

## **FACULTY INITIATED WITHDRAWAL COMMITTEE**

### **Introduction**

The Faculty Initiated Withdrawal Committee received its charge from Provost Wade on December 18, 2018.

### **Purpose**

The Committee was charged with developing procedures for the Faculty Initiated Withdrawal process. Deliverables of the Committee are the following:

- A draft Policy and Procedure, with an accompanying Protocol, if indicated
- Corresponding draft language for the College Catalog and Website to clarify the process and to inform students of the implications of Faculty Initiated Withdrawals
- Implementation of a mechanism to effectively inform students of financial aid and academic implications of course withdrawal compared to course failure
- A report summarizing the process used to arrive at their recommendations and supporting rationale for implementation

### **Membership**

The committee members included Matt Fox (co-chair), Holly Preische (co-chair), Jessica Barone, Kelsey Bright, Larry Dugan, Calvin Gantt, Michael Jacobs, Betsy Ripton, Timothy Butler (student), Ashley Hampton (student), Adrian Smalls, Jerome St. Croix, and Matthew Williams.

### **Background**

In fall 2017, the Faculty Initiated Withdrawal (FIW) practice was suspended in anticipation of a recommendation to revise the practice in ways that addressed challenges previously identified by Provost Wade. Data collected from IR indicated the practice was disproportionately detrimental to certain student populations. In October 2017, the Faculty Senate formed an ad hoc FIW committee and this committee researched the impact of the current practice. After conducting research and surveying faculty, the committee submitted a memo along with Senate voting tallies that recommended three models for reforming the former FIW practice to President Kress and Provost Wade. The president and provost considered the models and responded with comments only on models #1 and #2 since model #3 eliminated Faculty Initiated Withdrawals. The Faculty Senate ad hoc committee concluded its role, and in December 2018, the current FIW committee was convened.

### **Review Process**

The FIW committee reviewed all the documents and models recommended by the ad hoc committee. We discussed the pros and cons of each model as well as students' attendance in

class and its impact on course success. Committee members agreed attendance was important; however, some members, including student representatives, provided examples of students who sporadically attended class and were still mathematically able to pass the course. This led us to consider the complicated lives of our students and their struggles to balance class attendance with life responsibilities. After numerous discussions, we understood more deeply the relationship between class attendance and course success. When students miss class, they miss important details and information as well as the opportunity for a deeper understanding of a topic. In addition, attendance in class helps faculty build relationships with students, and these relationships can be the foundation for understanding the individual supports each student needs to be successful in the course.

For these reasons, the committee decided Faculty Initiated Withdrawal should be based on attendance in class and not whether the student can mathematically pass the course. MCC does not have a college attendance policy; however, many faculty members include attendance and participation in their grade calculations. Some use the Classroom Attendance feature in Starfish. As faculty track attendance, the students are automatically flagged after four absences and receive an email. So far this semester, there are 77 faculty members using the attendance feature; last semester 100 faculty members used this feature. In addition, faculty must submit attendance in Banner to meet the Federal Financial Aid Attendance Policy.<sup>1</sup>

Currently, the faculty is not required to take daily attendance or report this information except during the reporting period for federal financial aid. However, at the beginning of each semester, all faculty members are asked to respond to a Starfish Attendance Survey for each course so that college personnel can identify and intervene as early as possible with any students at-risk for attendance issues. This spring we had about 58% of the attendance surveys completed in Starfish. The committee concluded that Starfish is an easy-to-use tool with an intuitive user interface that gives faculty, students, and staff the opportunity to connect. Therefore, the committee recommends that the reformed Faculty Initiated Withdrawal procedure be an automated process utilizing the student-tracking module of the Starfish platform.

### **Recommendations**

1. Establish an automated course withdrawal policy that requires faculty to take daily class attendance and report it in Starfish by Monday of the following week.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal financial aid recipients must begin attendance in all courses to qualify for financial aid. Students reported for non-attendance in any or all courses could have their financial aid withdrawn. At the end of each semester, students who have failed to earn credit for any courses are reviewed. Faculty must indicate the last day of attendance for each F grade they assign. If it is determined that the failure to earn any credit for the semester was due to lack of attendance in classes, a federal aid return calculation must be performed. Attendance must be demonstrated through the 60% point of the semester.

2. Create an appeal process whereby students can apply for re-enrollment in the course.

### **Benefits to Students**

- Students will have a clearer understanding of the withdrawal policy, and this will set the same expectations for every course at the college
- This withdrawal process is consistent from course to course and instructor to instructor so that students will be withdrawn in a uniform and equitable manner
- Starfish helps detect at-risk students in time to provide outreach and wrap around supports
- Encourages best practices in course design
- Makes connection between attendance and success more visible and less arbitrary
- Students can appeal for reinstatement in the course using a standard process

### **Implementation**

One of the challenges faced since FIW was suspended has been students who effectively stop attending a class, yet remain on the roster throughout the semester, and eventually receive a grade of F. The provost recommended the committee first consider this population and make a recommendation for students who we believe do not intend to return to class; in essence, they have “abandoned” the course. The committee designated this category of students as those who missed up to 30% of the class meetings. The reason for this number is admittedly arbitrary: a grade of 70% is a C-, so lining up the absences with the grading system made the most sense in the absence of definitive data.<sup>2</sup> The committee also agreed that this is adequate to account for legitimate absences and the complications students experience in their lives. A student who has missed 13 classes of a MWF class has very likely abandoned the course. Therefore, the committee defined “abandonment” of a course as students who missed a number of classes equal to 30% of the class meetings.

Please see *Automated Course Withdrawal Policy and Protocol* on page 4. The policy and protocol are also attached as a separate file.

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<sup>2</sup> This criteria can be adjusted if necessary, particularly if a number with compelling data exists.

## Automated Course Withdrawal Policy and Protocol<sup>3</sup>

*This draft is an attempt to reinstitute a withdrawal process for students who have missed a considerable number of classes. It is intended to primarily affect students who have stopped attending altogether.*

**Proposed Policy:** A student who has missed a number of classes equal to 30% of the seat time for that class will be automatically withdrawn. Students will have the right to appeal this withdrawal and request re-enrollment in the class. Students will have the right to continue attending class during the appeal process.

The FIW Committee recommends the following protocol:

1. Faculty will keep daily attendance and report each week's attendance by Monday of the following week.
2. An automated system will be developed wherein students who have missed 30% of the seat time in a course will be withdrawn automatically from that class.
  - a. The CIS memo and CIS template will be revised to include information on this process, so that instructors can include information on it in their CIS (See *Appendix A*).
    - i. This blurb should contain a recommendation that students monitor their attendance on Starfish.
  - b. The student will receive an automated warning (email, text, etc.) when their absences reach 10% (*Appendix B*) and 20% (*Appendix C*) of seat time, and again when the absences approach 30% (*Appendix D*).
    - i. The instructor will be copied on these emails.
    - ii. These warnings will trigger outreach from college personnel, who will make referrals for wrap-around support aimed at retaining the student and helping them succeed.
    - iii. Students' assigned advisor(s) will receive a copy of these warnings.
    - iv. Other faculty and staff who are associated with the student via Starfish, such as coaches, counselors, etc. will also receive a copies of these warnings.
  - c. At 30%, the student will receive an automated email informing them that they have been withdrawn, and notifying them of the appeal process (*Appendix E*).
    - i. Students' assigned advisor(s) will receive a copy of this email

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<sup>3</sup> This protocol is not intended to undermine the rights of students who receive accommodations under applicable laws and/or policies, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972.

- ii. Other faculty and staff who are associated with the student via Starfish, such as coaches, counselors, etc. will also receive a copies of these warnings.
3. An appeal process will be established wherein students can apply for re-enrollment in the class.
  - a. The student will be directed to contact the instructor and prompted to explain why they deserve re-enrollment in the class.
  - b. The instructor may allow the student to re-register, and can contact Registration and Records to re-enroll the student.
  - c. If the instructor does not allow the student to re-register, or does not reply to the student's request within 72 hours, the student may contact the Department Chair (Appendix E).
  - d. The student's ability to pass the course will be considered in the appeal process.
  - e. The faculty and chair will work with relevant personnel to ensure compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972.
4. This automated course withdrawal process will be in effect until the individual course withdrawal deadline each semester.

## Challenges and Concerns

The committee had the benefit of feedback from its diverse membership, and additionally reached out to the Chair Network, the Title IX Officer, Disability Services and Health Services for feedback on this process. The feedback is included here so that the Provost may take it into consideration when deciding whether or not to implement this policy and process.

- Requiring faculty to take weekly attendance will be a significant change for the college, and present challenges.
  - Compliance will be difficult to enforce. Faculty are currently required to report attendance twice per semester, but there is still significant follow-up communication and “nagging” that has to happen in order for everyone to comply.
  - The committee recommends that the college explore alternative attendance-taking options, such as swipe stations, etc.
- Faculty will need to be vigilant and proactive in order to comply with Title IX and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
  - Because students will be withdrawn automatically, faculty will need to remain aware of students who are pregnant or who have the *Flexible Attendance* accommodation in order to reinstate the student promptly.
  - Disability Services expressed concern that too much responsibility would fall on the student.
- Implementation will need support from Computing.
  - Programming will be necessary to link Starfish attendance to Banner.
  - Blackboard settings will have to be adjusted so that students do not immediately lose Blackboard access.
    - This is necessary for students (especially online students) to continue attending class throughout the appeal process.
- There were philosophical objections to the policy and protocol.
  - There was discussion about the ability of some students to pass courses without attending. This policy would effectively forbid that, and there are some who object. Others feel that there is a fundamental flaw in a course if students are able to pass without attending, and that this consideration is therefore minor.
  - Some object to faculty, especially adjuncts, being forced to keep attendance.
  - Some object to a “one size fits all” policy and procedure.
- The following Faculty Senate Resolutions will be impacted by the new Automated Course Withdrawal Policy.
  - 1.1.6 SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENT AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

- 1.4 CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY
- 1.10 COURSE INFORMATION SHEET POLICY

**Conclusion**

This Automated Course Withdrawal Policy and Protocol will replace the former Faculty Initiated Withdrawal process. At MCC, there will therefore be four methods where students can be withdrawn from courses. They are the following

1. Automated Course Withdrawal (new policy and protocol)
2. Dropped for non-attendance
3. Student initiated withdrawal from an individual course
4. Complete withdrawal from the College

The College Catalog will need to be updated under the following areas:

Academic Progress - Class Attendance Policy (Appendix F)

Attendance and Registered Classes – Financial Aid (Appendix G)

Grading System – Registration (Appendix H)

Withdrawal Policy – Registration (Appendix I)

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Course Information Sheet Language.

At MCC, it is a standard policy that students who miss 30% of the total number of class meetings for any class will be automatically withdrawn from that course. Students have the right to appeal this withdrawal and request re-enrollment in the class.

### Appendix B. Attendance Warning Email (10% Missed)

Dear [student name]

Please be aware that you have missed 10% of the total number of class meetings for [class]. If you have already spoken to your instructor about these absences, there is no reason for concern. However, please be aware that students who miss 30% of the total number of class meetings are automatically withdrawn from that class.

If you are having trouble getting to class for any reason, please let us know how we can help you. You can always talk to your instructor, but you can also contact our *One Stop* program for help with anything, including non-academic problems such as food, housing and transportation. [Include additional resources?]

To contact *One Stop*, please call our office at [ ] or stop by [ ].

### Appendix C. Attendance Warning Email (20% Missed)

Dear [student name]

Please be aware that you have missed 20% of the total number of class meetings for [class]. If you are attending the class and intend to remain enrolled, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. At MCC students who miss 30% of the total number of class meetings are automatically withdrawn from that class.

If you are having trouble getting to class for any reason, please let us know how we can help you. You can always talk to your instructor, but you can also contact our *One Stop* program for help with anything, including non-academic problems such as food, housing and transportation. [Include additional resources?]

To contact *One Stop*, please call our office at [ ] or stop by [ ].

Withdrawal from a course can have a number of negative impacts: it can affect your financial aid and even cause you to owe money to the college; if you drop below full-time (12 credits) you can be evicted from campus housing; and it can negatively affect your Satisfactory



Academic Progress, and cause you to be put on *Academic Warning* or *Academic Suspension*. There can be other consequences, depending on your financial aid status and other factors.

If you do not intend to keep attending the class, we strongly recommend that you call the Financial Aid Office at 292-2050.

### **Appendix D. Attendance Warning Email (Withdrawal Imminent)**

Dear [student name]

You are about to be automatically withdrawn from [class]. If you are attending the class and intend to remain enrolled, please contact your instructor immediately. Please continue attending class. At MCC students who miss 30% of the total number of class meetings are automatically withdrawn from that class, and records show that you are very close.

Withdrawal from a course can have a number of negative impacts: it can affect your financial aid and even cause you to owe money to the college; if you drop below full-time (12 credits) you can be evicted from campus housing; and it can negatively affect your Satisfactory Academic Progress, and cause you to be put on *Academic Warning* or *Academic Suspension*. There can be other consequences, depending on your financial aid status and other factors.

If you do not intend to keep attending the class, we strongly recommend that you call the Financial Aid Office at 292-2050.

### **Appendix E. Withdrawal Email**

Dear [student name]

Our records indicate that you have missed 30% or more of the total number of class meetings for [class], so you have been withdrawn from that course. If you are still attending, please continue attending and talk to your professor immediately.

This withdrawal can have a number of negative impacts: it can affect your financial aid and even cause you to owe money to the college; if you drop below full-time (12 credits) you can be evicted from campus housing; and it can negatively affect your Satisfactory Academic Progress, and cause you to be put on *Academic Warning* or *Academic Suspension*. There may be other consequences, depending on your financial aid status and other factors.

You do have the right to appeal this withdrawal. If you wish to appeal and request re-registration into the class, please contact your instructor. If your instructor declines your appeal, or does not reply within 72 hours, you may contact the chairperson of the department in which the course is housed. Please see [College Directory/Departments](#), and click on the discipline of the course to see a list of faculty; the department chairperson is listed at the top.

We recommend you contact the Financial Aid Office at 292-2050 to see how your financial aid, student loans, etc. will be affected.

## **Appendix F. College Catalog: Class Attendance Policy**

**Current Version.** Prompt and regular attendance at all class and laboratory sessions is expected. Faculty members are asked to report students for excessive absence when such absence is adversely affecting the student's academic achievement in a particular course (not necessarily failing work). When this occurs, students may be reported through the early alert system to the Office of Records and Registration with the recommendation to warn the student or to withdraw the student from the course. In the event the student is withdrawn from the course, the grade of "W" will be assigned. Students should not assume that non-attendance will result in their automatic withdrawal from a course. Unless students themselves submit a formal course withdrawal, non-attendance may also result in an "F" grade and thus jeopardize the student's academic record. Non-attendance does not relieve the student of his/her financial obligations.

**Proposed.** Prompt and regular attendance at all class and laboratory sessions is expected, and faculty members are required to record daily attendance. Students with excessive absences will receive warning emails through the Starfish system. Students whose absences equal or exceed 30% of the total number of class meetings in a course will be automatically withdrawn from that course, and a grade of "W" will be assigned. Students do have the right to appeal this withdrawal and request re-registration in the class. Students may also withdraw themselves from a course by contacting the Records and Registration office.

Students will not be automatically withdrawn after the individual course withdrawal deadline each semester. In this case, non-attendance can result in an "F" grade and thus jeopardize the student's academic record. Non-attendance does not relieve the student of his/her financial obligations.

A grade of W (Withdrawn) in a class can affect the following areas:

1. Financial Aid
  - Withdrawal can negatively impact TAP, Pell, and other forms of financial aid, as well as scholarships like Excelsior. This can not only endanger students' eligibility for future semesters, but it can also result in students owing money to the college.
2. Housing
  - Students who drop below full-time (12 credits) are no longer eligible to live in campus housing, and can be evicted from the dorms.
3. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

- Although a grade of W does not affect a student’s GPA, it does affect SAP, and can contribute to a student being put on Academic Warning and Academic Probation.
4. Admission into Competitive Programs and Transfer institutions
- A grade of W may negatively impact students’ chances of admission into competitive programs.
  - A grade of W may also negatively impact students’ chances of transferring into four year institutions.

## Appendix G. College Catalog: Attendance and Registered Classes – Financial Aid

**Current Version.** You must be a registered student to be eligible for financial aid in any semester. The Financial Aid Office considers a registered student as one who is actively engaged in the requirements for their courses, including class attendance. Any changes to the number of credit hours for which you are registered can impact financial aid eligibility for that semester and future semesters. Changes in registered courses may be student initiated by a withdrawal or drop, or can be instructor initiated due to lack of class attendance. The student is responsible for maintaining themselves as registered students for financial aid purposes.

**Proposed.** You must be a registered student to be eligible for financial aid in any semester. The Financial Aid Office considers a registered student as one who is actively engaged in the requirements for their courses, including class attendance. Any changes to the number of credit hours for which you are registered can impact financial aid eligibility for that semester and future semesters. Changes in registered courses may be student initiated by a withdrawal or drop, and will be automatically initiated when a student misses 30% of the total number of classes in any course. The student is responsible for maintaining themselves as registered students for financial aid purposes.

## Appendix H. College Catalog: Grading System – Registration

**Current Version.** Grading System

Credit Courses

Grades are issued to students at the end of the semester. Students may obtain their [grades online](#).

The grading system is as follows:

Grade Interpretation	Numerical Value	# of Grade
A Excellent	4.0	
A-	3.7	

B+	3.3
B Above Average	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C Average	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D Below Average	1.0
D- Minimum Passing Grade.	0.7
F Failure	0*
W Student Withdrawal	*
I Incomplete	*
AU Audit	**

\*Semester hour credit and quality points shall not be granted.

\*\*Administratively assigned grades. Semester and cumulative averages are calculated only on the basis of credit courses completed with grades of A through F.

Note: Developmental courses are graded on the same scale but offer only imputed credit; the hours are included for billing purposes but not in the cumulative grade point average.

**Proposed:** The College may want to consider using a different letter instead of “W” to indicate students were automatically withdrawn from a course due to attendance. For example, some colleges use “Q”.

## Appendix I. College Catalog: Withdrawal Policy – Registration

### Current Version. Withdrawal Policy: Withdrawals

There are many reasons why you might need or want to withdraw. Before doing so, students should connect with their advisor. They can go over your options, especially since withdrawing can affect your financial aid, athletics eligibility, and veteran's benefits. You are responsible for 100% of tuition if you withdraw from a course(s) after the add/drop period.

### Withdrawal from an Individual Course

Withdrawal from individual courses must be initiated after the schedule adjustment (drop/add) period, but before 80% of the course has been completed as designated by the official Academic Calendar (or a proportional amount of time for courses less than 15 weeks in length). You are able to withdraw from individual courses online at MyMCC/Current Student/Registration or by submitting a signed form available from Registration and Records on the Brighton Campus or the Student Services Center at the Downtown Campus.

### Complete Withdrawal from the College

Complete withdrawals can be processed through the last day of the semester. Students can completely withdraw online until the deadline for individual course withdrawals listed on the Academic Calendar. If you wish to withdraw completely from the College after this date, you must provide official notification to Registration and Records (Brighton Campus) or to the Student Services Center (Downtown Campus) by the last day of the semester.

Your withdrawal date is considered to be the date the official notification is received in the appropriate office. **YOU ARE NOT OFFICIALLY WITHDRAWN UNTIL THIS PROCESS IS COMPLETED AND RISK RECEIVING "F" GRADES FOR ALL CURRENT COURSES IF YOU DO NOT INITIATE A WITHDRAWAL.**

Grades earned for short term courses within the semester will remain on your transcript and will not be changed to "W" grades when completely withdrawing from the college. Courses ending on or after the complete withdrawal request will be issued "W" grades. You may not request a complete withdrawal from a course that ended earlier in the term but has not yet been graded.

### Course Withdrawals, Complete Withdrawals, Financial Aid and Readmission

Students who receive financial aid are advised that they may lose continued eligibility if they withdraw from individual course(s) or completely withdraw. The eligibility requirements of their financial aid package should be checked carefully prior to course withdrawal(s) or complete withdrawals.

Your instructors cannot withdraw you. To withdraw online, log in to [myMCC](#). To withdraw in person, visit Registration and Records at the Brighton Campus (Bldg 6, Rm 203) or the Student Services Center at the Downtown Campus (2nd Floor, Rm 210).

After a complete withdrawal from a term, you will not be required to apply for readmission through the Admissions Office unless you stop out for more than two semesters or plan to return in a different program.

In cases of catastrophic illness, injury, or medical event requiring hospitalization that prevents you from withdrawing yourself before the end of the semester, you may request a withdrawal from the College through the Office of Health Services. You must submit medical documentation within 20 working days beyond the completion of the semester unless there are extraordinary circumstances.

## **Proposed:**

### Automated Course Withdrawal Policy

A student who has missed a number of classes equal to 30% of the seat time for that class will be automatically withdrawn. Students will have the right to appeal this withdrawal and request re-enrollment in the class. Students will have the right to continue attending class during the appeal process.

### Withdrawals

There are many reasons why you might need or want to withdraw. Before doing so, students should connect with their advisor. They can go over your options, especially since withdrawing can affect your financial aid, athletics eligibility, and veteran's benefits. You are responsible for 100% of tuition if you withdraw from a course(s) after the add/drop period.

### Student Initiated Withdrawal from an Individual Course

Withdrawal from individual courses must be initiated after the schedule adjustment (drop/add) period, but before 80% of the course has been completed as designated by the official Academic Calendar (or a proportional amount of time for courses less than 15 weeks in length). You are able to withdraw from individual courses online. To withdraw online, log in to [myMCC](#). To withdraw in person, visit Registration and Records at the Brighton Campus (Bldg 6, Rm 203) or the Student Services Center at the Downtown Campus (2nd Floor, Rm 210).

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In cases of catastrophic illness, injury, or medical event requiring hospitalization that prevents you from withdrawing yourself before the end of the semester, you may request a withdrawal from the College through the Office of Health Services. You must submit medical documentation within 20 working days beyond the completion of the semester unless there are extraordinary circumstances.