July 14, 2014

Dr. Dean Neikirk  
Secretary of the General Faculty and Faculty Council  
ENS 635 (C0803)

Dear Dean:

I write to give my approval to the “Proposal to Align Q-Drop and OTE Drop Policies: Academic Dishonesty,” Documents of the General Faculty 11516-11518. The proposal was approved by the Faculty Council at its meeting on May 5, 2014. On June 11, 2014, the proposal received the endorsement of Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. Gregory Fenves. By copy of this message to Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Pedro Reyes I am notifying UT System of the implementation of this legislation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

William Powers, Jr.  
President

WP/lac

Enclosures

cc:  Dr. Pedro Reyes, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UT System  
Dr. Gregory Fenves, Executive Vice President and Provost  
Mrs. Patti Ohlendorf, Vice President for Legal Affairs  
Ms. Debbie Roberts, Executive Assistant, Office of the General Faculty
May 6, 2014

William Powers Jr.
President
The University of Texas at Austin
MAI 400
Campus Mail Code: G3400

Dear President Powers:

Enclosed for your consideration is a proposal from the Educational Policy Committee recommending modifications to the Q-drop policy that would align it more closely to the One-Time-Exception policy in the General Information catalog as they relate to academic dishonesty (D 11516-11518). On May 5, 2014, the Faculty Council approved the proposal. Final approval resides with you with notification to UT System.

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Dean Neikirk, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

Enclosure

DPN:dlr

xc:  Gregory Fenves, executive vice president and provost
     Charles Roeckle, deputy to the president
     Patricia Ohlendorf, vice president for legal affairs
     Janet Dukerich, sr. vice provost

Electronic copies via email:
     Hillary Hart, chair, 2013-14 Faculty Council
     Mary Rose, chair, Educational Policy Committee
     Del Watson, assistant to Janet Dukerich
DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

PROPOSAL TO ALIGN Q-DROP AND OTE DROP POLICIES: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

On March 26, 2014, and on behalf of the Educational Policy Committee, Professor Mary Rose (committee chair, sociology) submitted the following proposal recommending modifications to the Q-drop and One-Time-Exception Drop policies in the General Information catalog as it relates to academic dishonesty. On April 14, 2014, Professor Rose will present the proposal to the Faculty Council for discussion, and it will be acted on by the Council at its meeting on May 5, 2014.

The Secretary has classified this as general legislation. Final approval resides with the president with formal notification to UT System.

Dean Neikirk, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

Posted on the Faculty Council website (http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/) on April 9, 2014.
PROPOSAL TO ALIGN Q-DROP AND OTE DROP POLICIES: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Background and Rationale
This is part of a series of proposed changes to the Q-drop and One-Time-Exception (OTE) aimed at making policies for each more similar. The Q-drop request came to Educational Policy Committee (EPC) from Professor Mihman Aroian (McCombs School of Business) who has been a campus leader in promoting awareness of academic dishonesty and developing practices to eliminate it. Professor Aroian asks that Q-drops have the same restrictions as OTE's, which inform students that they cannot drop a course to avoid the consequences of a charge of academic dishonesty. By a unanimous vote at our March 21, 2014, meeting, EPC recommended such a change.

Aligning Q-drop policy with OTE policy: We recommend that the University restrict Q-drops in the same way that OTE drops are restricted, namely that a student who has been formally accused of academic dishonesty cannot have a Q-drop in a course that is sought in order to avoid facing the academic dishonesty charge.

Rationale: Professor Aroian reports that some students are choosing to Q-drop a course as a way to avoid a charge from an instructor that the student engaged in academic dishonesty. When Faculty Council voted to remove the faculty signature requirement for Q-drops, this removed a previous barrier that students charged with dishonesty had to surmount (i.e., even though the form made it clear that the professor’s permission to drop was not required, students nonetheless had to speak directly with the professor charging them with dishonesty in order to obtain the required signature that acknowledged the drop). To ensure that students are not dropping to avoid a penalty for academic dishonesty, we propose adding in the same limitation that currently is listed for the OTE, which prohibits drops when students have a “pending investigation” of scholastic dishonesty. Because Q drops happen earlier in the semester, with the consequence that students who drop courses stop attending them (unlike the OTE, which is typically exercised very late in the term), we propose changing the language slightly to state that the petition will not be considered final until the investigation is resolved, rather than prohibiting students from even attempting to drop a course at all. This recognizes that an investigation by Student Judicial Services (SJS), which adjudicates these issues on campus, will likely not be resolved immediately; however, a student who believes he/she will be cleared of the charges can still drop. In this way, the student can make an informed decision about whether to continue to attend the course until the matter is resolved.2

Language of Proposed Changes:

(New language underlined/highlighted and language to remove noted with strikethrough below. No changes up to this point.)

Limitations

In accordance with section 51.907 of the Texas Education Code, a student may drop no more than six classes for academic reasons during his or her undergraduate career. This rule applies to all students who entered a public Texas institution of higher education as first-time undergraduates in the fall semester 2007 or later.

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1 Even before this proposal, the Student Dean’s Council implemented a new system in the Q-drop process in which professors receive an email notifying them that a student is planning to drop and invites them to contact Student Judicial Services if they have plans to pursue a charge of academic dishonesty. This policy simply makes it formally clear to the student that such charges are a bar to having the drop considered permanent.

2 Whatever grade results in the course, a student cleared of dishonesty can have a grade retroactively changed to a Q. In addition, upon a finding of dishonesty, a Q that has been granted will be converted to whatever grade a student merits given their performance and involvement in the course.
A dropped class is counted toward the six-drop limit if the student dropped it from the thirteenth class day through the deadline to drop a class for academic reasons in a long-session semester or from the fifth through the last class day in a summer term, and if the student did not drop the class for a substantiated, nonacademic reason as defined below.

Any Q-drop assigned will not be considered final until any investigations of scholastic dishonesty for the class in question are resolved.¹

(No further changes under this proposal. For a related proposal D 11519-11520.)

One-Time-Exception (for reference)

Undergraduate students who may not have urgent, substantiated, nonacademic reasons will be allowed to drop a single class or withdraw from the University after the deadline to drop or withdraw for academic reasons under the provisions of the One-Time-Exception (OTE). The OTE may be invoked only once during the student’s entire undergraduate college career regardless of the college the student was enrolled in at the time the exception was allowed. The provisions of the OTE are as follows.

Provisions for Drops

3. A student may not drop a class if there are any pending investigations of scholastic dishonesty for the class in question; this will be verified by the student’s dean’s office with the instructor of the course.²

²Currently, a faculty signature is required for the OTE. If that changes, this language will be updated.

¹The committee amended the sentence on Friday, April 11, 2014. The deleted sentence read “Students may not Q-drop a course in order to avoid a charge of academic dishonesty. Any Q-drop assigned will not be considered final until any pending investigations of scholastic dishonesty for the class in question are resolved. Pending scholastic dishonesty will be verified by the student’s dean’s office with the Dean of Students Office.”