

ACADEMIC SENATE Approved: 4/06/2023

**Academic Senate Resolution to Discontinue Requirement to Verify Serious and Compelling Reason for Withdrawal of Single Courses**

**WHEREAS:** [EM 10-018: Grading Policy](#) states that, “Withdrawals after the census date may be assigned only for serious and compelling reasons. Permission to withdraw during this time shall be granted only with the approval of the instructor, the department chair, and the dean”; and

**WHEREAS:** EM 10-018: Grading Policy states that, “Withdrawals during the final twenty percent of instruction require justification of circumstances clearly beyond the student’s control, such as an accident or serious illness. The requests and approvals shall state the reasons for the withdrawal. Records of approvals shall be maintained in accordance with the campus record retention policy”; and

**WHEREAS:** The 2022-23 University Catalog states that, “After the 20<sup>th</sup> day of instruction, the University’s census date, all Class Add/Update and Class Drop Request forms will require signatures of the instructor, department chair, and college dean. In addition, Class Drop Request forms will require a serious and compelling reason. See below (Appendix) for criteria used for evaluating a serious and compelling reason”; and

**WHEREAS:** During the final three weeks of instruction, no withdrawals will be permitted except for circumstances clearly beyond the student's control (such as accident or serious illness) and when the assignment of an "Incomplete" is not practicable ([EM 98-006](#)); and

**WHEREAS:** EM 10-018 and the 2022-23 University Catalog use the term, “justification” for a W grade assignment; and

**WHEREAS:** EM 10-018 does not use the term, “verifiable” or “verification” of a “serious and compelling reason” for a W; and

**WHEREAS:** The University Catalog, in its list of “Serious and Compelling Reasons” (see Appendix) uses the term, “verification,” which ACADEMIC SENATE concludes is inconsistent with EM 10-018; and

**WHEREAS:** Current practice varies, where some instructors, chairs, and deans require the student to provide written verification of the justification, while others do not; therefore be it,

**RESOLVED:** ACADEMIC SENATE finds that “justification” does not imply the need to verify written justification from the student; and

**RESOLVED:** ACADEMIC SENATE finds EM 10-018 does not indicate that a “serious and compelling” reason for assignment of a W requires “verification”; and

**RESOLVED:** ACADEMIC SENATE finds current practice requiring verification from the student creates an inequitable, unjust, and inconsistent application of grading policy; and

**RESOLVED:** ACADEMIC SENATE recommends that policy and practice should be consistent; and the practice of requiring written verification from the student of any serious and compelling reason



for withdrawal requests after census be discontinued.

## **Appendix**

### ***University Catalog list of Serious and Compelling Reasons***

The following situations are typical of those for which "serious and compelling" is appropriate justification for approving withdrawals and changes of grade option after the fourth week of classes:

1. An extended absence due to a verifiable accident, illness, or personal problem serious enough to cause withdrawal from the University. For example, a one- to two-week absence with a doctor's written excuse.
2. An extended absence due to a death in the immediate family. This applies to absences exceeding a week due to family affairs that must be attended to by the student.
3. A necessary change in employment status which interferes with the student's ability to attend class. This change in employment status must be verified in writing by the student's employer.
4. Other unusual or very special cases, considered on their own merit.