Withdrawal and Leave of Absence in the University's Undergraduate Catalog be revised to clarify the standing procedures for retroactive withdrawal, as follows (recommended edits are noted in blue font):</p> <p><b>Withdrawal:</b> A withdrawal is available anytime between the first and last day of classes. Students must submit written notice of withdrawal to the Office of the Registrar no later than the last day of classes. <span style="color: blue;">In exceptional cases, a retroactive withdrawal may be granted based on documented requests in which extenuating circumstances significantly impaired the student's ability to complete the semester and officially withdraw by the established</span></p> |

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
|                               | <p>semester deadlines. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, medical or psychological causes. A student's return to the University is contingent upon the conditions outlined in Return to the University below.</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>Additional Withdrawal/Leave of Absence Information:</b> The effective date of withdrawal or leave of absence for the purposes of refunds is the date that the notice is received by the Office of the Registrar. Notation of withdrawal/leave of absence and the effective date will be posted to the student's academic record. Instructors and college offices will be notified of all withdrawn students. The deadline date for submitting the withdrawal for each semester is the last day of classes. Students should contact the <del>Office of Undergraduate Admissions</del> <a href="#">Student Success Office</a> for reenrollment information.</p>  |
| <p><b>Committee Work:</b></p> | <p>The APAS Committee received the charge regarding retroactive withdrawals at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year. The committee consulted with representatives of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Studies about the current processes related to withdrawal and reinstatement. The APAS Committee also consulted with the Registrar's Office and confirmed that there is a protocol in place for handling requests for retroactive withdrawals, but that there is no official policy regarding retroactive withdrawals. The APAS Committee reviewed similar policies, procedures, and practices at peer and other institutions.</p> <p>The APAS Committee decided that the section of the Undergraduate Catalog on Withdrawal and Leave of Absence should be updated to include information about how to request a retroactive withdrawal. In conjunction with the Office of the Registrar, the APAS Committee crafted language for insertion into the catalog. It also identified an area within the section on Withdrawal and Leave of Absence on reenrollment that needs to be updated, since it was confirmed that the Student Success Office is the clearinghouse for services and resources to assist students in completing their undergraduate degree, including coordination of reenrollment.</p> <p>At its meeting on December 12, 2012, the APAS Committee voted unanimously in favor of recommending that the Withdrawal and Leave of Absence section of the Undergraduate Catalog be edited for purposes of clarity.</p> |

|                                    |   |
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| <b>Alternatives:</b>               | The Senate could choose not to approve the recommended changes to the Undergraduate Catalog, Section 4. Registration, Academic Requirements, and Regulations: Withdrawal and Leave of Absence. The section on Withdrawal and Leave of Absence would remain as is currently written. |
| <b>Risks:</b>                      | There are no associated risks.  |
| <b>Financial Implications:</b>     | There are no related financial implications.  |
| <b>Further Approvals Required:</b> | Senate Approval, Presidential Approval.   |

## **Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee**

### **Report – Senate Document 11-12-30**

#### **Proposal to Implement a Retroactive Withdrawal Policy at the University**

**January 2013**

#### **BACKGROUND**

In February 2012, an undergraduate student submitted a proposal to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) regarding the creation and implementation of a retroactive withdrawal policy for the University of Maryland (UM). The proposer asked that the Senate consider recommending a policy that would allow students to retroactively withdraw from a previous semester. The proposal asserted that by removing a semester of failing grades, an undergraduate student's grade point average might be improved, and the student might have a greater chance of successful matriculation to graduate school or in securing a well-paid job following graduation. The proposal also included suggestions for changes to the current reenrollment process, in which a student who leaves the University due to mental health issues could return to the University within four semesters without having to reapply. The proposal noted that other institutions of higher education have implemented a retroactive withdrawal policy for students who experience extenuating circumstances that require them to leave school or fail to complete the semester without formally withdrawing.

The SEC reviewed this proposal at its meeting on February 22, 2012. The SEC charged the Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee with reviewing the proposal. The SEC asked APAS to determine whether a formal retroactive withdrawal policy should be created for the University and whether the University's Undergraduate Catalog should be revised, as appropriate.

#### **CURRENT PRACTICE**

According to the 2012-2013 Undergraduate Catalog, a withdrawal is available any time between the first and last day of classes. Students must submit written notice of withdrawal to the Office of the Registrar no later than the last day of classes. A leave of absence is a type of withdrawal and is available for students wishing to take time away from the University with the intention of returning the following semester. The leave of absence status is especially helpful for recipients of federal financial aid because they are not considered to have withdrawn provided they do return and complete the following semester. Students may apply for a leave of absence only during the last 60 days of the semester. Normally, a student may withdraw or take a leave of absence from the University only once during matriculation as an undergraduate. Students who find it necessary to leave the University are required to petition the Faculty Review Board in order to return; students who have earned a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA, with no previous withdrawal or leave of absence, are exempt from this requirement. Students who withdraw or take a leave of absence while on academic probation, or

those returning from dismissal, are always required to petition the Faculty Review Board. Students are also required to complete a Reinstatement Advising Meeting with their academic college advising office before the petition will be considered by the Faculty Review Board.

## **COMMITTEE WORK**

The APAS Committee received the charge regarding retroactive withdrawals at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year. The committee began its review by consulting with representatives of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Studies about the current processes related to withdrawal and reinstatement.

The committee also consulted with the Registrar's Office and confirmed that there is a protocol in place for handling requests for retroactive withdrawals, but that there is no official policy regarding retroactive withdrawals in the Consolidated University System of Maryland and University of Maryland College Park Policies and Procedures Manual. The Registrar's Office has a process in place for students to request leaves of absence or withdrawal from the University; the process does not make distinctions between the reasons why a student may request a leave of absence or withdrawal. While the University's Undergraduate Catalog explains how students can submit written notice of withdrawal any time between the first and last day of classes, the Undergraduate Catalog does not currently explain how retroactive withdrawals may be granted.

In consultation with the Registrar's Office, the committee learned that there is an appeals process in place for students who leave the University abruptly and who would like to retroactively address any resulting negative consequences (e.g. failing grades, financial obligations, etc.). Such students submit their appeals, along with any supporting documents, particularly those related to extenuating circumstances (e.g. health and mental health issues, family issues, financial issues, etc.) to the Registrar's Office for review. The committee found that the practice of not distinguishing between different reasons for withdrawal is valid and equitable. The committee is not supportive of the idea of singling out mental illness as a reason for withdrawal or leave of absence. The committee prefers to continue allowing students the flexibility to file a request for retroactive withdrawal based on extenuating circumstances, including mental health issues, which significantly impair the student's ability to complete the semester and officially withdraw by the established semester deadlines.

The committee also agreed that the proposer's concerns about the difficulty in obtaining information on the topic of retroactive withdrawals were valid. When the committee consulted with the Registrar's Office, representatives confirmed that the office had prioritized a complete website review, and that changes to the website's format and content were forthcoming. The Registrar's Office confirmed that it would include added details on processes and services to its updated website. During Fall 2012, the APAS Committee met with an Assistant Registrar who oversees the appeal process. The Assistant Registrar met with the committee on two occasions to discuss the process

and present potential text that would help to clarify and codify the process in the University's Undergraduate Catalog.

The APAS Committee also reviewed similar withdrawal policies, practices, and procedures at a number of peer and other institutions across the country, including the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; University of California, Berkeley; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Michigan; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; University of Texas, Austin; Penn State University; University of Florida; and University of Kentucky.

The committee decided that the section of the University's Undergraduate Catalog on Withdrawal and Leave of Absence should be updated to include information about how to request a retroactive withdrawal. In conjunction with the Office of the Registrar, the committee crafted language for insertion into the catalog. It also identified an area within the section on Withdrawal and Leave of Absence on reenrollment that needs to be updated, since it was confirmed that the Student Success Office is the clearinghouse for services and resources to assist students in completing their undergraduate degree, including coordination of reenrollment. At its meeting on December 12, 2012, the committee voted unanimously in favor of recommending that the Withdrawal and Leave of Absence section of the Undergraduate Catalog be edited for purposes of clarity.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Senate APAS Committee does not recommend the creation of a formal retroactive withdrawal policy. Rather, the committee recommends that the section on Withdrawal and Leave of Absence in the University's Undergraduate Catalog be revised to clarify the standing procedures for retroactive withdrawal, as follows (recommended edits are noted in blue font):

**Withdrawal:** A withdrawal is available anytime between the first and last day of classes. Students must submit written notice of withdrawal to the Office of the Registrar no later than the last day of classes. *In exceptional cases, a retroactive withdrawal may be granted based on documented requests in which extenuating circumstances significantly impaired the student's ability to complete the semester and officially withdraw by the established semester deadlines. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, medical or psychological causes.* A student's return to the University is contingent upon the conditions outlined in Return to the University below.

...

**Additional Withdrawal/Leave of Absence Information:** The effective date of withdrawal or leave of absence for the purposes of refunds is the date that the notice is received by the Office of the Registrar. Notation of withdrawal/leave of absence and the effective date will be posted to the student's academic record. Instructors and college offices will be notified of all withdrawn students. The deadline date for submitting the withdrawal for each semester is the last day of classes. Students should contact the *Office of Undergraduate Admissions Student Success Office* for reenrollment information.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Recommended Changes to the University’s Undergraduate Catalog

Appendix 2 – Charge from the Senate Executive Committee, April 2012

Appendix 3 – Proposal from Samantha Roman, February 2012



**Recommended Changes are listed in Blue/Bold Font**

*Excerpt from the University's Undergraduate Catalog  
Section 4. Registration, Academic Requirements, and Regulations  
<http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1586/s/1526>*

**Withdrawal and Leave of Absence**

Students admitted to the University of Maryland are expected to make regular and consistent progress towards the completion of their degree. However, the University understands that in exceptional circumstances a student may find it necessary to completely withdraw from all classes. The University considers such an interruption to be very serious as it delays normal progress towards the degree. Students should not withdraw for frivolous reasons or to avoid the consequences of ignoring their academic responsibilities. Any student considering withdrawal is strongly encouraged to meet with his or her academic college advisor before leaving the University.

**Potential Implications:** Withdrawing or taking a leave of absence from the University may have serious implications for international students, students receiving financial aid or students residing in on-campus housing. Students are advised to contact the appropriate offices before finalizing withdrawal or leave of absence plans.

Student Financial Services Office, 1135 Lee Building, 301-314-9000  
Department of Resident Life, 2100 Annapolis Hall, 301-314-2100  
Office of International Services, 2111 Holzapfel Hall, 301-314-7740

**Withdrawal:** A withdrawal is available anytime between the first and last day of classes. Students must submit written notice of withdrawal to the Office of the Registrar no later than the last day of classes. **In exceptional cases, a retroactive withdrawal may be granted based on documented requests in which extenuating circumstances significantly impaired the student's ability to complete the semester and officially withdraw by the established semester deadlines. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, medical or psychological causes.** A student's return to the University is contingent upon the conditions outlined in *Return to the University* below.

**Leave of Absence:** A leave of absence is a type of withdrawal and is available for students wishing to take time away from the University with the intention of returning the following semester. The leave of absence status is especially helpful for recipients of federal financial aid because they are not considered to be withdrawn provided they do return and complete the following semester. Students may apply for a leave of absence only during the last 60 days of the semester. A student's return to the University is contingent upon the conditions outlined in *Return to the University* below.

**Return to the University:** Normally, a student may withdraw or take a leave of absence from the University only once during matriculation as an undergraduate. Students who find it necessary to leave the University are required to petition the Faculty Review Board in order to return. Students who have earned a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA, with no previous withdrawal or leave of absence, are exempt from this requirement. Students who withdraw or take a leave of absence while on academic probation, or those returning from dismissal, are always required to petition the Faculty Review Board. Students are also required to complete a Reinstatement Advising Meeting with their academic college advising office before the petition will be considered by the Faculty Review Board.

**Additional Withdrawal/Leave of Absence Information:** The effective date of withdrawal or leave of absence for the purposes of refunds is the date that the notice is received by the Office of the


Registrar. Notation of withdrawal/leave of absence and the effective date will be posted to the student's academic record. Instructors and college offices will be notified of all withdrawn students. The deadline date for submitting the withdrawal for each semester is the last day of classes. Students should contact the ~~Office of Undergraduate Admissions~~ **Student Success Office** for reenrollment information.

The repeat policy will not apply to courses taken during the academic semester from which the student is officially withdrawn.

**Military Call-ups:** It is the intent of the University of Maryland, College Park, to facilitate the withdrawal or change in registration and the reenrollment of students who are called to active military duty during the semester. The student (or a representative) should take a copy of the military orders to the Office of the Registrar and process a withdrawal or change in registration papers. Detailed information about this process may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar. Withdrawal for active military service will have no effect on any subsequent request to withdraw from the University.



**University Senate  
CHARGE**

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Date:</b>              | April 10, 2012  |
| <b>To:</b>                | Robert Buchanan<br>Chair, Academic Procedures & Standards   |
| <b>From:</b>              | Eric Kasischke <br>Chair, University Senate |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Proposal to Implement a Retroactive Withdrawal Policy at the University of Maryland   |
| <b>Senate Document #:</b> | 11-12-30  |
| <b>Deadline:</b>          | March 30, 2013  |

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) requests that the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee review the attached proposal entitled, “Proposal to Implement a Retroactive Withdrawal Policy at the University of Maryland” and make recommendations on whether the Undergraduate Catalog’s procedures for Withdrawal and Leave of Absence should be revised.

Specifically, we ask that you:

1. Review the University’s Undergraduate Catalog-Withdrawal and Leave of Absence section:  
<http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1586/s/1526>
2. Consult with the proposer to discuss her specific concerns about the current procedures.
3. Consult with representatives of the Office of the Registrar on their current procedures and the impact of the proposed changes.
4. Consult with representatives of the University’s Health Center on data related to student mental health cases on our campus.
5. Consult with representatives of the Office of the Provost on the current procedures and their impact on the academic mission of the University.
6. Review similar withdrawal procedures at our peer institutions.
7. Consider whether the University should create a formal retroactive withdrawal policy.

8. Consult with the University's Office of Legal Affairs.
9. If appropriate, recommend whether the University's Undergraduate Catalog should be revised and a formal policy created.
10. If appropriate, make further related recommendations.

We ask that you submit your report and recommendations to the Senate Office no later than March 30, 2013. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.

## Executive Summary

On college campuses across the nation, mental illness is a significant barrier to student success, often causing a student to miss class or leave school altogether to seek treatment. The University of Maryland should take steps to help students experiencing psychological distress by making it simpler for students to return after an extended absence and by implementing a policy allowing for retroactive withdrawal from a previous semester.

Within any given 12-month period, 26.2% of Americans over the age of 18 experience a diagnoseable mental health disorder (Kessler et al., 2005). This means statistically, there are approximately 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students on campus every academic year coping with a psychological disorder. Additionally, among people with a serious mental illness (which includes major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and borderline personality disorder), young adults ages 18-24 are the least likely to seek help, with less than 50% receiving treatment for their disorder(s) (NAMI, 2011; NIMH, 2010).

For students that experience the onset or exacerbation of mental illness while at the University of Maryland, College Park, there are many resources available on campus. However, sometimes a student's illness is of such severity that the student fails to seek help, to attend class, or to complete his or her work; this student may ultimately have to leave the university, whether from academic dismissal or to seek treatment. It has come to my attention that the university's reinstatement policy may hinder a student with a mental illness from successfully re-enrolling in classes, and the lack of a retroactive withdrawal policy may prevent that student from achieving further success.

This proposal includes implementation of a policy which would allow students to petition the Faculty Review Board to withdraw from a semester prior to a period of absence due to psychological distress and/or extenuating circumstances that negatively affected the student's academic performance during that semester. By removing a semester of failing grades, a student's GPA may be improved and the student may have a greater chance of successful matriculation to graduate school or in securing a well-paid job following graduation.

Additionally, this proposal includes changes to the current re-instatement policy in which a student who must leave the university due to mental health issues can return to the school within 4 semesters without having to reapply or defend his/her case before the Faculty Review Board.

This change would also require documentation from a mental health professional attesting to the student's treatment and ability to return to school, if the student left for mental health reasons.

These changes will only benefit the students at the University of Maryland, College Park. Indeed, many other universities across the nation have implemented a similar retroactive withdrawal policy for students who experience extenuating circumstances that require them to leave school or else fail to complete the semester without formally withdrawing. Among these schools are some of our aspirational peers, including the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Even our sister institution, University of Maryland, Baltimore County has a retroactive withdrawal policy in place. In order to remain competitive and further care for its students' mental health, the university should also implement this policy. It would cost the university nothing to make these policy changes, and the proposed changes utilize an organization that is already in place, the Faculty Review Board, which would allow for a smooth policy transition.

I urge you to consider the potential benefits to both the student population and the greater campus community in supporting these proposed policy changes. By supporting and implementing this policy, the university not only directly shows students that mental health matters, but also that it does not have to be a barrier to higher education.

# A Proposal to Implement a Retroactive Withdrawal Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park

Samantha Roman

February 2012

Prepared for the University Senate

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## Introduction

In the 1960s, approximately 10% of college students experienced emotional conflicts severe enough to warrant professional help, 3-4% experienced depression severe enough to impair their work, and 0.2% experienced thoughts of suicide (Farnsworth, 1966, p. vi). Today, approximately 25% of college students have a diagnosable mental illness, 44% report symptoms of depression, and 7% of young adults (15-24) experience thoughts of suicide (Borchard, 2010; NIMH, 2010). Furthermore, levels of anxiety that would have been considered “high” in the 1950’s, today are considered “average” (Sharkin, 2006, p.5).

Why the prevalence of mental illness in college students has risen so dramatically in the last half century has been the center of much debate and research. One contribution may be that more students with psychological disabilities have been able to enroll in college after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990; these students also have access to increasingly effective treatments that allow them to better manage their symptoms (Sharkin, 2006, p. 8). Students today may be more susceptible to stressors, or have more stressors than they have had in the past: uncertain economic futures, increasing pressures to succeed, and increasing peer-pressure due to increased social networking. In addition to the fact that most mental illnesses manifest during young adulthood, genetic predisposition to such illnesses might be enhanced by stressors such as homesickness, anxiety, relationship conflict, and alcohol or drug use (Fisher, 1994, p. 39). In addition, the current academic culture encourages success in a stressful environment and rewards such performance with entrance to prestigious graduate programs and high-paying jobs after graduation (Sharkin, 2006, p. 10).

Regardless of the causes of mental illness, since the 1980s, the number of students seeking help has significantly risen and counseling centers across the US have reported greater numbers of students presenting with increasingly severe psychological problems (Sharkin, 2006, p.4). Mental health is not a problem that only occurs on other college campuses or one that is relevant only when a tragic, high-profile case like Columbine High School or Virginia Tech is in the news. Student mental illness is a growing problem on our own campus. In the last year alone, Mental Health Services in the University Health Center has seen an 18.8% increase in the number of overall mental health appointments, a 22.2% increase in psychiatric medication management appointments, and a 90.9% increase in the number of mental health triage interviews. Additionally, the university has begun to implement a waiting list for students seeking therapy with a certified therapist or psychiatrist (M. Hopkinson, personal communication, November 8, 2011).

Students with a mental illness are less likely to enroll in a university and are more likely to drop out than students without a mental illness (Hartley, 2010). When they do matriculate to a university, it may increase the burden on the school to care for them, and students still may not receive the treatment they need. A case study of students withdrawing from Dartmouth College showed that depression was the cause of students' difficulties in approximately half of the withdrawals (Meilman et al., 1992). It is increasingly more important that the university take care to ensure success for its students, including those that experience psychological distress while enrolled. Statistically, the median age of onset for all mental health disorders is in the late teens through the early twenties, although specific onsets vary by disorder; this puts college students in the precarious position of being exposed to multiple, new stressors at a time when

mental illness is most likely to develop, especially for those students with a genetic predisposition or family history of mental illness (Kessler et al., 2007).

### **Psychological Distress Affects Academics**

Students experiencing the onset or exacerbation of a mental health disorder may find that their symptoms interfere with class attendance, concentration, memory, motivation, persistence, and study habits, which are all integral to success in the college environment (Sharkin, 2006, p. 10). They are less likely to manage their study environment efficiently, to persist in their studies, or to seek academic assistance when needed, with academic performance being particularly negatively affected in cases of depression and substance abuse (Brackney & Karabenick, 1995; Sharkin, 2006, p. 11). Students may or may not be receiving treatment for such problems and have access to a note written by a mental health professional. University policy V-1.00(G) states, “The instructor shall establish a written policy for non-consecutive medically necessitated absences beyond a single lecture, recitation, or lab” (University of Maryland Policies and Procedures, 2011).

This means that students experiencing psychological distress must depend on the understanding of their professors to allow them to make up missed work, which can be significantly more difficult without medical documentation or if the student feels ashamed and is unwilling to discuss his or her illness. Faculty who have had a personal experience with mental illness (friends, family, etc.) tend to have more positive perceptions of students with mental disorders than faculty who did not have a similar experience (Brockelman et al., 2006). It seems reckless to base a student’s academic success on the personal experiences of the faculty teaching

their classes, especially considering that faculty must ensure the missed work is for a legitimate reason, which is nearly impossible to prove without medical documentation.

### *Why Grades Matter*

It may seem insignificant to some, but a GPA may be the single most significant value when students apply to graduate and professional programs or to entry-level jobs to begin their careers. It has been proven that people rely heavily on nominal performance indicators, like GPA, as an indicator of success while simultaneously failing to take into account information about the environment from which it came (Moore et. al. 2009). Furthermore, although many application processes may allow students to explain a semester in which they failed every class, every interviewer may not be open-minded or sensitive to the difficulties that accompany mental illness. Again, this bases the student's success on the personal experiences and biases of the interviewer; this may be very risky considering the fact that people with mental illnesses are one of the most stigmatized groups in today's society. Indeed, employers are more likely to hire someone with a physical than a mental disability (Stuart, 2006).

Although students with mental health disabilities should be encouraged to openly seek treatment for their disorder, they should not have to justify a low GPA by discussing details of their illness. More than half of the individuals with a severe mental illness report some experience with discrimination, most often occurring in employment, housing, and interactions with law enforcement (Corrigan et al., 2003). Due to these difficulties, the university should attempt to help its students succeed by allowing them to erase a semester of failing grades prior to time spent away from school due to a mental health disorder.

## **Advantages of Withdrawing**

Approximately 5% of college students fail to complete their college education due to mental health disorders (Kessler et al., 1995). Not only does mental illness affect the physical, emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal functioning of the student, but it may also impact the greater campus community; students with emotional and behavioral problems may affect other students, faculty or staff by being disruptive, disturbing, and possibly dangerous (Kitzrow, 2003). Evidence suggests that academic performance can be improved upon return from a temporary withdrawal for mental health reasons, and in many cases, withdrawing to seek treatment for mental illness is beneficial both to the student and to the greater university community (Sharkin, 2006, p. 111). As such, the university should make it easy for its students to understand the policies for both withdrawing from and returning to classes, in order to seek treatment for mental illness and other personal difficulties.

## **Current University Policy Regarding Withdrawal and Reinstitution**

According to current university policy, students who wish to withdraw must submit a written notice to the Registrar's Office in the Mitchell building no later than the last day of classes. There is no additional information provided on the university's website about withdrawal, and it is very difficult to obtain information on this topic through phone calls. One recommendation is to make withdrawal procedures clear on the Registrar's website, and provide any forms a student may need to fill out. The university website complicates withdrawal by referencing a leave of absence, which is defined as a withdrawal during the last 60 days of the semester with the intent of returning the following semester. This is essentially the same as a withdrawal, but students remain eligible to continue receiving federal loans and grants. (Office of the Registrar, 2012).

The current policy to reinstate students who have withdrawn is somewhat complicated as well and depends on the student's academic history. Those with a cumulative GPA greater than 2.0 and who had not previously withdrawn or taken a leave of absence must reapply for admission and do not need to petition the Faculty Review Board to return. Students with a cumulative GPA less than 2.0, left the university in poor academic standing, or who had previous withdrawals or leaves of absence must complete a Reinstatement Advising Meeting with their academic college's advising office and then petition the Faculty Review Board in order to be reinstated (Office of the Registrar, 2012).

### **Barriers to Students with Mental Illness: Why the Policy should be Revised**

The current policy for withdrawal and reinstatement creates many barriers to students experiencing mental health difficulties. Students without a mental illness that must leave the university due to extenuating circumstances are more likely to seek out information on withdrawing before the semester ends and successfully withdraw than a student experiencing psychological distress. The motivation and planning this requires may be especially true of students who must leave due to financial difficulties and work to support their families. However, the focus of this proposal is mental illness because many symptoms of mental illness may directly affect a student's ability and ambition to seek out such procedures and withdraw before the end of the semester.

For example, the lack of motivation, excessive sleep and depressed mood characteristic of major depression may make it difficult for a student to complete coursework and attend class, much less find procedures for withdrawing and complete them. Additionally, a student must recognize his or her symptoms, and the fact that the symptoms are negatively impacting

academic performance, before the end of the semester. Although some information can be found on the university's website, the withdrawal policy, beyond submitting a notice in writing to the Office of the Registrar, is not clear.

Although young adults ages 18 to 24 are the least likely to seek treatment out of all age groups, they have the highest rates of suicidal thoughts and serious mental illness (NIMH, 2010). It is quite alarming that even on college campuses where mental health services are offered to all students, most students with mental health disorders do not receive the treatment they need (Eisenberg et al., 2007). This increases the chances that a student seeking treatment for the first time does so only during an emergency, in which case the student may be hospitalized for his or her symptoms. If this occurs in the later part of a semester, it would be nearly impossible for a hospitalized student to withdraw before the last day of class.

The process for reinstatement is equally as challenging for a student with mental health difficulties. When a student reapplies, there exists the possibility that the student may not be accepted a second time. Furthermore, if the student had a poor GPA, or left the university without being in good academic standing, he or she must actually defend him or herself before a panel of faculty to be reinstated at the university; the student may be further disadvantaged by having to explain his or her illness before faculty who may or may not be sympathetic to the student's situation. It seems that this policy is more detrimental than helpful in the student's career, creating barriers to the continuation of education at the university level and preventing students with mental illness from re-entering the school.

## **Proposed Policy Changes**

There are two parts to the proposed policy changes: an amendment to the re-enrollment process and inclusion of a new policy allowing students to retroactively withdraw from a previous semester.

As an amendment to the current re-enrollment policy, students should be allowed to resume undergraduate enrollment without having to reapply if they were enrolled as a student within the past four semesters. If they have left due to mental illness, students should be required to submit documentation to the university from a mental health professional (either from the University Health Center or from the student's personal psychiatrist/therapist) indicating the student has received treatment or otherwise dealt with the difficulties which prompted the period of absence, and is ready and able to resume classes. The student should also be required to meet with an academic advisor in his or her academic college to create a revised academic plan.

As a new policy, after re-enrolling at the university, students should be able to petition the Faculty Review Board for the withdrawal of the last semester in which they were enrolled. This would be contingent on the fact that the last semester was the semester in which the student experienced difficulties which negatively impacted his or her grades, prevented him or her from withdrawing before the last day of classes, and prompted his or her leaving the university. This policy could be extended to any extenuating circumstance in which a student was prevented from withdrawing before the last day of classes and needed to leave the university for some period; however, the focus of this proposal is specifically mental illness.

## **Schools the University Could Use as a Model**

As previously mentioned, many undergraduate institutions have retroactive withdrawal policies that the university could model their policy after. This long list includes schools like the



University of Texas, North Carolina State University, California State University, the University of California system, University of Missouri, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Pennsylvania State University, University of Florida, University of Kentucky, and even University of Maryland, Baltimore County. These schools vary in how a student must go about applying or petitioning for a withdrawal, but all of these schools have an official policy regarding the circumstances and procedures for students to withdraw after the semester has ended. Many even have forms available for students online and are clear about the procedures for retroactively withdrawing. Please see Appendix A for links to examples of retroactive withdrawal policies and online forms published by the aforementioned schools.

### **Potential Consequences**

This policy change would not require any financial contributions on the part of the university, and it would utilize the Faculty Review Board, which is already in existence. In addition, the Office of the Registrar would be largely responsible for implementing and monitoring these proposed changes as it already deals with student enrollment and withdrawals.

The effects of such a policy change would have mostly positive consequences, largely for students who have had to leave school due to deteriorating mental health. The new re-enrollment policy would make it less stressful and intimidating for students to return to school and continue their education. Most significantly, students who failed an entire semester could increase their chances of matriculation to a graduate-level program or employment after college by improving their GPA by retroactively withdrawing. To prevent abuse of this policy, the withdrawal would be contingent on documentation from medical personnel that the student's reason for leaving indeed impacted his or her grades in the last semester.

One negative impact may be an increased workload on the University Health Center's Mental Health Services if students seek mental health documentation from its providers. As previously mentioned, Mental Health Services is already inundated with students needing mental health treatment, and the university might consider increasing funding to help better care for the mental health of its students. However, alternatives may exist to disperse the Mental Health Services workload, such as having students receive such documentation from community providers.

## **Conclusion**

About half of Americans will meet the criteria for a psychological disorder sometime in their life, and 26.2% of the U.S. population can be diagnosed such a disorder in any given 12-month period (Kessler et al., 2005). Statistically, it is not surprising that many students experience the symptoms of mental illness while at school, especially considering the number of stressors prevalent in the college environment. Mental health resources are available on campus, but are not nearly adequate to treat the nearly 38,000 students on campus at the University of Maryland. A formal policy to help students, especially those with a mental illness, experiencing academic difficulty is needed. Furthermore, helping its students in this way comes at no cost to the university, which is critically important in these difficult economic times. By making it easier for students to return to school and withdraw from semesters in which their difficulties negatively impacted their grades, the university would greatly help these students continue and succeed throughout their college careers.

## Appendix A

| <b>Institution</b>                          | <b>Link to Policy Regarding Retroactive Withdrawal</b>  |
|---|---|
| University of Maryland,<br>Baltimore County | <a href="http://www.umbc.edu/artsciences/coursewithdraw.pdf">http://www.umbc.edu/artsciences/coursewithdraw.pdf</a>   |
| UC Berkeley                                 | <a href="http://registrar.berkeley.edu/electforms/RetroWDPet.pdf">http://registrar.berkeley.edu/electforms/RetroWDPet.pdf</a>   |
| University of Texas                         | <a href="http://www.utexas.edu/provost/policies/withdrawal/">http://www.utexas.edu/provost/policies/withdrawal/</a>   |
| NC State University                         | <a href="http://www.ncsu.edu/stud_affairs/counseling_center/services/academic/Forms/wd_request_information.pdf">http://www.ncsu.edu/stud_affairs/counseling_center/services/academic/Forms/wd_request_information.pdf</a> |
| California State University                 | <a href="http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/docs/RW_Policy.pdf">http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/docs/RW_Policy.pdf</a>   |
| University of Missouri                      | <a href="http://www.umkc.edu/catalog/pg2449.html">http://www.umkc.edu/catalog/pg2449.html</a>   |
| University of Illinois<br>Urbana-Champaign  | <a href="http://faa.illinois.edu/files/RetroactiveWithdrawal.pdf">http://faa.illinois.edu/files/RetroactiveWithdrawal.pdf</a>   |
| Penn State University                       | <a href="http://dus.psu.edu/handbook/petition.html">http://dus.psu.edu/handbook/petition.html</a>   |
| University of Florida                       | <a href="http://www.dso.ufl.edu/publications/rmp_instructions.pdf">http://www.dso.ufl.edu/publications/rmp_instructions.pdf</a>   |
| University of Kentucky                      | <a href="http://www.uky.edu/eForms/forms/RWAform.pdf">http://www.uky.edu/eForms/forms/RWAform.pdf</a>   |

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## General Information on the Retroactive Withdrawal Policy and Process

### **Background: Official and Unofficial Procedures for Dropping Classes**

**Official Withdrawal from All Classes:** All students wishing to withdraw from classes must do so by posted deadlines each quarter using the official withdrawal process. The withdrawal process is completed through the Registrar's Office, by filing a petition called the "*Petition to Withdraw Completely from the Current Quarter.*" The petition must be signed by the Instructor(s), Department chair, and College Dean. Documentation may be required. When all guidelines are followed and permission is granted, students will receive a "W" for all courses taken, indicating formal withdrawal. The grade of "W" does not affect a student's grade point average (GPA). For more information go to <http://dsa.csupomona.edu/registrar/withdrawal.asp?setactive=page>.

**Dropping Individual Classes:** The procedure to be followed depends on what point in the quarter a student wishes to withdraw from a class(es). From the 1<sup>st</sup> day of registration to the 5<sup>th</sup> day of instruction, students may drop class(es) online without a notation on their records. From the 6<sup>th</sup> day to the 15<sup>th</sup> day of instruction, students may drop class(es) online, but will receive a grade of "W". From the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the quarter through the last day of finals week, to drop one or more classes, students must file a petition called the "*Petition to Drop after the Third Week of Instruction.*" The petition must be signed by the Instructor(s), Department Chair and College Dean, and approval is granted only for serious and compelling reasons. Documentation may be required. When all guidelines are followed and permission is granted, students will receive a grade of "W" for all classes dropped. This grade does not affect a student's grade point average. For more information on the timeline for dropping and procedures, go to <http://www.dsa.csupomona.edu/registrar/drop.asp>.

**Unofficial Withdrawal:** Students who stop attending classes (unofficially withdraw) and do not follow this procedure, may receive a grade of "F" or "WU" (Withdrawal Unauthorized). The "WU" is worth 0 grade points, similar to a grade of "F".

### **What Is Retroactive Withdrawal?**

The Retroactive Withdrawal process allows students to petition to withdraw from all classes in one or more quarters after those quarters have ended. If permission is granted, the result is that all grades for those quarters are changed to "W" grades.

### **Who Can Apply for Retroactive Withdrawal?**

Students who unofficially withdraw from one or more quarters, receive "WU" " grades in ALL coursework taken those quarters, and have serious and compelling reasons for the unofficial withdrawal.

### **When Can I apply for A Retroactive Withdrawal?**

A student has up to *one (1) calendar year from the last day of the quarter* in question to apply for a retroactive withdrawal. A student need not be enrolled at the University at the time that the petition for retroactive withdrawal is submitted. The petition form and documentation should be submitted to the Office of Academic Programs. Deadlines for turning in petitions and all relevant documentation may be found at the Academic Programs website: <http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/withdrawals.shtml>

### **Where Can I Get More Information?**

The "*Request for Retroactive Withdrawal*" petition form is available on-line through the Office of Academic Programs at <http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/withdrawals.shtml>. Additional questions about

the retroactive withdrawal process and processing timelines should be referred to the Office of Academic Programs at (909) 869-6975. General information, guidelines and petition form may be found at:

<http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/withdrawals.shtml>

At any time prior to submission deadline, you may make an appointment for a comprehensive review of your Retroactive Withdrawal package by the Academic Programs Counselor. Please call (909) 869-3121 or (909) 869-6975 to schedule an appointment.

### **Once I submit the petition, what happens?**

- All efforts are made to schedule the Retroactive Withdrawal Committee within a few weeks following the deadline date. However, faculty availability determines the time that a meeting can be scheduled so that committee members can consider all retroactive withdrawal petitions submitted for that term. In addition, those petitions submitted during Summer term may not be reviewed until the beginning of Fall term, depending on the availability of committee members during the Summer. For Summer petitions, all efforts are made to set the review meeting at least within the first few weeks of the Fall quarter if not sooner.
- Once decisions have been rendered, each student is notified in writing approximately two weeks after the Committee's decision.

### **How Does the Review Committee Decide?**

The Cal Poly Pomona Retroactive Withdrawal Committee will give consideration to the following factors:

- The student has provided a clear explanation of why the student did not withdraw from the university by filing the appropriate forms with the Registrar's Office in a timely manner during the quarter(s) in question.
- The student has serious and compelling reasons for the student's unofficial withdrawal, e.g., serious illness or injury to student or family member, death in the family, etc.
- The student has provided documentation of the serious and compelling reasons.
- The student's overall academic history.
- If the student earned A-F grades during the quarter(s) in question, a clear explanation of why those grades were not WU grades.
- In the rare case that exceptional circumstances prevent the student from filing the petition within one calendar year of the last day of the quarter(s) for which the student is requesting retroactive withdrawal, a clear explanation, supported by documentation, of these circumstances.
- Supporting documentation from the student's major department advisor or from the student's advisor(s) in support programs such as the Maximizing Engineering Potential Program, the Math Intensive Learning Experience Program, the Educational Opportunity Program, and Disability Resource Center.



### **What are the Steps for Submitting a Petition for Retroactive Withdrawal?**

- 1) Obtain a “*Request for Retroactive Withdrawal*” petition form from the Office of Academic Programs website: <http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/withdrawals.shtml>
- 2) Review the guidelines on the form carefully. If you have questions about the process, contact the Office of Academic Programs at (909) 869-6975.
- 3) Complete, sign and date the form.
- 4) Provide a statement following the suggestions below. Use business letter format and address your statement to the Retroactive Withdrawal Committee.
- 5) Provide documentation.
- 6) Before submitting your petition packet, review your packet with a counselor in the Office of Academic Programs. To make an appointment, call (909) 869-3121 or (909) 869-6975.
- 7) Submit your completed petition packet by the deadlines posted on the Office of Academic Programs website: [http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/docs/Petition\\_Deadlines.pdf](http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/docs/Petition_Deadlines.pdf)

For advice on preparing a retroactive withdrawal petition, review the document “Suggestions for Preparing a *Request*”, available at the Academic Programs website:

[http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/docs/Retroactive\\_Withdrawal\\_Prep.pdf](http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/programs/docs/Retroactive_Withdrawal_Prep.pdf)

**If you have additional questions, please contact:  
The Office of Academic Programs  
(909) 869-6975**

NC State Counseling Center  
Personal Counseling, Academic Support, and Career Counseling Services

Requesting a Late or Retroactive University Withdrawal

**Please read the following instructions thoroughly before filling out the pre-application for a withdrawal request.**

**Failure to follow these instructions may result in a delay of the processing of your withdrawal request.**

A late (current semester after the last day of the official drop period) or retroactive (prior semester) withdrawal permits a student to drop all of the courses that he/she is registered for after the last day to officially drop in a given semester.

The University guidelines for the approval of a late or retroactive withdrawal require a student to prove, through documentation, that conditions of a medical, psychological, and/or hardship nature occurred during the semester in question and:

- ◆ Cause (d) a serious disruption in academic functioning
- ◆ Are (had been) reasonably unforeseeable and unavoidable prior to the last day to officially drop classes

*Withdrawal petitions involve several steps on the part of the student and the University to insure that sufficient grounds exist to alter a student's record. Since the withdrawal process requires several steps and there is no guarantee that approval will take place, you should allow plenty of time to pursue the withdrawal request and should have a back-up plan in the event that your withdrawal is not approved or is delayed.*

1. Consult with your advisor to discuss the academic implications of the intended withdrawal, and to plan for other avenues in the event that your withdrawal request is not approved.
2. Please fill out the Withdrawal pre-application form available on the Counseling Center website and bring it with you when you come to make an appointment. You will possibly be asked to fill out other Counseling Center paperwork that will become part of your permanent medical record.
3. Organize the details of your case as best you can before you see your counselor. It is often helpful to write a statement detailing the grounds for your request to withdraw (e.g., what occurred, when it occurred, how it affected you and what you have done or plan to do about it). For medical and psychological withdrawals this statement can be provided on the Counseling Center's Withdrawal Pre-application Form or in a separate letter addressed to the Counseling Center. For hardship withdrawals the statement should be in a letter addressed to your Academic Dean.

**In cases of medical or psychological withdrawal requests:**

Contact any off-campus physicians, therapists, or other health care providers whom you may have seen to help you document your difficulties for the semester in question. In order to make sure you have all the information required, please download the **Health Services Provider Information letter** from the Counseling Center website linked to this page. This letter asks for written verification of (1) diagnosis and/or description of the problem including date of onset, actual or estimated duration and degree of incapacitation and (2) the degree to which the medical and/or psychological problem cause (d) a disruption in academic functioning.

4. **For medical or psychological withdrawal requests, please bring any documentation you have gathered with you to your evaluation session.** If approved, the withdrawal application form will be completed by your counselor and you will be given a withdrawal clearance sheet that may require several additional steps (e.g., clearance with Financial Aid) before Registration and Records will be able to process your application.

**In cases of medical or psychological withdrawal requests:**

Your counselor will evaluate existing documentation and/or assist you in obtaining a further evaluation. If the counselor believes that you may have a legitimate case for withdrawal, your written permission will be required to consult with the Associate Dean of your college. Your counselor and/or the Associate Dean may raise additional questions, require additional documentation, or set certain conditions that must be met before a withdrawal is approved.

**In cases of hardship withdrawal requests:**

Your counselor will provide you with a Withdrawal Application Form and will direct you to the appropriate person(s) in your college for additional information after verifying that your potential grounds for applying for a withdrawal are not mainly medical or psychological. You will need verification of the extenuating, unavoidable and unforeseeable circumstances that have interfered with your academic functioning when you meet with your dean's office. If approved, the Associate Dean of your college will indicate approval on the Withdrawal Application Form and direct you back to the Counseling Center for processing.

*If you have any questions or concerns, you are welcome to discuss these matters further with a counselor.*

## Retroactive Medical Petition (RMP)

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Previous Semester

Petition to withdraw retroactively from a previous semester for medical reasons.

(Do not fill out this form if you have already withdrawn from the entire semester.)

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A Sub-Committee of the University Petitions Committee is available to consider petitions to withdraw retroactively from **all classes** from a **previous semester** that you have received grades for **medical reasons only**. If your retroactive withdrawal/drop is for selected classes or for non-medical reasons, please visit the University Registrar in 222 Criser. (Pursuant to the Rule of the Department of Education 6C1-3.0371, "tuition and registration fees will be refunded in full in the circumstances noted: (e) Death of the student or member of his/her **immediate family** (parent, spouse, child, sibling), (f) Illness of the student of such severity or duration, as confirmed in writing by a physician, that completion of the semester is precluded.") **Florida Administrative Code Rule 6C-7.002(10): written appeal for a refund or other appeal action must be submitted to the university within six (6) months of the close of the semester to which the refund or other appeal action is applicable.** (If six months or longer has passed for the semester you wish to petition, you can still submit a retroactive medical petition to have your grades reviewed, but monetary reimbursement will not be granted.)

The procedure for petitioning to withdraw past the published deadline because of medical reasons include the following:

1. Print or email this packet. Please read ALL instructions carefully, and if you have any questions contact the Medical Withdrawal Process at the Dean of Students Office, 202 Peabody Hall, P.O. Box 114075, Gainesville, FL 32611. Office Fax: 352-392-5566, Office Phone #: 352-392-1261 ext. 209
2. Completely fill out the RMP Summary, Action Request Form, INCLUDING your 2-3 page typed personal statement. Please return this paperwork to Ms. Malphurs at the Dean of Students, 202 Peabody so that your file can be established and a status sheet will be kept as your documents are completed and turned in.
3. This can be the most difficult part of the entire medical petition process. Please be patient with your instructor(s). The instructor(s) must complete the RMP Instructor Recommendation Form for each of the course(s) for which you were registered during the term(s) you are petitioning. If the instructor(s) is no longer at UF, the department chair can sign off on the Instructor Form. The completed forms can be given to students directly, or the instructor(s) may mail the form(s) through campus mail. Form(s) may also be emailed to [dsocares@dso.ufl.edu](mailto:dsocares@dso.ufl.edu) or faxed to 352-392-5566.  
\*Please note it has been helpful for students to completely fill out the top portion of the instructor form, as the bottom part is completed by the instructor(s). Then send as a .pdf attachment in an email to the individual instructor(s). This makes it easy for the instructor(s) to print out, complete, and return to our office.
4. Obtain medical documentation from a physician, psychologist, or counselor. The documentation should be a professional letter typed on the physician/psychologist/counselor's letterhead. The documentation should include ALL dates the student has been under medical care, the nature (diagnosis), and duration of medical problem and how it interfered with the student's ability to perform academically (being very specific is helpful), and recommendation whether student should withdraw from previous semester student is petitioning. Documentation should not be from a family member. Remember your documentation should support your personal statement and all dates should match the semester you are petitioning.
5. Once the DSO has your completed file your material will be reviewed. Your material cannot be reviewed until all of the above paperwork is sufficiently completed and turned in to Ms. Malphurs. If necessary you will be contacted to schedule a personal interview or phone interview with a committee member at the Dean of Students Office. Decision on medical petition will be made on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month. Students will be notified via email of the committee's decision and it will be posted to your ISIS. If the Sub-Committee denies the student's petition, it is automatically forwarded to the University Petition Committee as part of the appeal process.
6. Retain copies of all information submitted. The documents you submit will remain on permanent file with the university; they will not be returned.

**University of Kentucky - Request for Retroactive Withdrawal**

*This side to be completed by the student*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student Number \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

Semester and year you wish to withdraw from \_\_\_\_\_

College and major during the semester under consideration \_\_\_\_\_

Current college and major (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to appear before the committee in person?<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

List all courses for the semester under consideration<sup>2</sup> (include course prefix, number, title, instructor name and telephone number)

**Student Checklist**

\_\_\_ I have included a detailed personal statement explaining my rationale for this request that

1. Explains a serious injury or illness, or serious personal/family problems, or serious financial difficulties, or a permanent disability verified by the Disability Resource Center and diagnosed **after** the semester in question.
2. Explains why you were unable to withdraw during the semester in question.

\_\_\_ I have attached documentation to support my rationale for this request  
(petitions without documentation will not be considered)

\_\_\_ I have consulted with my Academic Dean and completed the necessary procedures for my college to evaluate my case and make a preliminary ruling (your Dean will complete the other side of this form)

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<sup>1</sup> "The student shall have the right to appear in person before the Committee to present his or her request and shall have the right to be represented by an attorney or other designated individual" (University Senate Rules 4.1.8.3 transmittal November 28, 1997). The committee will contact you if you elect to appear in person.

<sup>2</sup> "Typically, a student may withdraw for a given semester only if the withdrawal is from **all** classes" (University Senate Rules 5.1.8.3 transmittal November 28, 1997).

**University of Kentucky - Request for Retroactive Withdrawal**

*This side to be completed by the Dean of the college where  
the student was enrolled during the semester in question*

Name (of Dean reviewing the case): \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Speed Sort \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Checklist of procedures for the Dean in the retroactive withdrawal process**

1. The Dean consults with the student and informs him/her of required procedures to facilitate the particular college's review process (i.e. documentation requirements, whether instructor feedback is required, etc.)
2. Upon receipt of necessary documents from the student, the Dean reviews the case and makes a preliminary recommendation to support or not support the student's request. This recommendation should be in the form of a detailed letter to the committee outlining the college's position for the particular case in question.
3. The Dean shall provide the committee with an unofficial copy of the student's transcript(s).
4. All materials shall be forwarded (even in cases where the Dean does not support the request) to the Faculty Senate Office in a timely manner after the Dean has made the recommendation.
5. The Senate Retroactive Withdrawal Appeals Committee will review the case and render its decision (usually within 30 days). The Dean's office will be notified of the decision and, in turn, the Dean notifies the student and instructors (if applicable).

\_\_\_ I support the student's request for retroactive withdrawal.

\_\_\_ I do not support the student's request for retroactive withdrawal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## UNDERGRADUATE GUIDELINES FOR RETROACTIVE WITHDRAWAL

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If students are experiencing academic difficulties for any reason during a semester, they are strongly encouraged to contact the Academic Advisor for their FAA unit and the FAA College Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. The College is eager to discuss the alternatives available to address student problems. Action during the semester is much preferred to waiting until after the semester ends and grades have been submitted.

If a student was not able to address the academic problems during the semester as a result of health, emotional, or psychological problems, a retroactive withdrawal is an option, which may be requested by the student. To receive a retroactive withdrawal, the student must provide documentation from a health care provider verifying that the student has experienced a hardship, which would warrant such an extraordinary action. If the College approves the withdrawal, the student will be withdrawn from all courses taken that semester with “W”s remaining on the student’s record. The “W” would indicate a late withdrawal, but would not affect the student’s GPA. A partial retroactive withdrawal from selected classes with lower grades while maintaining classes with higher grades is not an option in FAA.

The college office does not require extensive details regarding a health problem. The health care provider must appropriately verify that the student was treated for a problem, which would have prevented the student from completing the semester’s academic work. If a student’s care provider provides the College with an assurance that the student has experienced a health problem which would not affect academic performance for the next semester, the college will consider a resumption of the student’s academic progress the next semester.

When a student has experienced emotional or psychological problems such that the student must request a retroactive mental health based withdrawal, University of Illinois Dean of Students and McKinley Health Care standard practice is to require that the student not continue at the University the next semester. The student would then be required to petition for re-admission. A condition of readmission is that the student must provide permission for an appropriate University representative (which is usually the McKinley Health Center) to communicate with the student’s care provider to verify that the student is able to continue in a University program. A letter from the provider to the College office addressing the general re-entry related issues would also be required.

When a student has experienced a medical problem, which has impacted negatively on a prior semester, they are encouraged to seek advising regarding the appropriateness of a retroactive withdrawal. This process would result in the records showing a withdrawal, but the problem grades would no longer impact upon the student’s future academic plans.

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NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL
FOR RETROACTIVE (I.E., PRIOR TERM) WITHDRAWALS ONLY

COMPLETE IN BLUE OR BLACK INK -- INSTRUCTIONS & INFORMATION ON REVERSE

TERM: [ ] Fall [ ] Spring Semester 20\_\_

SID No.: \_\_\_\_\_ U G

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ last first middle

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_ no. & street city state zip

Permanent Address: \_\_\_\_\_ no. & street city state zip

Telephone No.: Local (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ First enrolled at Berkeley: \_\_\_\_\_ term/year

College, School, or Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Major/Curriculum: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for withdrawal: [ ] Personal [ ] Medical (this must be approved by UHS) [ ] Other

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you planning to resume studies at Berkeley? [ ] No [ ] Yes If yes, when? [ ] Fall [ ] Spring Semester 20\_\_

GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY: Do you receive financial assistance from the University or any governmental agency? [ ] No [ ] Yes If yes, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
Are you the beneficiary of a loan fund or a holder of any fellowship or scholarship? [ ] No [ ] Yes If yes, name of sponsoring agency: \_\_\_\_\_

REQUIRED SIGNATURES (SEE REVERSE TO DETERMINE SIGNATURES YOU NEED.)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Dean or Dean's Representative: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Head Graduate Adviser: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Director, Student Health Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

International Student Adviser: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Aid Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

EOP Adviser: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterans Services: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing and Payment Services: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
Eligible for refund: [ ] No [ ] Yes -> Percent: \_\_\_\_% Readmit Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Fees: [ ] Paid [ ] Offset



## INSTRUCTIONS

This petition is intended for students requesting a **retroactive** withdrawal. i.e., after the ending date of the term for which withdrawal is requested. Students wishing to withdraw for a term still in progress must contact their college or school dean's office (undergraduates) or their major adviser (graduates); this form should **not** be filed. Students wishing to withdraw for the term following the current term should **cancel** their registration via Tele-BEARS.

| UNDERGRADUATES  | GRADUATES  |
|---|--|
| <p>SPECIAL NOTE FOR STUDENTS IN THE COLLEGES OF ENGINEERING, ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN, AND LETTERS &amp; SCIENCE: Retroactive withdrawals may be subject to a semester-out rule on readmission. Exceptions may be made by the deans.</p> <p>REQUIRED SIGNATURE:<br/><b>Dean or Dean's Representative</b> - Required of all students.</p> <p>FILING:<br/>File this petition at the Office of the Registrar, 120 Sproul Hall.</p> | <p>REQUIRED SIGNATURES - OBTAIN AS FOLLOWS:<br/><b>Head Graduate Adviser</b> - Required of all students. (Law students must obtain the signature of the Dean of the Law School.)<br/><b>Graduate Dean or Dean's Representative</b> (Graduate Division, 302 Sproul Hall) - Required of all students.</p> <p>FILING:<br/>File this form at the Graduate Division, 302 Sproul Hall.</p> |

### ADDITIONAL SIGNATURES - ALL STUDENTS

**Medical Director, Student Health Service** (Room 2100, Tang Center) - Required of all students who withdraw due to illness and who wish to request a refund of fees.

**International Student Adviser** (International House) - Required of all F-1 or J-1 visa holders.

**Financial Aid Officer** - Required of all students receiving financial aid. Undergraduates in the College of Letters and Science go to 250 Sproul Hall; all other students go to 201 Sproul Hall.

**EOP Adviser** (Golden Bear Center) - Required of all students under the EOP Program.

**Veterans Services** (120 Sproul Hall) - Required of all students receiving benefits from the Veterans Administration or the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Billing and Payment Services** (140 University Hall) - An exit interview is required of all students with outstanding loans.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING FEES

Students withdrawing retroactively are liable for the full amount of fees assessed; no refunds are granted. If you withdraw retroactively and have an unpaid balance on your CARS account, you will continue to receive billing statements until the debt is cleared.

### RETURNING TO BERKELEY

If you wish to enroll for a future term, you must file an Application for Readmission by the following dates: Fall Semester, April 15; Spring Semester, August 15. Forms are available at the Office of Undergraduate Admission and at Deans' Offices. (Graduate students must consult the Graduate Division.) Refer to the application for information concerning readmission procedures.

**College of Arts and Sciences**

University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
1000 Hilltop Circle  
Baltimore, Maryland 21250

PHONE: 410-455-2386  
FAX: 410-455-1095  
VOICE/TTY: 410-455-3233  
www.umbc.edu

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Faculty, Staff and Students in The College of Arts & Sciences

**FROM:** Victor G. Wexler  
Associate Dean  
College of Arts & Sciences

**RE:** Requests for Retroactive Course Withdrawal or Registration

**DATE:** August 22, 2003

The Dean's Office in the College of Arts and Sciences will consider requests for late or retroactive withdrawal under the following circumstances:

1. Serious and prolonged illness as certified in writing by a doctor.
2. Written evidence of traumatic events such as serious accidents or death in the immediate family.
3. An error in electronic registration certified by University Computing.
4. Any request for course withdrawal after the deadline requires the written approval of the instructor even if the student never attended the class.
5. Any request for late or retroactive registration must be approved in writing by the instructor.
6. All requests must be made to the Dean in writing after the appropriate documentation is obtained.