

Class drop deadline intended to help students, faculty plan

By Denise Clifton
Emerald Reporter

Three weeks into every term panic-driven University students race to Oregon Hall to drop unwanted courses with a fee of \$8 per course to prevent the dreaded "W" from appearing on their transcripts.

After another three weeks, the rush begins again as more students stand in line to drop courses, accept the "W" over a failing grade to maintain a satisfactory grade point average.

This term's deadline to drop classes without a "W" is April 18, and the deadline to drop classes with a "W" is May 12.

Wouldn't it be better if University students didn't have to worry about these deadlines?

Stanford University apparently thinks so.

For more than thirteen years, Stanford's students have been allowed to drop classes without a fee up until 24 hours before finals, and no indication of withdrawal appears on their transcripts.

According to Stanford assistant registrar Joy Parker, their school does not experience any problems with their drop system.

"Students simply file the drop card available at most universities, and there's no fee because they're paying pretty stiff tuition," she said, adding that the process of deleting students' names from computer class lists is very simple.

"I don't see why the program can't be adopted at other universities," Parker said. "It does not seem to present any problem with faculty or administrators here."

Moreover, the University of Washington has a similar withdrawal program available to freshman and transfer students who are completing their first year.

This "preemptory drop" program allows them to drop classes until the last day of instruction, according to UW Registrar Assistant Amy Hocker.

"It gives the students that are new here a chance to get used to the deadlines in the system," Hocker said. "It works really well here, and I think it's a fair system."

University associate registrar Kate Johnson said such a drop system easily could be set up in the computer system.

"The issue is not a matter of whether it can technologically be done," she said. "It's an issue of what the University faculty sets as standards for the University."

Joseph Hynes, vice-provost for academic personnel and English professor, said the problem with extending the drop deadline is "accommodating students" and faculty.

"People hanging on in a class block the way for serious students who care and ... need the course to graduate," he said, adding that faculty also should not have to deal with students who don't care about doing the work.

"Serious students know what they're going to do, and then do it," Hynes said. "There ought to be a reasonable time after which those students should have a chance."

In addition, physics Professor Marvin Girardeau said a later drop deadline would create more work for faculty. "It's a lot of work for the professor to grade the papers and ... it's not really fair to the faculty to have to do that," he said.

Provost Norman Wessells, formerly Stanford's dean of arts and sciences, said he believes the students' abuse of Stanford's withdrawal program has contributed to their grade inflation problem.

"Students there sort of have the feeling that they're so smart that they can't be a D or a C," he said. "The high GPA is part high quality, but there's just not that many C's and D's handed out."

However, Sally Hamaker, a senior studying organizational behavior at Stanford, said the withdrawal system is not abused by the students.

"I think it allows for a lot more independence. I like not having a rule to guide my decisions in my classes," Hamaker said. "It teaches students more responsibility ... and that's a part of growing up."

University sophomore Aaron Hopkins, a pre-med major, said students often are forced to drop classes, and they should be allowed to drop without penalty throughout the term.

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Dix responds to law student complaints

Rep. David Dix (D-Eugene) is prepared to compromise on changing the name of the name of the University's law school to the Wayne L. Morse School of Law, a legislative assistant to Dix said Wednesday.

Dix announced plans to move the bill back to the House Education Committee for amendments when it comes to the House floor April 17. The House Judiciary Committee voted on the bill last Friday.

Nate Garvis, an Oregon law student and intern in Dix's office, said the problem of renaming the law school was not so much in memorializing Wayne Morse, but rather the deletion of the moniker "University of Oregon" from the school's name.

"The law school has a valuable nationwide reputation and name recognition that would be jeopardized by a name change, but I believe that students are not against memorializing Morse," Garvis said. "Most (University law) students support naming the law school building the Wayne Morse Law Center."

Dix said he'd make sure the amendments would make clear that the name of the law school would remain the same while the name of the law building would be changed according to students' suggestions, Garvis added.

Many University law students have signed a petition opposing renaming the law school.

Dix said he was concerned about the issues raised by law students and asserted it was never his intention to minimize the marketability of student law degrees, but rather to commemorate Morse, law school dean from 1931-43 and a former four-term senator.

Dix said the bill will be moved to the House floor after a work session. If passed, it will be sent to the Senate, where Dix will request that the bill be held up until a University ad hoc committee can comment on the name change.

Garvis said Dix believes that it is important that the bill be passed out of the House so that the University could get a sense of where one side of the Legislature stands on this issue.

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