

Request to Reexamine University Regulations Regarding Academic Drop/Add Period

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Background:

April 15, 2002 the Academic Standards, Regulations and Admissions Committee affirmed a report issued in April of 2001, recommending a drop period of seven (7) calendar days, and an add period of eight (8) calendar days from the first day of classes. This was in response to logistical difficulties experienced within the University with regard to joint programs between Rutgers - Newark and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) as well as “compromised academic integrity of 15-week courses.”

Students at the University have long been dissatisfied with this period, concerned that it is simply too short a period of time to accurately assess their compatibility with a course, and does not afford them adequate opportunity to add new courses. Crippling budget cuts experienced by the University over the past several years have only exacerbated this complaint, as it has resulted in a decline in the availability of courses. To that effect, the Rutgers University Student Assembly in April of 2008 urging the University Senate to extend the add period to two weeks (14 days) from the first day of classes, and the drop period to three weeks (21 days) from the first day of classes. The resolution reasoned that several other universities around the country had similar Drop/Add periods.

Proposal:

Request that the Academic Standards, Regulations and Admissions Committee reexamine the Drop/Add period and consider its extension. Examine best practices at institutions similar to Rutgers in size and structure, such as Penn State University, Ohio State University, and San Francisco State University to make recommendations to the University Senate.

Issues to Consider:

- Would it be feasible to require special permission codes to add certain courses (i.e. Writing Program courses) after a certain period of time?
- Would altering the Drop/Add period impact the disbursement of refund checks?
- How would altering the Drop/Add period impact the logistical operations of the units of the University?

Rationale:

Due to budget cuts at the University, the increasing lack of availability of courses has resulted in students feeling undue pressure to make their academic scheduling choices wisely to complete their degrees in a timely and cost-effective manner. Additionally, many courses have seen increased enrollment capacity, which many students find off-putting and burdensome on their academic growth and development. The short Drop/Add period severely constrains a student’s ability to properly assess their compatibility with a course and additionally does not give them sufficient time to examine alternate scheduling options. Many other universities around the country have longer Drop/Add periods, that range from 10 drop and 11 add days to 21 days.

Final Comments:

Due to concerns raised in the 2001 report to the Senate, a period of three weeks for Drop/Add is likely not a feasible option for this University. However, the issue is one that should be examined again in light of changes at the University both with regard to the availability and structure of courses, as well as the transformation of U\ndergraduate education.