

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** August 9, 2013

**TO:** Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and Advisors

**FROM:** George Gehrels, Chair, Undergraduate Council  
Celeste Pardee, Assistant Director, Curricular Affairs

**RE: Retroactive Withdrawal - Permanent Policy**

In December 2012, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Gail Burd announced an Interim Policy on Retroactive Withdrawal that expanded the options for students to file a General Petition for retroactive withdrawal based on medical, disability, and other legitimate reasons. The Interim Policy, approved by the Chair of the Faculty and University President, became effective in January 2013; it has remained in effect until replaced by a permanent policy approved by the appropriate UA committees. That review and approval process has now been concluded. Undergraduate Council proposed that the interim policy become the permanent policy on 2/12/13, and the Faculty Senate passed this proposal on 5/6/13. The revised policy applies to all incoming and continuing undergraduate students, effective Summer/Fall 2013.

**Revised Policy on Retroactive Withdrawal,** <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2013-14/policies/leavingu.htm>

*Under appropriate circumstances, undergraduate students may petition for a complete retroactive withdrawal from all classes for a previous semester, and may, in rare circumstances, consider a petition for partial retroactive withdrawal. Petitions for retroactive withdrawal are only available before the student's degree is awarded.*

*Students may petition for a complete retroactive withdrawal based on either extenuating circumstances (Retroactive Withdrawal for Extenuating Circumstances), or for other reasons that do not rise to that level (General Retroactive Withdrawal). Neither unsatisfactory performance nor failure to take action within published deadlines constitutes an adequate reason for any type of retroactive withdrawal. Other restrictions, along with filing procedures, are available on the [General Petitions site](#).*

*The time limit for filing a petition for a retroactive withdrawal either for extenuating circumstances or other reasons is typically one year from the last day of class of the semester for which the retroactive withdrawal is sought. If a student demonstrates good cause for being unable to file a petition within this one year period, then the time period may be extended. If a petition for retroactive withdrawal is approved, the student will receive a W for all classes to which the retroactive withdrawal relates during the semester for which the student sought the withdrawal.*

*For the graduate student policy on retroactive withdrawal, see the [Graduate Catalog](#).*

### **Justification for the Policy Revision:**

- The former policy was too narrow in scope. The University needed a broader policy that permits retroactive withdrawal based on medical, disability and other legitimate reasons, including fulfilling the University's nondiscrimination, anti-harassment and Title IX obligations.
- To bring the policy more in line with legal and ethical practices, members of the health professions will take part in the decision-making process when medical or other matters involving a student's health and well-being constitute a basis for the request.
- The procedural revisions (excluded from the policy statement in the Catalog) will maintain the student's privacy interests when his or her request for a withdrawal involves medical, disability, psychological or equity reasons.

- The revisions bring the policy in line with the practices and policies of UA peer institutions.
- The one-year filing time limit is needed because it is difficult for students to obtain all necessary signatures and records to fulfill the petition requirements beyond one year.

**Petition Procedures for Retroactive Withdrawal:**

- Step-by-step instructions for filing a petition are posted on the Registrar's General Petitions site, <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/regtrans/petitions/documentation>. The student's obligations, along with the University's obligations, for each kind of petition are listed on the General Petition form.

Questions about the revised policy on retroactive withdrawal may be addressed to Celeste Pardee, Curricular Affairs, at 621-5375, or at [cpardee@email.arizona.edu](mailto:cpardee@email.arizona.edu).