March 16, 2015

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: Encourage Students to Speak with Professors Before Dropping a Class,” Documents of the General Faculty 12123-12124 and the “One-Time-Exception Drops Proposal,” Documents of the General Faculty 12125-12127. The proposals were approved by the Faculty Council at its meeting on March 9, 2015. On March 13, 2015, the proposals 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: Pedro Reyes, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UT System
    Gregory Fenves, Executive Vice President and Provost
    Patti Ohlendorf, Vice President for Legal Affairs

Electronic copies via email:
Bill Beckner, Chair, 2014-15 Faculty Council
Mary Rose, Chair, 2014-15 Educational Policy Committee
Carol Longoria, Assistant Deputy to the President
Debbie Roberts, Executive Assistant, Office of the General Faculty
Victoria Cervantes, Sr. Administrative Associate, Office of the General Faculty
March 10, 2015

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

Dear President Powers:

Enclosed for your consideration are two proposals from the Educational Policy Committee recommending changes to the General Information catalog. The Faculty Council unanimously approved both items at its meeting yesterday afternoon.

- Proposal to Align Q-Drop and OTE Drop Policies: Encourage Students to Speak with Professors Before Dropping a Class (D 12123-12124)
- One-Time-Exception drops proposal (D 12125-12127)

Final approval of the legislation 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

Enclosures

DPN:dlr

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

Electronic copies via email:
    Bill Beckner, chair, 2014-15 Faculty Council
    Mary Rose, chair, 2014-15 Educational Policy Committee
    Vincent (Shelby) Stanfield, registrar
    Lydia Cornell, assistant to Janet Dukerich
PROPOSAL TO FORMALLY ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SPEAK WITH PROFESSORS BEFORE DROPPING A CLASS

On January 16, 2014, and on behalf of the Educational Policy Committee, Professor Mary Rose (committee chair, sociology) submitted the following proposal encouraging students to speak with professors before dropping a class. This proposal pertains to the Q-drop and One-Time-Exception Drop policies in the General Information catalog. The Faculty Council will act on the proposal at its meeting on March 9, 2015.

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 February 25, 2015.
PROPOSAL TO FORMALLY ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SPEAK WITH PROFESSORS BEFORE DROPPING A CLASS

The Educational Policy Committee (EPC) proposes adding the following sentence to the introductory section of the General Information catalog (GIC) section on dropping a course: “Students considering dropping a course are encouraged to speak with the course’s instructor to determine if options exist for completing the course.” This proposal passed EPC unanimously.

Rationale: Faculty Council approved a 2012-2013 EPC proposal to remove the signature requirement from the Q-drop, and EPC currently proposes doing the same for the “One-Time Exception” (OTE) drop. In discussions with faculty, some have reported first-hand experiences of students approaching them to obtain the signature to drop a course, only to find that the faculty and student can come up solutions to the student’s perceived problem, which permits the student to finish a course. Although there are plenty of reasons to believe that the benefits of removing the signature outweigh the costs, EPC also believes that the GIC (and Q-drop and OTE forms) should serve as a place in which students are reminded that conversations with faculty about drops can have beneficial consequences and should be encouraged. We therefore propose that the following language be added to the introductory section of the drop policy rules in the GIC.

For full text of existing rules, see:
Dropping a Class: Rules for Undergraduate Students
(http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/adding-and-dropping-classes/dropping-a-class-rules-for-undergraduate-students/)

{New language is underlined.}

DROPPING A CLASS: RULES FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

In general, an undergraduate may drop a class through midsession in a long-session semester and through the last class day in a summer term. However, the student must meet the conditions described below and must abide by the Quantity of Work Rule. The dates of the deadlines discussed below are given in the Academic Calendar. Students considering dropping a course are encouraged to speak with the course’s instructor to determine if options exist for completing the course.

In addition to other required approvals, international students must have the written consent of the International Office to drop a class.

On the recommendation of the instructor and with the approval of the student’s academic dean, a student may be required to drop a class at any time because of neglect or lack of preparation. Delete drops (which remove all indications of the course registration from a student’s academic record) may be requested only in the cases of University error or in response to rare and extenuating circumstances. The form requesting the delete drop must be signed by the dean of the college or school in which the student is enrolled.

{No further changes under this proposal. For a related proposal see D 11519-11520, which was to be considered by the Faculty Council at its meeting on May 5, 2014, but was postponed for lack of time.}
PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CURRENT POLICY ON DROPS AND ONE TIME EXCEPTION (OTE) DROPS

On January 16, 2014, and on behalf of the Educational Policy Committee, Professor Mary Rose (committee chair, sociology) submitted the following proposal recommending changes to the current policy on Drops and One Time Exception Drops. This proposal pertains to the Q-drop and One-Time-Exception Drop policies in the General Information catalog. The Faculty Council will act on the proposal at its meeting on March 9, 2015.

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 February 25, 2015.
PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CURRENT POLICY ON DROPS AND ONE TIME EXCEPTION (OTE) DROPS

The Policy Implementation Group (PIG), a committee appointed by Senior Vice Provost Laude, recommended to Educational Policy Committee (EPC) that the current policy on Drops and One Time Exception (OTE) drops be adjusted to be more consistent with one another and to better support current institutional practices administration of academic records. EPC unanimously approved the changes listed below.

{New language underlined and language to remove noted with strikethrough below.}

**Background and Rationale:** It is recommended that OTE policies reflect those for the $Q$-drop by removing the requirement that students obtain a faculty signature in order to drop the course. In addition, it is recommended that UT Austin remove grade-based barriers to the OTE, which have previously prevented students (other than those who have been in residence less than two long semesters) from dropping a course when they are expected to earn higher than a $D$ or $F$ in the class.

Currently, the instructor in a course signs the OTE form both as a means of acknowledging that the professor has been informed of the request and as means of documenting the grade the student currently has in the class. Professors do not "grant" OTE's or give permission for the student to use the drop in a given circumstance. Because current practice allows for email notification to instructors when students petition to drop (and permits the instructor to notify the student dean about charges of academic dishonesty), and because advising staff can verify if a grade has been assigned in the course, there is currently not a strong need for the faculty signature as a means of notification. As with the $Q$-drop discussion in previous years, the need to obtain the signature creates hurdles for students and may require that a professor be located at the last minute in order to sign the form, an inefficient means of notification. The proposal aligns language forbidding drops to get out of academic dishonesty accusations with current language that appears for the $Q$-drop.

It is further recommended that Faculty Council delete the policy that mandates that students cannot OTE a class in which they have a grade higher than a C. The policy is problematic because nothing in the policy prevents above-D students from taking steps to artificially lower their grade in order to qualify for the OTE (e.g., to announce that they will not be taking the final exam and therefore will automatically get less than the C in the course; per advising staff, this anecdote has occurred). Further, there is clear ambivalence in the grade-based policy because it is not extended to students who have completed less than two semesters at UT Austin, who currently can use the OTE for any reason. Finally, as a more general matter, it seems problematic to micromanage the reasons why students opt to use their single OTE. Even if one assumes that some students might want to use the OTE to drop courses in which they are performing only modestly (with a B or C grade), there remain high costs in terms of wasted time, tuition costs (for some) associated with dropping late in the term (i.e., after the $Q$-drop deadline), and forgoing opportunities to use the OTE later. We therefore do not believe that, on balance, the instances of students dropping to change their grade point average results outweighs the benefits of removing the low-grade requirement and giving students more autonomy to decide when the OTE is warranted. Assuming this change is made, this provides a further rationale for omitting the need for the instructor's signature (since the grade does not have to be verified).

The proposed changes are as follows:

**One-Time-Exception**
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.

**General Provisions**
1. The OTE does not apply to students in the Graduate School, the College of Pharmacy, the LBJ School of Public Affairs, the School of Law, or the School of Information.
2. A student must [request] submit the completed OTE [form] to the student’s dean’s office by the last class day. [Forms must be returned to the student’s dean’s office before the first day of final exams.]

3. Any drop or withdrawal allowed under the OTE will be subject to the same academic and financial aid rules governing other drops or withdrawals taken during the semester.

Provisions for Drops

1. [The student must obtain the signature of the instructor on the form.]

2. A student may not drop a class in which a final grade has been assigned. This will be verified by the student’s dean’s office [with the instructor of the course].

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

4. A student who has not completed two long semesters will be allowed to drop a course regardless of his or her current grade in the course.

5. A student who has completed at least two long semesters at the University of Texas at Austin may only drop a class if he or she has an average grade of D+, D, D-, or F in the course at the time of the request. This will be verified by the student’s dean’s office with the instructor of the course.

6. Drops allowed under the provisions of the OTE will be considered academic drops and will count toward the six-drop limit. Students who have reached the six-drop limit are not eligible to use the OTE to drop a course.

Provisions for Withdrawals

1. Students who are requesting to use the OTE for a withdrawal will be allowed to withdraw regardless of current grades in classes.

2. No instructors’ signatures will be required on the form.

3. Pending scholastic dishonesty will be verified by the student’s dean’s office with the Dean of Students Office. Withdrawal will not be approved if there is a pending scholastic dishonesty case.

{No further changes under this proposal.}

For full text of existing rules, see:

Dropping a Class: Rules for Undergraduate Students
http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/adding-and-dropping-classes/dropping-a-class-rules-for-undergraduate-students/