

February 10, 2009

To: Bloomington Faculty Council

From: Student Academic Appointee Affairs Committee
Brian Horne, Chair

Re: Registration information/Bursar fees

Background:

In April 1995, the Educational Policies Committee of the Bloomington Faculty Council presented a slate of recommendations to the BFC to address a mandate given to the Registrar. This mandate was to “restore enrollment stability and instructional integrity to the first week of classes.” The EPC also commented on “the necessity to provide suitable information and incentives for undergraduate and graduate students to plan their academic schedules in a timely and effective way.” [Appendix 1] The policies were passed through the BFC and appropriate practices were adopted.

This document makes it clear that the Educational Policies Committee wanted to ensure that the “incentives and penalties experienced by students” were at an “appropriate level to encourage registration practices that lead to a stable first week of classes,” and that they “should not be unduly harsh.”

In addition, the EPC expressed concern that all academic units “provide timely, informative and useful course information to students prior to registration.” In fact, the EPC determined that “not all academic units” were “responding with this detailed information that is crucial to the successful implementation of the ... registration system.”

At some point, a fee schedule was implemented by the office of the bursar to motivate student behavior. At this point in time (February, 2009), the bursar fees can be summarized this way:

There are two types of charges associated with drop/add activity. The first are administrative fees assessed to all students if they make a change to their course schedule (\$8.50 for changes to their schedule via self-service more than 48 hours are registration and through the first week of classes, and \$23 for each class dropped after the first week of classes). This resolution does not concern these charges and is focused on the consequences of the second type of charge, which does not apply to undergraduate students, MBA students and Law students if they are enrolled within their flat fee and remain so after the schedule change. Under the current refund policy, graduate students forfeit a portion of their tuition if they make a change after their first week of classes. For example, a nonresident graduate student enrolled in 12 credit hours will be charged \$874 for switching from one 4-credit-hour course to another in the second week of classes, \$1724 for waiting until week 3, \$2574 in week 4, and \$3425 in week 5 (this information taken from an e-mail announcement from the Graduate Office of the College of Arts and Sciences in the fall of 2008). This policy creates a situation in which graduate students, unable to cover these costs, must be able to select a final course schedule by the end of the first week of classes. [provided by Nick Clark, GPSO president]

It appears clear to us as members of the Student Academic Appointee Affairs Committee that the parts of the 1995 actions that motivated student behavior by assessing steep fees for making schedule changes after the first week of classes have been honored. It has become our opinion, however, that the parts of the 1995 resolution that intended to motivate faculty/chair/dean behavior have not been honored, at least not in all cases.

The GPSO has presented a resolution—entitled *Resolution on Drop/Add late fees for graduate students to the administration of Indiana University—Bloomington*—to the SAAAC to address this situation. The committee is split on the appropriate course of action for this resolution, with most of the faculty members against it and most of the GPSO members for it. I have asked for time from the Agenda Committee to present this resolution to the BFC as a whole, and will address it in conjunction with Nick Clark, president of the GPSO.

Although it is a gross oversimplification to express it in these terms, the GPSO resolution seeks to address the problem by addressing what is done at the **end** of the process. To address the problem by addressing what is done at the **beginning** of the process, the SAAAC recommends the following policies as a formal resolution to the Bloomington Faculty Council:

- 1) Academic deans should ensure that their faculty and other instructors create and regularly update course descriptions that are sufficiently informative and detailed to be useful to students in making registration decisions. These course descriptions should be made available on-line to students at least three weeks prior to the start of registration. [This was taken verbatim from the 1995 resolution and should be current practice.]
- 2) Syllabi for planned courses should be available to students either online or by request from the instructor no later than seven days before the first day of classes.
- 3) The syllabi and class schedules for courses which are not offered on a regular basis and are not part of a regularly occurring course of study (e.g. elective classes, topics classes, etc.) should be available as soon as possible to students so that they can be evaluated and considered. Except in extraordinary circumstances this information should be available during registration, and in all cases this information should be available before the first day of classes.
- 4) Except in extraordinary cases classes should meet as scheduled during the first week of classes so that students can make the decisions they need to make during the allowed period of time.
- 5) If a course does not meet during the first week of classes and/or the course syllabus, grading summary, and rough schedule of assignments, tests, etc., is not available to students before the end of the first week of classes, the drop/add fees and penalties to the student for making changes in his/her schedule should be paid by the department.

Again, it seems clear that the 1995 university policy has motivated students as intended, but has not motivated faculty, chairs, and deans as intended. Point No. 5 above would seek to address this. This course of action has unanimous support from the SAAAC.

APPENDIX 1

Circular B49-95
(Approved by the BFC April, 1995)

To: Bloomington Faculty Council
From: Educational Policies Committee
Date: April 18, 1995
Subject: Changes in Registration Procedures
to be discussed during Today's BFC Meeting
(Agenda Item #9)

The BFC Educational Policies Committee has carefully considered the mandate given to the Registrar by the BFC to restore enrollment stability and instructional integrity to the first week of classes, and the necessity to provide suitable information and incentives for undergraduate and graduate students to plan their academic schedules in a timely and effective way.

The EPC is concerned that: (1) the incentives and penalties experienced by students should be at an appropriate level to encourage registration practices that lead to a stable first week of classes, and should not be unduly harsh, and (2) all academic units must provide timely, informative and useful course information to students prior to registration. The EPC has determined that, in fact, not all academic units are responding with this detailed information that is crucial to the successful implementation of the new registration system.

In response to these concerns, the EPC presents the following resolutions:

1. Undergraduate and graduate courses dropped by the end of the first week will not become part of the student's permanent record.
2. Academic deans should ensure that their faculty and other instructors create and regularly update course descriptions that are sufficiently informative and detailed to be useful to students in making registration decisions. These course descriptions should be made available on-line to students at least 3 weeks prior to the start of registration.
3. At the end of the 1995-1996 registration period, the EPC (in consultation with the Budgetary Affairs Committee) should review the late-program-change fee structure, in order to evaluate its fairness and effectiveness.