Medical Withdrawals

Policy 403.3

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the withdrawal or reduction in class load for students after the nine-week free drop period. This policy applies when a withdrawal from the University results in the assignment of a grade of "F" for each course; and reduction in class load is not permitted without special approval. Its purpose is to facilitate communication between the Health Service and academic areas without violating the student's right to confidentiality.

2 Scope

3 Definitions

3.1 Withdrawal

Refers to the process resulting in a student terminating his or her enrollment in all classes during a semester or summer term. If approved by the University, all courses are assigned a grade of "withdrawal." If not approved by the University, all courses are assigned a grade of either "failure" or "unsatisfactory."

3.2 Retroactive Withdrawal

Refers to the process by which the University allows a student to withdraw from an academic term AFTER the academic term has ended. All grades assigned during the academic term are changed to "withdrawal."

3.3 University

Refers to Appalachian State University.

3.4 Reduction in Class Load

Refers to dropping one or more, but not all, courses from a student's class schedule during an academic term. A dropped course does not appear on the student's academic record (transcript) and is not computed in his or her grade point average (GPA).

3.5 Retroactive Class Drop

Refers to the procedure by which the University allows a student to drop one or more, but not all, courses from his or her class schedule after the academic term has ended. Courses dropped retroactively will not appear on the student's academic record (transcript) and will not be computed in his or her grade point average (GPA).

3.6 Director

Refers to the director of the Student Health Service or his/her designee.

4 Policy and Procedure Statements

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 During the first nine weeks of a fall or spring semester, students are permitted to withdraw from the University without academic penalty (i.e., the student is assigned a grade of "withdrawal" on each course for which he or she is enrolled). During the first nine weeks of a fall or spring semester, students may discontinue enrollment in a specific course(s) and have the course(s) dropped from their schedule of classes without academic penalty (i.e., the course will not appear on the student's academic record and will not be computed in his or her grade point average).
4.1.2 Students who withdraw or discontinue classes after the first nine weeks of a fall or spring semester will automatically receive a grade of "failure" or "unsatisfactory" on each course for which he or she is enrolled.

4.1.3 Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Director of Student Health Services when, in his or her medical opinion, a student has a medical problem of such a type or of such severity that the student can no longer continue enrollment at the University for the remainder of the current semester or summer term. Examples of reasons for which a medical withdrawal might be given include, but are not limited to, serious physical injury greatly restricting mobility, prolonged hospitalization, or having a contagious disease of such a type that casual contact places others within the University at unreasonable risk.

4.1.4 Special Circumstances Withdrawal - Occasionally, serious injury or illness prevents a student from withdrawing during a semester and it becomes necessary to withdraw a student retroactive to a previous term. A retroactive withdrawal for a previous term should be requested in the next regular semester of enrollment. Retroactive withdrawals from semesters or summer terms two or more semesters after regular enrollment are normally not granted.

4.1.5 The retroactive withdrawal of a student for health-related reasons can only be granted by the student's academic dean upon the recommendation of the Student Health Center.

4.1.6 In certain special unusual circumstances, a student may be allowed to drop a course(s) after the free drop period while remaining enrolled in other courses. The student must be able to demonstrate a compelling reason for granting such a request for reduction in class load.

4.2 General Procedure

4.2.1 During the first nine weeks of each semester or term, a student may withdraw without academic penalty under the University's normal withdrawal policy. Medical withdrawals after this period which occur during the term of enrollment require approval by the Director of the Student Health Service. Students are required to provide all requested information required by the Director of the Student Health Service in order for him or her to render a decision regarding the request for a medical withdrawal. Students seeking a medical withdrawal during a term of enrollment should contact the Director of the Student Health Service at the Mary Shook Health Center.

4.2.2 Retroactive withdrawals, reduction in classes after the nine-week drop period, or retroactive reductions in classes require approval of the dean of a student's college. Students seeking health-related withdrawals or reductions in classes under these special circumstances must make a written request for special consideration to the dean of their college.

4.2.3 Normally, the dean or one of his or her designees will ask the Director of the Student Health Service to offer a medical opinion regarding the request by the student to withdraw or reduce his or her load for health-related reasons. The student must show to the Director of the Student Health Service documentation sufficient for him or her to reach an opinion. The Director of the Student Health Service will inform the student of his or her opinion and make a recommendation to the dean of the student's college. Specifics of a student's medical problem or condition will not be disclosed by the Director of the Student Health Service without the student's written permission, and the student will not be required to grant permission as a condition for consideration of the request to withdraw or reduce his or her class load.

4.2.4 Therefore, the Director of the Student Health Service will communicate to the dean of the student's college only that he or she does or does not find a compelling medical justification to grant the student's request. The dean will consider the recommendation of the Director of the Student Health Service and render a decision in his or her discretion.

4.3 Administrative Procedures

4.3.1 Students seeking permission for a withdrawal or reduction in class load under special circumstances should contact the Dean's Office where their records are located and make an appointment to talk with the dean or his/her designee. Students who receive approval from their dean for a withdrawal under special circumstances should be given a memorandum on official letterhead from the Dean's Office indicating the student's name, student identification number, and stating the term for which the student is being given permission to withdraw. Students must take the memorandum to the Student Development Office so that an official withdrawal form can be processed. Students who are out of town may request that the Dean's Office send the memorandum via campus mail. Students who receive approval from their dean for a reduction in class load under special circumstances should be given a memorandum on official letterhead from the Dean's Office indicating the student's name, student identification number, and the courses the student is being allowed to drop. Students must take the memorandum to the Registrar's Office so that the reduction in class load can be completed. Students who are out of town may request that the Dean's Office send the memorandum via campus mail.