

**Rutgers University Senate
Student Affairs Committee
Response to Charge S-1507 on Deregistration for
Non-payment of Term Bills, Including for Online Courses
January 2016**

The Student Affairs Committee (SAC) was issued the following charge by the Senate Executive Committee:

Charge S-1507-Deregistration for Non-payment of Term Bills, Including for Online Courses:

Examine the issue of student deregistration for non-payment of term bills, including for online courses. Refer to Senator Rudy Bell's proposal and background when pursuing this charge. Make recommendations for preventing inappropriate deregistration.

Background

Referring to the letter from Dr. Rudy Bell and the SAC's December 2013 [Response to Charge S-1211 on Deregistration for Non-Payment of Term Bills](#), committee members met with Theresa Wooding, University Controller, Student Financial Services in ASB I, Rutgers-New Brunswick, as well Associate Chancellor Mary Beth Daisey at Rutgers-Camden, to review the current protocol in place to deal with deregistration of students, particularly regarding online courses, here at Rutgers University.

Summary of Investigation

As mentioned in the report of December 2013 on Charge S-1211, reasons for non-payment of term bills varied widely but notably included the late receipt of student loans or other forms of financial assistance.

Ms. Wooding was briefed about Dr. Bell's letter. The issues mentioned in his letter were reviewed point by point. The first point made in this regard was that students who did not pay their term bill by the first week of classes were deregistered. However, Ms. Wooding informed the committee that this does not happen and that, in fact, such students are given a grace period for either completing their term bill payment or at least communicating their respective reasons for non-payment if they are unable to pay term bills by the deadline. Also, as mentioned in the report on Charge S-1211, the Student Accounting Services office conducts numerous attempts to communicate with students to resolve outstanding balances before actual deregistration. A number of communication methods in a variety of formats through email, phone, and hardcopy mail are delivered to students over an approximately two-month period beginning a week before being deregistered. Notably, students do not need to be physically present to confirm their attendance as long as they communicate their situation with the office in time via different media and can provide required documents online.

The second point raised concerns online courses. Dr. Bell stated in his letter that online students are affected the most because of deregistration due to non-payment of term bills. However, as Ms. Wooding informed the committee, the "grace period policy" extends to online students as well, and that the essential criterion for deregistration always happens to be a lack of communication of students with the University offices concerning their non-payment, or that the students applied late for financial aid during their application process to the University. The Student Accounting office informed the committee that even if such students appear deregistered from the class, they are given a chance to communicate their reason for non-payment, or simply communicate with the office and the office

would toggle their registration status from “off” to “on”. Along with their respective professor's approval, students would thus be granted access to every aspect of their online course, and would be able to attend that online course similarly to any other student throughout the semester. Ms. Wooding clearly communicated the fact that, no matter what, the University academic offices would always try to keep interested students in class irrespective of their bill payment status as long as those students appropriately communicate their situation with the office.

Conclusions

- No additional or modified action is recommended to change the policies or procedures currently employed regarding deregistration for non-payment.
- No further action can be taken to ameliorate the effect of deregistration on students still attending classes while deregistered.
- Students enrolled in online or hybrid classes are given the same opportunities and notifications as traditional students, and therefore will not be given special consideration.

Student Affairs Committee 2015-16

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