University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 33-26

Modify Course Add and Drop Policy 301.1

Presented by: Academic and Instructional Policy Committee (AIPC) on behalf of the Registrar's Office.

Background

A series of Senate Proposals (30-94, 24-99, 11-00, 17-02, 27-04, 27-05, 18-12) have established the University's course add, drop, late add, and late drop policies. Collectively, the proposals are policy 301.1. The most recent changes to this policy were made 14 years ago, and the policy does not take into consideration current best practices for compliance or the technology and software solutions that have been implemented over the years. Proposed changes are summarized below:

- Remove the word "signature" throughout the policy: A wet signature is no longer the only means to convey approval.
- Remove the requirement for first-year students to obtain instructor approval to drop a course: New software allows advisors to see comparative student data relevant to course grades and engagement. Advisors may still require the student to talk to the instructor before approving the drop if it is in the student's best interest. This change is supported by the Academic Advising Council.
- Add a requirement for all students to obtain approval to drop a course after the census date (currently Wednesday of week 2): This is a best practice for retention and holistic advising practices, and it ensures that students are in compliance with other policies that apply to them. The required approvals are based on the student type (e.g., student athlete, international student, undergraduate student, graduate student). This change is supported by the Academic Advising Council, Graduate School, International Programs and Services office, Student Athletics, and the Student Success Council.
- Change the last day to drop a course with a grade of W from week 10 to week 12: Based on the timing of mid-term grades (week 8) and registration for the following semester (weeks 9-11), there is little to no time for advisors and success/retention staff to meet with students to discuss a plan for improvement and for the student to implement the plan before needing to decide whether or not to drop a course. This change also allows more time for instructors to enter grade information in the course management system so students can make informed decisions about dropping a class. Among Michigan Tech's operational peer institutions and other Michigan universities, the last day to drop with a grade of W ranges from week 8 to the last day of classes before final exams. This change is supported by the Graduate Faculty

Council, Academic Advising Council, and Student Success Council.

- <u>Remove the period of time when students can drop a course without it appearing on their record:</u> This is being removed due to compliance risk for State and Federal financial aid. Students who drop a course after the census date (currently Wednesday of week 2) will receive a W for the dropped course.

- <u>Remove language that establishes the Census Date (see definition below):</u> The established census date at Michigan Tech has been Wednesday of week 2 for more than 20 years. In policy, however, it should be referred to as "the census date" due to it being based on financial aid regulations and University processes (e.g., the timing of student loan disbursements) and being subject to change. The census date is currently included in the academic calendar for both Financial Deadlines and Add/Drop Deadlines. This change in wording is supported by the Financial Aid office and Student Billing office.

   Definition: The **Census Date** is a standard date each college/university must establish to take an official snapshot of enrollment for federal financial aid regulation compliance purposes. Students' number of enrolled credits captured on the Census Date will be used to determine the final, official calculations of financial aid that can be awarded to a student. It is the last day to add/drop classes without financial penalty or permanent academic records of withdrawal. It is also the date that enrollment data for reporting purposes is captured.

Combined, these recommendations aim to simplify the process and take advantage of efficiencies created through new technology while ensuring compliance for students and administrative processes.

Proposal: Change the Course Add and Drop policy (Policy 301.1) as follows:

Adding Courses

~~Signature requirements for permission to add a course are:~~

First-year (first semester) students:

Through the first five business days of the semester*, ~~signature~~ approval must be obtained from the student's academic advisor.

After the fifth business day of the semester*, ~~signature~~ approval must be obtained from the student's academic advisor and course instructor. Section changes for the same course do not require ~~an~~ academic advisor approval ~~signature~~.

All other students:

Through the first five business days of the semester*, no ~~signature~~ approval is required to add a course or change sections. After the fifth business day of the semester*, students must obtain ~~signature~~ approval from the course instructor to add a course or change a section

The last day to officially add a full semester course is the ~~Wednesday of second week~~ established census date of each semester*.

* ~~Or the same percentage of the time if a course is offered in a time module other than a fourteen week semester.~~ Courses offered in a time format other than 14 weeks or outside of the official semester dates will be prorated accordingly.

Dropping Courses

~~During the first three weeks of the semester, c~~ Courses dropped through the census date will not be recorded on the student's permanent record. Beginning the ~~fourth week~~ the day after the census date through the end of the ~~tenth~~ twelfth week of the semester, courses dropped will be indicated by a grade of 'W' on the student's permanent record. The effective date of the course drop will be the date the request is fully approved. Drop requests that are initiated but not approved by the deadline will be managed on a case-by-case basis.

~~Signature requirements to drop a course are:~~

First-year (first semester) students:

~~During the first three weeks of instruction*, signature~~ Beginning the first day of the semester through the end of week 12, approval must be obtained from the student's academic advisor to drop a course. ~~Students must be made aware of how dropping a course affects their progress toward graduation. After the third week of instruction*, signature approval must be obtained from the student's academic advisor and course instructor.~~

All other students:

~~During the first week through the end of the tenth week of instruction*, no signature approval is required to drop a course.~~ Beginning the day after the established census date* through the end of week 12, approval is required to drop a course. At a minimum, undergraduate students must obtain approval from their academic advisor and graduate students must obtain approval from the Graduate School. Additional approvals may be required as applicable (e.g., student athletes, international students).

The last day to drop a full semester course without financial liability is the established census date of each semester*.

* ~~Or the same percentage of the time if a course is offered in a time module other than a~~

fourteen week semester. Courses offered in a time format other than 14 weeks or outside of the official semester dates will be prorated accordingly.

After the ~~tenth~~ twelfth week, a student may request a late drop from ~~Student Affairs~~ the Dean of Students Office, which will only consider those requests that clearly involve extenuating circumstances beyond a student's control. Comments from the academic advisor and instructor will be requested prior to final approval. If approved, ~~The registrar will show~~ the course will appear on the student's permanent record with the grade of W.

Students ~~that~~ who drop all of their courses will be withdrawn from school as of the date the last course was dropped.

Proposed Policy without markup:

Adding Courses

First-year (first semester) students:

Through the first five business days of the semester*, approval must be obtained from the student's academic advisor.

After the fifth business day of the semester*, approval must be obtained from the student's academic advisor and course instructor. Section changes for the same course do not require academic advisor approval.

All other students:

Through the first five business days of the semester*, no approval is required to add a course or change sections. After the fifth business day of the semester*, students must obtain approval from the course instructor to add a course or change a section.

The last day to officially add a full semester course is the established census date of each semester*.

* Courses offered in a time format other than 14 weeks or outside of the official semester dates will be prorated accordingly.

Dropping Courses

Courses dropped through the census date will not be recorded on the student's permanent record. Beginning the day after the census date through the end of the twelfth week of the semester, courses dropped will be indicated by a grade of 'W' on the student's permanent record. The effective date of the course drop will be the date the request is fully approved.

Drop requests that are initiated but not approved by the deadline will be managed on a case-by-case basis.

First-year (first semester) students:

Beginning the first day of the semester through the end of week 12, approval must be obtained from the student's academic advisor to drop a course.

All other students:

Beginning the day after the established census date* through the end of week 12, approval is required to drop a course. At a minimum, undergraduate students must obtain approval from their academic advisor and graduate students must obtain approval from the Graduate School. Additional approvals may be required as applicable (e.g., student athletes, international students).

The last day to drop a full semester course without financial liability is the established census date of each semester*.

After the twelfth week*, a student may request a late drop from the Dean of Students Office, which will only consider those requests that clearly involve extenuating circumstances beyond a student's control. Comments from the academic advisor and instructor will be requested prior to final approval. If approved, the course will appear on the student's permanent record with the grade of W.

Students who drop all of their courses will be withdrawn from school as of the date the last course was dropped.

Courses offered in a time format other than 14 weeks or outside of the official semester dates will be prorated accordingly.

Questions regarding the add/drop process can be referred to the Registrar's Office.

Definition: The **Census Date** is a standard date each college/university must establish to take an official snapshot of enrollment for federal financial aid regulation compliance purposes. Students' number of enrolled credits captured on the Census Date will be used to determine the final, official calculations of financial aid that can be awarded to a student. It is the last day to add/drop classes without financial penalty or permanent academic records of withdrawal. It is also the date that enrollment data for reporting purposes is captured.