

Permissive Withdrawal and Compressed Courses

Background:

The Senate Rules and Elections Committee has identified a number of academic issues that arise from 'compressed courses.' One of these issues, initially drawn to SREC attention by the Registrar, relates to the current Senate Rules wording about 'permissive withdrawal.'

SR 5.1.7.2.1 on "Unilateral Withdrawal" states:

"Any student may withdraw from any class (except for those used to meet the Writing Requirement) during the withdrawal period which is defined as the period up through 70% of the way into the **term.**"

Note here to SC: "term" is defined by the Senate as a semester, the winter intersession, or the summer session, which have defined lengths in the SRs. Hence, "term" does not apply to a 'compressed course' that does not correspond to the architecture of a semester, the winter intersession or the summer session.

SR states 5.1.7.3 on "Permissive Withdrawals" states

A student may withdraw from a class, or from the University, after the withdrawal period in SR [5.1.7.2.1](#) but **through the last day of classes for the academic term** upon approval by the dean of the student's college of a petition certifying urgent non-academic reasons including but not limited to:

1. Illness or injury of the student;
2. Serious: personal or family problems;
3. Serious financial difficulties; or
4. Having excused absences for the dates and times associated with more than one-fifth of the required interactions in a course, pursuant to SR [5.2.5.2](#). [SREC: 11/20/87; US: 2/12/2018]

* **The "last day of classes" refers to the date (given on the Registrar's website), which was approved by the University Senate, not the last day that an individual class met.** [SREC: 5/13/2016]

Issue:

The above Rules create an issue for when a compressed course completes before the last day of classes of the term within which the compressed course is nested. The Rules prescribe that permissive withdrawal can occur *only* up through the last day of the term. However, in (for example) a course compressed into the opening four weeks of the fall semester, permissive withdrawal could occur event after the last day of that class and after its final grade has been submitted. But for the regular courses of the term, withdrawal *after* the last day of class is allowed *only by retroactive withdrawal process*. If the above Rules were applied literally to the example compressed course, it would allow the student to withdraw from the class after the last day of *that* class *but not through the retroactive withdrawal process*, which does not make pedagogical sense in relation to the apparent intent of these Rules. In this circumstance, the Registrar has operationalized a practice not to allow withdrawal from compressed courses after the grade for the compressed course has not been submitted, *but the Registrar is uneasy that this practice does not derive from a clear Senate Rule* (e.g., SR 5.1.7.3 does not refer to final grade submission as a parameter).

The SREC agreed the above unresolved intersection of permissive withdrawal and 'compressed courses' is not a theoretical issue but, is a policy issue directly affecting students in compressed courses.

Recommendation:

The SREC agreed to ask the Senate Council to task to an appropriate committee to take a broad look at this issue (and other various educational policy issues arising from compressed courses). If the Senate Council

would like, the SC can send to the SREC possible draft policy on SR 5.1.7.3, and the SREC could devise proposed language on 'what would Senate Rules look like that codify such policy.'

The SREC requests that 'if SC tasks the matter to a committee, that the SREC Chair be contacted prior to committee deliberation so that an SREC member can be identified to attend the committee meeting to clarify any issues to the committee.'